

# Good to KNOW

BY KONG NHEAN SEREY,  
AS TOLD TO PHYLLIS GUNDERSON

*Who would ever guess that memorizing the Articles of Faith would change my life?*

**W**hen I was 19, I left my small village in central Cambodia to live with my older brother in the capital city of Phnom Penh. Several years earlier my brother had met two young men wearing white shirts, ties, and name tags. Now my brother introduced me to the gospel and baptized me into the Church.

When I was baptized, my district president, President Pen Vibol, told me, “Memorize the Articles of Faith. They explain everything that is good in the Church, things you should always remember.” I thought this was wise advice, so I memorized all 13 and reviewed them regularly. But I never imagined how important President Vibol’s advice would turn out to be.

My brother always encouraged me to improve myself and get an education. A few years after I was baptized, I was able to pass the English university entrance test, and I received a four-year scholarship to study international marketing at Brigham Young University–Hawaii.

But as difficult as the entrance test was, the hardest part was still ahead—getting an American visa. Permission to enter the United States is difficult and expensive. Sometimes permission is denied even for students who have scholarships to attend American universities. I filled out the proper forms, made an appointment for an interview at the U.S. Embassy, and soon found myself sitting across the desk from a young man with blue eyes.

“There are a lot of American universities,” the

interviewer said. “Why do you want to go to BYU–Hawaii?”

“Because I’m a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and it’s a Church-owned university,” I replied.

The interviewer shuffled his papers. “I see your brother is already there,” he said. I knew that the embassy didn’t like more than one member of a family to leave the country at the same time.

“Yes,” I admitted. “My older brother is attending BYU–Hawaii.” The interview wasn’t looking good.

“Can your parents support you?” was the next question.

“My father is a farmer, and my mother is a seller,” I said. I told him they didn’t make much money.

“Then how can you afford to study in the United States?” asked the interviewer.

I pulled out my acceptance letter and explained that I had a scholarship to attend the university.

After looking at the letter, the interviewer reached into his desk drawer and pulled out a small card. “Recite four of these Articles of Faith,” he said.

I knew them as well as I knew my own name. “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost,” I began. After I had finished the third, the interviewer stopped me.

“OK, great!” he said, putting the card back in his desk. “You can pick up your visa tomorrow.”

I don’t know why the interviewer had an Articles of Faith card in his desk, but I was grateful I didn’t have to think twice when he asked me to recite them. Knowing the Articles of Faith may not always bring such dramatic results, but they’ll always be good to know. **NE**

