When I was in third grade, my teacher Mrs. Artaberry gave us a project. “Class, I would like you to do a math problem. Please figure out how old you will be in the year 2000.” That year was so far away! I did the math and determined I would be 45 years old. That was old, and it would certainly never come. But it did, and here we are 18 years later. It is a new year, and time continues to pass us by.

For young men in the streets, time stands still, and everything is for the moment. The future is never considered. They live day-to-day, aimlessly, not noticing the passage of time through the hourglass. Gang life, with one day appearing like the next, presents no hope for the future.

As I pondered the future year 2000 at my desk on that day long ago, the memory of it is seared into my mind because I had hope. I wondered, what will I be like when I am 45? What will my family be like, and my kids? I thought about my education, my job, and my future. Why can a third grader think like that, but not a 20-year-old gang member? Hope. Hope is not wishful thinking. Hope is certainty about the future. I did not know what the future held, but I had hope, knowing that it would be good.

Like my third grade teacher did for me, my prayer is that Hope Now will challenge young men to consider their future, and that when they look back on their life, they will be able to remember someone who helped them.

My hope stemmed from having a loving and strong father, and a caring mother. Hope was instilled in me from an early age. Gangsters miss out on that. They are told, “You’re going nowhere.” And that is why Hope Now For Youth will be there in the year 2018. We believe every young man can go “somewhere.” We will do whatever we can to make that happen. Will you join us this year?

Roger Feenstra
Executive Director
Where Young Men Grow and Bonds of Love are Created

Mout is our part-time Hope Now staff member in Phnom Penh. In his other job he works as a free lance photographer and film director. On his off days, Mout works with Hope Now young men who have been deported and are in need of physical, emotional, and spiritual help.

This month he received an award from the National Film Festival for the Best Production Designer for a Feature Film in Cambodia.

In his younger days, Mout fell into a lifestyle that got him into trouble with the law. As he matured and grew up, he turned his life around and opened a successful barbershop in Philadelphia. It was then that immigration officers arrested him and deported him to Cambodia.

In spite of that set-back, Mout made a life for himself in his new country. Not only is he successful in life, he is married and has a three-year-old son. Mout loves to share the good news of Jesus Christ wherever he goes.

To find out more about our Cambodia work, please see our new Hope Now Cambodia Facebook page:

https://www.facebook.com/HopeNowCambodia/

25th Anniversary Banquet Next Month

Online reservations are beginning to pour in for our 25th Anniversary Banquet on February 22nd. Invitations will be in the mail soon. Look for yours and respond quickly to ensure a place. Like all our banquets, this one promises to be illuminating, uplifting, and encouraging. Will we see you there?