

STICKY RICE MINISTRY

Luang Prabang Today

A few years ago, work in Luang Prabang was extremely difficult. LAF only had a few believers scattered in rural Luang Prabang with no shepherds to care for them. When they got sick or died we had to send pastors from Vientiane to care for them.

In fact, in 2011, when our pastor went to conduct a funeral at Na Ouan Village, in Luang Prabang, he was arrested. He was kept in custody for 3 days until we could negotiate for his release. This pastor was arrested several times prior to this. He was in and out of jail for the sake of the gospel, but he counted as a privilege to share the suffering of the apostles.

The New Age Has Arrived

Then, in 2014, a young pastor graduated from Mountain View College, Philippines. He is a native of Luang Prabang. LAF decided to send him back to Luang Prabang. He became the first pastor for the whole province of Luang Prabang. Wasted no time, he established his family quickly by marrying a beautiful young lady who happened to be a daughter of a village chief. This allowed them to worship at their house without being persecuted! Then the two began to serve God together by visiting and praying for the sick and the needy. God granted power to them to heal the sick and soothe the pain of the suffering. Through their tireless work the church began to take shapes in Luang Prabang. Since then we have seen a surge of interests and opportunities as never before.

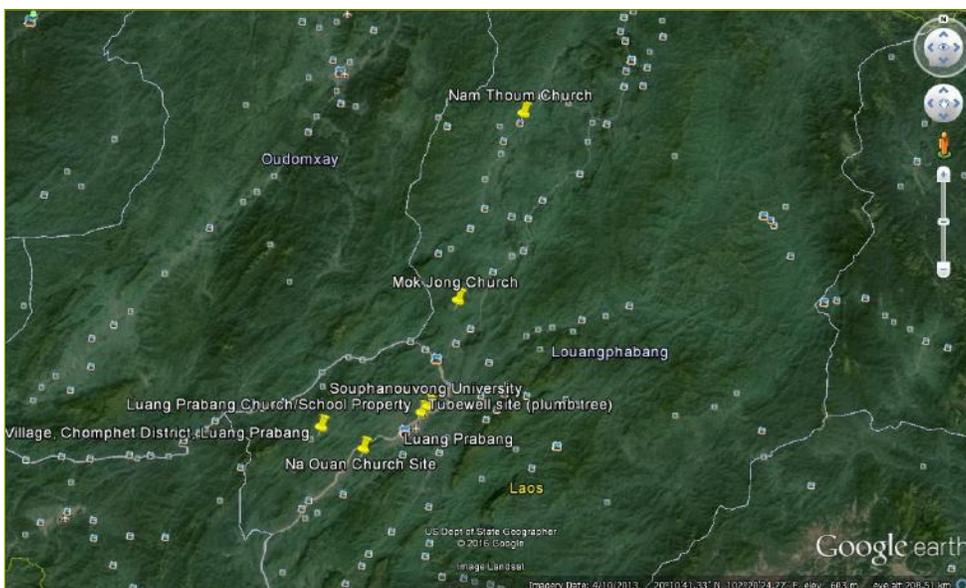
It may not make sense to many of you, but the below map shows the locations of where Adventists are in Luang Prabang Province. The distance to the furthest group of believers is about 3 hour drive from Luang Prabang City. Yet, we have only one college trained pastor for the whole province.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

—Matthew 6:19-20, ESV

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Locations of Adventist churches in Luang Prabang as of May 2016

Coincidence or Providence?

Do you think it is a coincidence? While visiting Luang Prabang April 10-17, Pastor Singkham ran out of money so he decided to stay with his friend. It also happened that a woman next door just came to visit her mother from Phongsaly Province. On Sabbath morning, Pastor Singkham overheard the woman talking on the phone saying "May God bless you." "Surely, she must be a Christian," he thought to himself. Then, around 10 am, she overheard Pastor Singkham's conversation with his companion and she suspected them of being Christians. So, she came over to investigate.

She has been a Christian for just over a year. At first, her parents rejected her. Through prayers, now, her mother also accepted the Christian faith. She completed a law degree and is waiting for a job in the police force. She is very interested in the truth as presented to her by Pastor Singkham. Please pray for this woman and her mother. If they accepted the Adventist faith they will carry the gospel back to Phongsaly Province where until now is still an unentered province for the Adventist message. Earlier, last month, we just baptized the first believer from Phongsaly. This woman could be the second believer from that province.



Luang Prabang Church Property as of February 2016

Center of Influence in Luang Prabang

Those of you who remember the story of the "Miracle Church" property that God purchased for us so cheaply in February 2015 and the "Miracle Rock" that God sent to stop Pr Bounprany's car in December 2014 will know that the Lord indeed has stepped up His work in Luang Prabang beginning in 2015.



It all happened in 2015. As you know, our work in Luang Prabang was severely limited with so many obstacles such as restrictions, persecutions, lack of human resources, and lack of facilities. We had

been searching unsuccessfully for a property since I arrived in late 2011. It was too expensive way beyond our affordability. So, in January 2015, as we were leaving Luang Prabang heading towards Xieng Khouang I disappointedly made a statement to my friend, Robin Willison, who happened to visit with me on that trip, saying, "I give up on Luang Prabang. Let's go to Xieng Khouang and work there." Then, a few minutes later our young pastor in Luang Prabang called us and said that someone was selling a land and house for \$45,000. I quickly asked him if the price is correct. A land, over 2,800 SQM and a 3 BR brick house cannot be sold for \$45,000. He must have heard it wrongly. So, he went back to ask and came back and confirm that the price was right. So, God helped us purchase that property and now it is being used as Luang Prabang City Church, Language School, and training center for lay pastors in northern provinces.

Na Ang Village as another Center of Influence

Since the first contact through the "miracle rock," Mr Bouaphanh, also the deputy village chief of Na Ang was later baptized in August 2015. Recently, he was equipped with a motorbike, donated by my friends in Australia. He has visited many villages and 5 more groups from different villages are receiving bible studies by our young pastor, Pr Singkham, our newly appointed secretary of Lao Attached Field.



God sent this woman to Pr Singkham

Please Help Build Churches in Luang Prabang

As you can see, there is no more room to squish anymore members inside this house church. A piece of land nearby the pastor's house has already been purchased by funds made available by my Darwin church members in Australia. The members have levelled the land and tried to do the fence. But more urgent matter is a place of worship, the church building.

To build an 8x12 meter cement church building with tile roof in Laos costs around \$15,000 each. With the rapid increase of membership in Luang Prabang province we do not have sufficient funds to build churches for our new members. This year, beginning on 1 May 2016, we are building a church at Na Ouan Village, funded by ASAP.

There is a need to build 2 more churches in Luang Prabang urgently: one at Nam Thouam Village and another at Na Ang Village.

At Na Ang Village there are 23 families, over 100 people, also squished in a house to worship on Sabbaths. A land was already donated to LAF ready to build a church. So, if you are able and God has blessed you and you would like to help build His places of worship in Luang Prabang please let us know.

May God bless you as you live your lives for Him, in expectation of His Soon Return, each day.



"No more room to squish in anymore" - Nam Thouam House Church as of March 2015

Nam Thouam House Church

The house church at Nam Thouam Village is fast running out of space for members to squish in during worships. This cramped worship room was photographed in March 2015. On the same day, 19 new members were added to the church through baptism. What can we do to satisfy the hunger for spirituality of these people?

Nam Thouam house church has come a long way from being severely persecuted a few years ago to explosion in membership now. Earlier the village chief used to threaten to burn down the church, but now he is a regular worshipper at the church. On that day, he even used his own truck to transport people to get baptized.



This dilemma needs to be addressed soon or we will run a risk of losing a momentum. Not just Nam Thouam house church that is facing a dilemma of no more space, the Pha Phueng house church, 15 km from Nam Thouam, is also facing a similar problem. Please pray for the Lao Attached Field (LAF) as it tries to cope with the rapid growth of interests. In Luang Prabang, the growth has really been too fast more than LAF can cope. Since 2015 hundreds of people have been asking for bible studies. Those who previously persecuted us and threatened to burn down our church have since joined us and have since proclaimed the gospel message. Others, like at Na Ang Village, have given the church their land in which we can build a church. Other villages near Na Ang Village have heard about our message have requested for bible studies and seminars. Over 300 people from 5 other villages have requested for bible studies and our health message.

Go and Heal Them

“We don’t want to go home. Just tell us more about how to live a healthy life.” These are some of the words of people in Luang Prabang. People here are sick with all kinds of diseases, mostly caused by ignorant lifestyle. Top of the list is high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diarrhea, etc... These are caused by wrong diets. Many are addicted to alcohol, other drugs, and unclean animal meat. In fact, they would eat just anything.

“Why no one told us about how to live a healthy life before?” Well, doctors cannot tell people to do what they themselves cannot do. Once Mahatma Gandhi was asked to by a concerned mother to tell her daughter to stop eating sweet candies. He told her to come back with her daughter in two weeks’ time. After two weeks, the mother brought back her daughter to him again. This time, Mahatma Gandhi called the girl to him and told her to stop eating sweet candies. The mother was puzzled and she asked why Mahatma Gandhi did not tell her daughter to stop eating sweet candies two weeks ago when she requested him to then. Mahatma Gandhi smiled and answered the concerned mother, “You see, two weeks ago when you asked me to tell your daughter to stop eating sweet candies, I also ate sweet candies too. I could not tell your daughter to stop eating candies when I myself still ate candies. Now, that I have stopped eating candies I can tell your daughter to stop eating candies too.”



People are so eager to learn through the night



While their parents paid attention to the health lectures and refused to go home the kids could no longer keep their eyes open. So they slumped into sleep.

Yet, the people wanted more. So, they requested us to come back again to give them another chance for a better and healthier life.



Song Lee and his family—Pastor of Nam Thouam/Pha Pheung Churches

Pastor Song Lee is busy preaching and sharing the word of God. So many people would like to be free from the bondage of Satan. They have now realized that life under Satan’s rule only leads to doom and destruction. You see, Hmong people are animists. They have been worshipping all kinds of spirits, including their ancestral spirits. In their religious system there are shamans who would conduct religious ceremonies for all aspects of life, from birth to death, including wedding, healing, and funeral. Of all these ceremonies animal offerings and sacrifices are required by the shamans. People, who are already poor, often become poorer as they not only have to feed their family members, but also the spirits who often demand offerings and sacrifices beyond their affordability.

Furthermore, their old traditional religion does not offer hope beyond the graves. In reality, people worship the spirits in exchange for healing and often out of fear of punishments for noncompliance. Many times, the spirits would demand different kinds of offerings and sacrifices and when people could not supply according the demands they would cause illnesses and even death to the noncompliant persons. Therefore, when some Hmong people who had decided to give their lives to Jesus found true freedom from the bondage of Satan others were curious to know what would happen to them. The Christians found hope of eternal life in Jesus. They would belong to the family of Jesus and receive love and care from their fellow believers, the things that were lacked in their traditional religion. They no longer have to live in fear, but in the love of the Father—their God.

As more Hmong people in Nam Thouam Village embraced the gospel message as preached to them by Pastor Song Lee his house, which has limited space, can no longer accommodate all worshippers during Sabbath worship. Would it be nice if we can help them have a proper place of worship? A church building can be built with around \$15,000. Embarrassed to say, but the infant Lao Church (LAF) does not have this fund. So, we appeal to you all, our brothers and sisters in the world. If the Lord speaks to your hearts and if you are able please help us build this church for the Hmong people at Nam Thouam Village. Nam Thouam church, once completed, can become a place of worship, not just for the people in this village, but also other villages nearby. Currently, we already have members in another village around 30 minute drive from there. Those members also have no place of worship. And they are growing out of the house church fast as well. But, at least let’s get Nam Thouam Church built first.



Pastor Tong Thor baptized more members at Na Ang Village

Na Ang House Church on Fire

Recent baptisms at Na Ang Village have caused problems to the Lao Church. One of the problems is that the house where they worship can no longer accommodate everyone. The house that was built to accommodate one family, now has to accommodate 23 families, more than 100 people.



Pastor Singkham gives bible study at Houay Seng Village



Pastor Singkham gives bible study at Khoksavang Village



Pastor Singkham gives bible study at Houay Thak Village



Pastor Singkham gives bible study at Houay Khan Village



Recent baptism of 23 people, more to come soon

Using health approach and bible studies Pastor Sing Kham attracted a lot of people's interest to learn more and to know more about this God who loves and cares for the poor people.

During his last visit, April 10-17, Pastor Singkham conducted health seminars and bible studies in several villages apart from Na Ang. Other people said how come the Na Ang people are blessed with better health and lifestyle? We want to be blessed as well. So, at their requests, Pastor Singkham had to spend time teaching and preaching at 5 other villages as well, namely Houay Seng, Khoksavang, Houay Thak, Houay Khan, and Na Lae. Following are photos of Pastor Singkham's teaching in those villages.

We now have a big problem. Our Na Ang house church is too full. We need to build a church for them. A piece of land has been donated. We need another \$15,000 to build a church at Na Ang. Who would like to help us build this church? It will be used as the mother church for these 5 other churches. Thank you in advance for your help.



Pastors and Church Leaders in Laos at recent Bible Conference, 22-23 April 2016

3rd Bible Conference in Laos

April 22-23, 2016, 43 LAF pastors and church leaders are blessed with the 3rd Bible Conference organized by a team from GC, SSD, and SAUM, led by Dr Michael Campbell. The theme for this year's Bible Conference is "Discovering God's Call to Mission." It was a wonderful experience for all who were present at the conference. The rich biblical gourmet as presented by different presenters truly uplifted the spirit of service and dedication of our Lao workers.



Dr Willie Hucks gives presentation on Church and Spiritual Leadership



Sabbath Worship during the Bible Conference in a rented place, Vientiane, Laos

On Sabbath, 23 April 2016, we were able to gather at a rented place for worship to enjoy the spiritual food. Dr Willie Hucks shared with the Vientiane Church members on the need to have a close walk with Jesus before going out to preach the gospel message. Dr Hucks challenged over 200 worshippers that the most important thing for spiritual leaders is not so much what we do for Jesus but our relationship with Him rather. His sermon was based on Mark 3:13,14. The apostles were chosen by Jesus first to BE with Him and then to GO out to preach the gospel. Therefore, spiritual leaders—all Christians—are to be with Jesus daily before they can preach about Him.

In the afternoon, many church members in Vientiane still stayed behind to feast on the biblical gourmet presented by Dr Michael Campbell on Biblical Preaching and by Dr Cristian Dumistrescu on Shame and Honor.



Dr Michael Campbell shares about Biblical Preaching



Dr Cristian Dumistrescu shares about Shame and Honor



Vientiane church members enjoy bible conference in the afternoon of 23 April 2016

It was really an eye opening to many people to hear about the shame and honor in different cultures. The ultimate shame though is sin. To cover this shame God had to kill a lamb and covered the shame for Adam and Eve. God has now made available through Jesus a garment to cover our shame. Do you need one? Let us know if you need one.