

# STICKY RICE MINISTRY

Lao Attached Field Newsletter

April 2016

## LIVING WATERS ACADEMY



The Adventist message was first brought to Laos in 1957 by Pastor Dick Hall and his then young wife, Jean Hall. Unfortunately, they were able to work for only 3.5 years and had to be evacuated from Laos due to the Indochina War. Most of the early church members were also relocated to safer areas near the borders with Thailand. Since then the very few young in faith remnant church members were left without a shepherd until the Southeast Asia Union Mission (SAUM) resumed its involvement in Laos again in the late 1990s.

Truly, the Lao SDA Church has just begun to take shape 10 years ago, 2006, when the first Lao theology graduate from the then Mission College became the pastor of the Vientiane Church and the Laos Attached Field (LAF) president. Indeed, the new Lao SDA Church was born with him. Without education the Lao Mission Field wouldn't have begun to take its first breath yet. As of today, April 2016, 7 more theology graduate pastors have joined the Lao Church. In fact, 5 of them have just joined the church 2 years ago. Again, I emphasize that without education the future of the Lao Church will still remain in the dark. This highlights how essential education is for the future survival of the Lao SDA Church.

Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." I agree with Mandela that if we are to present the gospel message in Laos and to give its people a better life, eternal life, it is absolutely important that the Lao Church have an Adventist Academy. The counsel of the Lord and history tell us that if we would like to have a strong and committed workforce we will need to train up our children when they are still young (Proverbs 22, 6, cf. Deuteronomy 6). Malcolm Forbes also added that "The purpose of education is to replace an empty mind with an open one." Indeed, there are millions of empty minds in Laos that need to be opened.

At the moment, the Laos SDA Church still does not have a solid foundation. Not until it can establish its own Adventist Academy and train up its young people. The academy, once established, will become a power house for the Lao Church. It will become a place where young Adventists can receive holistic Christian education and solid spiritual nourishment. These young people will go on become

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*"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."*

*- Proverbs 22:6, ESV*

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**The 25 hectare (62 acre) Lao Living Waters Academy Land as seen during the driest season of the year**

leaders of the church in the future. At the same time, other young people can come for missionary vocational training. The idea of setting up an academy far away from the cities to provide protection for our young ones from the temptations of the cities and train them up in the way of God is supported by our church prophet and pioneer, Mrs Ellen G. White. She said, "Let men of sound judgement be appointed, not to publish abroad their intentions, but to search for such properties in the rural districts, in easy access to the cities, suitable for small training schools for workers, and where facilities may also be provided for treating the sick and weary souls who know not the truth. Look for such places just out from the large cities, where suitable buildings may be secured, either as a gift from the owners or purchased at a reasonable price by the gifts of our people. Do not erect buildings in the noisy cities."--*Evangelism*, 77 (1909).

Lao Attached Field has identified the above mentioned land in the outskirts of Vientiane City, at the foot of the Phou Khao Khwai Biodiversity National Park, about 70 kilometres (43.5 miles) from Vientiane City. The land is suitable for farming as it has plenty of water all year round. It is also surrounded by nature and suitable for health centre. In fact, there are two waterfalls, one just 1 mile away from the academy land and another is just next to it. The two waterfalls draw hundreds of tourists to it each day. Just imagine that each day, hundreds of local tourists who come to the waterfalls would have passed by our facilities and learned about us and what we can offer them, hope, good health, and better life. The land is far away from the city, yet it is located in a place that will draw people to it.

This piece of land, 25 hectares (62 acres) is large enough for many Adventist institutions: academy, health centre, vocational & missionary training centre, agricultural school, retirement vil-



**The waterfall near the academy land (driest season)**



**Another Waterfall & pool adjacent to the academy land**

lage, and camping ground. The owner of the land is wanting \$150,000 for it. We have surveyed around and found that the lands in the area were sold at that price or even higher. Really, this land is best suitable for our purpose. Our future, the future of the Lao Church, depends on securing this land and make it a centre of training and centre of influence. It is located away from

the city yet it draws people to it by the hundreds each day.

LAF has secured pledges from donors an amount of \$50,000 already. We urgently need another \$100,000 to secure this piece of land before someone else snatches away from our hands again. So, please pray for us as we step out in faith to establish an Adventist Academy in Laos to prepare a workforce for the Lord's vineyard in Laos.

Thank you for your prayers and support to the Lord's work in Laos, especially your help in the establishment of the Lao Living Waters Academy for the future of our Lao church and children.

## FIRST BAPTISM IN OUDOMXAY



**Mr Khamman Sengmany baptized on 26 March 2016**

On January 20, 2016, LAF sent a missionary to Oudomxay province in a hope to take the gospel to the people of Oudomxay and neighbouring provinces. Two months after, on 26 March 2016, the first person, Mr Khamman Sengmany, accepted the gospel message and gave his life to Jesus in baptism.

While the baptism of Mr Khamman is wonderful the way God led Mr Khamman to Himself is even more amazing. In order to reach Mr Khamman God reached his young brother, Mr Nat, first. Mr Nat found Jesus when he came to study in Vientiane. It was through the work of Pastor Saisavanh Phouliphan who opened an English language tutoring program at his aunt's house for the college students nearby. Mr Nat came to study English with Pastor Saisavanh and as a result he got more than English language skills, but he also found Jesus as his personal Saviour. Mr Nat was baptized in the Vientiane Church in October 2015. Excited about his new found faith he returned to Oudomxay and witnessed to his family that Jesus is God and Saviour of mankind.

It happened that our pastor was sent to Oudomxay so his brother came to study about God with the pastor. He was so much interested in reading the bible and learning about God that he decided to do a Marathon bible study. A Marathon bible study is done when a person lives far away from the missionary house and the distance does not allow frequent visits to give bible study. So, it is done both day and night lasts for a few days. In this case, Mr Khamman has received bible study from 23 to 28 March 2016

and was baptized on 26 March 2016.

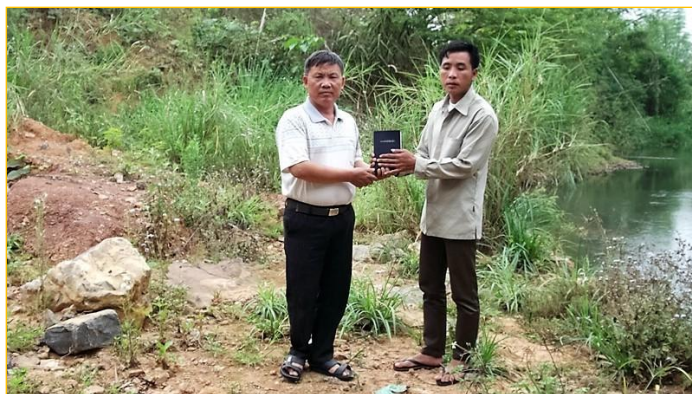


Now, here in Vientiane, during the 2016 Lao Youth Camp, on the same day, 26 March 2016, another family member of Mr Khamman, his sister, was also baptized. She was among the 8 youth who were baptized on that day.



**Mr Khamman's sister, Miss Dao, is also baptized on 26 March**

Mr Khamman has received a copy of the bible and he will continue to read it in his home and witness to his family and his fellow Khmu in his village.



It is expected that more members of Mr Khamman's family will eventually accepted the gospel message soon. The trend is that more and more Khmu in Laos are embracing the Adventist message. The challenge for us is how we can minister to them all. There is a real need to send bright and committed Khmu young people to study theology and come back to minister to their own people. Please help us pray that we can find scholarships to prepare young Khmu for future ministries in Laos. Two young Khmu have been identified and ready to go to study. One has been sponsored, but another is yet to receive a scholarship. Thank you for praying for our Khmu people in Laos

## MORE KHMU ACCEPTING JESUS



The first Khmu SDA Church in Laos, South Thong Namee, Borikhamxay Province

Thong Namee Village is a very large village of Pakkading District, Borikhamxay Province, just 200 km south of Vientiane Capital. The Adventist Church of Laos has two churches in this village, one for the Hmong and another for the Khmu. Both churches still do not have pastors. They are being cared for by lay leaders.

We sincerely hope that one day, in the near future, there will be college trained pastors ministering to these churches. Some of you may argue that there is no need for college trained pastors to care for these churches, but lay pastors are just efficient as trained pastors. I do not disrespect the ability of our lay pastors, especially in the developed countries, to minister to God's people. However, in Laos, we have experienced many problems with strange beliefs and heresies. When our local leaders are not deep rooted in our faith it is quite easy for heretic beliefs to creep in, especially when they are appealing to traditional, cultural, social, and emotional senses of the people. When heresies are not dealt with immediately and effectively they take roots deep in the hearts of people and gain strength in practices. It becomes very difficult to deal with. It often resulted in a split or dead of the congregations.

Therefore, there is a real need to train up pastors for different ethnics. In Laos, we are determined to train pastors for each ethnic of our believers. Currently, we have believers among the Lao, the Hmong, the Khmu, the Ta Oi, the Ya Hern, the Ngae, the Tai Dam, the Phou Noi of Phongsaly, and more. Some ethnics, we have yet to have pastors for them.

Elsewhere, in Xayaboury Province, a recently established group led by a retired medical Khmu doctor, Dr Somdy, has also grown out of the living room of his house. There is also



a need to enlarge his living room to accommodate more worshippers. Pr Singkham, our secretary, is heading there today, Thursday, 7 April 2016, week to give bible studies and to baptize new believers. Please watch out for the next report when more details about what God has done among the Khmu will be fully revealed. Please also pray for Pr Singkham's efforts and his safety as he travels there and back.

# WITNESS TO THE BUDDHIST MONKS



Pastor Bounprany Vannady, LAF president, gave presentation about Adventist beliefs to Buddhist monks at Wat Ongtue Mahaviharn, Buddhist University of Laos. The program was organized by the Lao Front for National Construction (LFNC). It was part of the government efforts to create better understanding among religious organizations in Laos.

Pastor Bounprany presented the truth at the hall of the Buddhist University to around 50 Buddhist scholars who were very interested to learn about our faith. Being a former Buddhist monk himself Pastor Bounprany was able to relate to the monks very well. The atmosphere was very amicable.

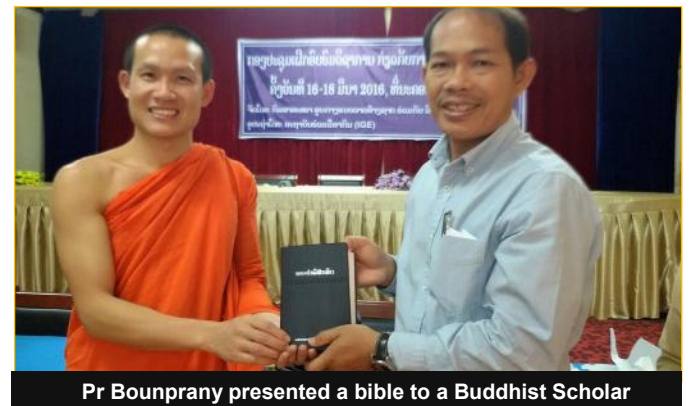
He presented that the Buddha also predicted about the first coming of Jesus. It was believed that the Buddha once talked about the coming Messiah who would bring equality among humankind. The, he shared with them more about Jesus. He emphasized the similarities between the teaching of both Jesus and Buddha. After establishing similarities then he presented the unique doctrines of Adventism.

On the topic of Creation, he asked them if they knew how the world was created? Then, he shared with them about the record of the Bible on creation. Genesis 1 said that at the beginning there was void and God created the world out of nothing. The monks were interested in reading the bible. He gave them his personal bible, but they all wanted one. So, he called the Lao Bible society and the bible society donated 50 bibles to the monks and Buddhist scholars. They also kept some bibles in the university library for other Buddhist scholars to read.

So impressed with what he taught them they invited him to go

back to present our faith at the Buddhist university again. This time, he plans to take the books "Steps to Christ" to give to them as well.

The last day of presentation, 5 monks came to talk to him personally. They asked if they wanted to come to our church will we accept them? Pr Bounprany told them that in the past there were some monks who came to worship in our church. So, they are welcome to come and worship with us. They were so excited that our church welcomes them to worship with us even as they still dress in their orange saffron. In the past, there were many misunderstandings and suspicions between the Buddhists and Christians. This warm atmosphere and friendship mark the beginning of tolerance and cooperation for the betterment of Lao society. Who knows the seeds that Pr Bounprany has scattered will one day grow into big trees of faith. Please continue to pray for our work in Laos. We need to try different methods and use unconventional approaches in order to reach to different peoples of Laos.



Pr Bounprany presented a bible to a Buddhist Scholar

# LAO YOUTH CAMP IN VIENTIANE



A bible study station at the Vientiane Lao Youth Camp

A few years ago, it would be unthinkable to hold a Christian youth camp in Laos. Each year, LAF used to send a few of its youth, as many as it could afford, to join youth camps in Thailand. Since 2015, LAF was able to hold its own youth camp in Laos. Thanks to a few privately sponsored graduated young pastors from Mountain View College, Philippines, who have just recently joined us since 2014. These pastors came with good experience in youth ministry and were keen to put into practice what they had learned. In addition, we are grateful to our foreign members who are working in Laos for bringing their expertise in Youth Ministry to help out at the camp.

Over 100 Lao youth from all parts of Laos gathered together at a campsite in Vientiane between Friday, 25 and 27 March 2016. Many came with empty stomach as some of them just arrived in Vientiane on Friday morning. They were all transported to the campsite which is just a few kilometres from the National University. Pastor Singkham Phouliphanh, LAF secretary and former LAF Youth director, personally cooked noodles soup for his young people. Everybody enjoyed their noodles so much that some even licked their fingers. Overall, it is the spiritual food that the youth really enjoyed most. The spiritual and social activities were so effective that on Sunday, 27 March 2016, 8 youth decided to give their lives to Jesus in baptism.

Most importantly, these youth have come to know Jesus through the contacts of our language schools and the care of our Adventist youth. And more significantly, two of the youth who were baptized on that day are from unentered provinces like Oudomxay and Phongsaly. I can see that God has opened the door to these two provinces for us to enter.

On this day, the seed of the gospel has been sown and germinated in two unentered provinces, Oudomxay and Phongsaly. Please pray that they will grow in faith and take the gospel back



Pr Bounprany, LAF President, instructing baptismal candidates



The first Adventist from Phongsaly Province

to their respective provinces. LAF has a plan to start a vocational missionary training program, Lao Adventist Missionary Program (LAMP). We will train local missionaries in trades like sewing, hairdressing, motorcycle mechanic, mobile phone repair, and so on. Equipped with these skills and rooted in solid biblical understanding we believe that they will become tent making missionaries in their own homeland.