

# The Journey To Laos

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## Who Is God?

*Tsuchue & Joua Vang*



ABOVE: PASTOR  
TONGPAO THAO

BELOW: BAPTISM



Above: New Church  
building B Phaxanh.  
Below: Evangelism team  
and Mrs. Tongpao Thao



In 1975 the Vietnam War turned Laos upside down forcing people to find refuge in Thailand. Many of those who fled had to leave their families behind to hide in the jungles of Laos.

Tongpao Thao and his wife were left to hide in the jungles of Laos with his aging mother. They moved down from village to village in hopes of one day getting to the Mekong River, where they could possibly reunite with his sibling in Thailand. As time passed, his mother became weaker and requested they settle in one place before she left the world. As a result Tongpao's family settled in Ban Nongxay, 32 Kilometers from the Mekong River, where she lived her last days. Following his mother's death in 1990, Tongpao became very sick. Constant nose bleeds weakened his health, leaving him unable to work in the field, and provide for his family. They had no other income and were looked down by the people in their village because they had become so poor. In desperate need of health care, Tongpao contacted the most feared shaman in the village. The shaman told him to sacrifice a calf, pig and dog to redeem his soul from hell or else he'd lose his life. At that very instant, a powerful voice came upon him and said, "The devil does not love you, he is punishing you." He thought to himself, "Could this be from God?". He could not forget the voice that spoke to him. He realized he didn't want to suffer anymore and desired to become a follower of Jesus Christ.

Soon after Tongpao's wife found a deacon located two hours away in the village of Ban Phouphiang, the deacon converted his family to Christianity. The next day his nose bleeds stopped, his eyes cleared, his hearing improved, and he gained his strength back. ***This is the power of Christ Jesus, his love is amazing!***

Later that year limited farmland forced Tongpao's family to move to Ban Phaxanh. During that time, constant pressure from his family and culture brought them back to Shamanism. After many difficulties in Ban Phaxanh, Tongpao made his way back to the deacon that converted his family and confessed his sins. He realized that he could not hide from God anymore and now understood that God was truly protecting him every step of the way, waiting patiently until Tongpao was ready for his everlasting embrace. *Continue on page 2*

## Who Is God? *Continue from page 1*

### Special Thanks to

- \* *River Hill UMC, Burnsville, MN (covenant)*
- \* *The Two Yang families from Hmong Asbury UMC, St. Paul, MN (youth and building)*

### Focus

- Pray for churches struggling in Laos
- Women Seed project \$300 per family 20 families is need
- Bibles, Hymns-cassette recordings, and ministry materials
- Pray for six Bible students to Bible college Thailand in 2007
- Lay preachers Bible training
- Children ministries (orphan)
- New church building permission

In 2001 Tongpao attended the LUMC Bible Leadership and Discipleship Training in Vientiane. Today, under his leadership alongside Pastor Pao Her, they are one of the strongest ethnic LUMC's in Laos. What started out as one congregation in Ban Phaxanh has become 14 and continues to expand to surrounding provinces.

His love and commitment to our dear Lord has encouraged his two children to follow in his footsteps; in 2007 they will be studying at Phayao Bible College in Thailand. They want nothing but to serve the Lord and hope to spread God's ministries to those that haven't been exposed to Christianity.

"I am blessed by the grace of God and I am continually amazed by the power of his love. I know that with every baptism and family converted to Christianity, his angels are celebrating with me and smiling down from Heaven. I am tireless because he fulfills me." - *Tongpao Thao*

*As Missionaries to Laos we come to you for financial support, please selecting one of these vital mission projects:*

- (1) Covenant relationship advance # 15074Z or # 15073Z*
- (2) Programs support advance # 14927A or # 14926A*

### The Future of LUMC

There are 55 lay preachers/local pastors that oversee 60 congregations in Laos. None of these leaders have a Bible college degree or high school degree, 73% have only been through grade school. This is a major issue of the LUMC that must be addressed in order for the LUMC to have a successful future.

Under the Mission Initiative and the LUMC, a few young adults consisting of two females and four males were given the opportunity to take Bible courses. The Lao government responded by prohibiting these courses from being taught in Laos. Fortunately, the Mission Initiative has negotiated with Phayao Bible College to allow the six students to attend the college in 2007.

The goal for the LUMC is to have these six students grow into energized and well-equipped Bible leaders that will lead the LUMC far into the future.

The total annual tuition for the six students attending Phayao Bible College will be \$3,600.00 per year. For one student, the annual tuition cost will be \$600.00, this mission project is extremely important to the future of LUMC and we need your help in fulfilling the dreams and destinies of these six young students and the LUMC. To sponsor for a student is cost \$600.00 per year. Please consider this as a mission project for you or your church. Sponsorship for these students is greatly needed and will be deeply appreciated. Thank you for everything, and God bless!

*Below: New family brought to Christ*

