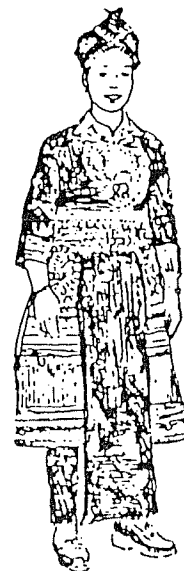


**Our
World Mission
At Home**



By Loren E. Steele



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"Some time ago, when we lived in Laos, the Vietnamese came to shoot at us so we ran to live in the jungle. We didn't have any food to eat. We were very hungry. We ate only bamboo shoots and tree shoots, the leaves of vines and the leaves of trees. We couldn't stay there anymore so we ran to the banks of the Mekong River. Then we swam across the river to Thailand. The Thai didn't love the Hmong, and the Hmong were very poor. We thought and thought about our lives and our hearts were broken, so we went to be interviewed, and we came to America. We came here but we don't know our future, whether it will be good or bad."

11-year-old Sao Vue
Hmong.

"Since the separation from my family I have lived a nightmare of misery and sadness. I have been through so much, no one understands me. What shall I do? What shall I do? I clench my fists and bite my lips: I must get through, somehow."

18-year-old Eng Hoa
Cambodian.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Jesus Christ
Savior of the World.



PROBLEMS IN EVANGELIZING SOUTHEAST ASIAN IMMIGRANTS

By Loren Steele
1988

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Due in great measure to the encouragement and shouldering of an additional workload on the part of my associate, Rev. Fred Kogler, I have had the unique opportunity to do extensive evangelism in the Hmong and Cambodian communities. With the wise council of Fred and the opportunity to "go forth" I have stumbled through the beginning efforts of a mission which I believe must continue to be carried out.

It has been the request of the Essay Committee that I present an informational paper on this mission effort. In particular I was asked to give the body some understanding of the peculiar problems encountered in our efforts to reach the Southeast Asian peoples with the Gospel. In order to draw you into the realities of this "World Mission At Home," I will be sharing with you a number of actual experiences.

My hope is that this paper will give you three things:

1. INFORMATION about Emanuel's "World Mission At Home."
2. ENCOURAGEMENT to continue your own mission endeavors, in spite of the problems you encounter.
3. APPLICATIONS to the ever changing "American" mission scene that you face.



THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN EXPERIENCE

Mai looked up from the rice she was helping plant. Above her, soft white clouds floated by, and below, off the sloping mountainside stretched an endless undulating sea of emerald green forest. Around her worked her sisters, cousins, mother, and grandmother. In her own words Mai was siah yuag, "tall and skinny" for a Hmong woman. She was already taller than her mother at age twelve.

A dirt clod landed near her feet, breaking into her reverie. Mai looked up into the laughing face of Za, her best friend.

"What are you thinking about?" Za asked. "Your father's new horse?"

Mai smiled, "The future. What will happen in our future."

"Don't be silly. You already know that. Your father will agree to sell you for...oh, I think you are worth ONLY two silver bars," she teased. "Who'd pay more for a wife who gazes at the clouds and thinks of the future when she is supposed to work. Maybe your father will sell you soon to get rid of a lazy daughter who eats like a boy and still stays too skinny. Anyway, like your mother and all girls, you will have many children and go to work just as we are today. Life never changes."

Mai's brow wrinkled. "I know," she said, returning to her work, "But, I had a dream..."

No dream could have prepared Mai for the events spiraling in on her over the next fifteen years. Her peaceful mountain village

would become a blazing battleground. She would be forced to watch as her brothers were murdered. Her father would be killed in battle serving for the United States C.I.A. She herself would be raped by soldiers. Mai would marry a soldier who would die of disease in a Thai refugee camp.

There, in Thailand, she would be faced with a terrifying choice, starve or immigrate to the USA. She immigrated. Here, unable to speak the language, haunted by memories of three children dying of starvation, she'd face her new life with five living children to care for. At age thirty she'd be "too old" to remarry, and thus be condemned by her culture to a life of loneliness. Overwhelmed by the quantum leap from a stone age culture into the twentieth century, and by all that life had brought her, she would suffer depression and severe headaches for years. Alone, she would shed her tears at night while fear, despair, and hopelessness gripped her heart.

But a day would come when a spark of hope would be kindled in her breast. A spark that would slowly grow into a flame that would light her path to eternal life. That flame would be Jesus Christ!

THE URGENCY OF THIS MINISTRY

One might ask the question, "Why is the Hmong ministry being highlighted today and not another?" With each one of our ministries vitally important, why single out one ministry for discussion? There are several reasons. First, it's unique. Second, few realize it's going on. Third, hearing about this ministry may encourage you to look around for the unique opportunity God has given you in your particular area. And fourth, there is a particular urgency in Hmong evangelism. ~~This~~ ⁷⁷¹⁵ time is NOW! If these people are not evangelized in the next five to ten years the open door will be slammed shut with a resounding bang.

What makes Hmong evangelism so urgent? Their hearts are ripe for it! They have been refined by the Lord in the furnace of heartbreak. Much of their life has been soaked in suffering and witnessing the most heinous atrocities. The scar tissue on their minds is still red and tender. And, with their arrival in the U.S. has come a cultural shock beyond belief. A mountain tribe people has suddenly been plunged into the midst of fast paced twentieth century living. Cars, time, dates, light switches, toilets, packaged foods, and book learning are things the Hmong never imagined in their most extravagant day dreams.

These people have come to America staggering under the blows of

the past and stumbling under the weighty problems of adopting new language. Typically, after six or eight months, most of those people begin to realize they can survive in America, and this gives them time to think. It's then that they begin a period of depression and introspection, asking themselves: "What is life all about? What does the future hold for me? Why is there war, death, and sickness?" Their native religion, Animism, cannot give them the answers to these nagging questions. They're a people who are groping and searching, more open to new ideas than they ever will be again. They are ripe for the Gospel.

But soon ripeness will turn to rottenness. In five to ten years the pain and memories will have lessened, and they will have learned what life is all about by American standards and be striving full bore to get it - more money, new cars, a cottage at the lake, and a bigger home. Then they will be full-fledged Americans, and then it will be too late!

It will be too late for this special reason, - oriental cultures have a tendency to adopt Western ways, yet seal themselves off from Western influence, especially as regards religion. Think of Chinatown in many major U.S. cities. Or read the mission updates from our full time Asian missionaries. A single conversion in Japan is big news. The May C.P.S. Update regaled us with the grand news that eight Chinese were attending a Bible Class. Right now, due, I believe, to God's preparation of hearts in the furnace of heartbreak, this Hmong oriental culture is not as sealed off as it soon will be. Working only part time at this ministry for a little over one year, we find ourselves with the opportunity to share the Word of God regularly with nearly seventy-five men, women, and children. Many of these people have already made a solid commitment to Emanuel Lutheran Church.

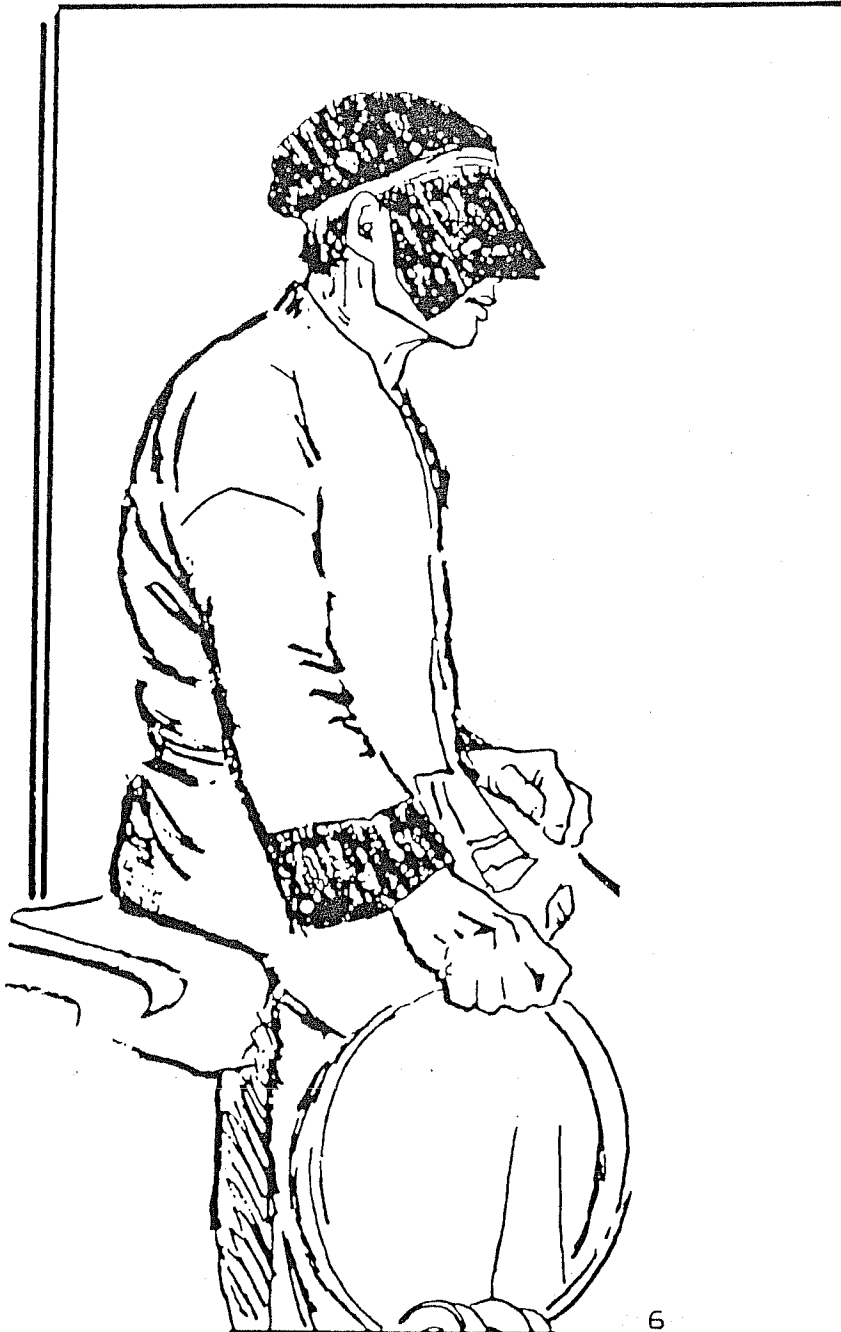
It appears that we are only at the beginning. What lies ahead we cannot predict. But with over 28,000 Southeast Asians living in the Twin Cities, and hundreds more arriving monthly, an opportunity exists that was not available ten years ago, and will not be available ten years down the road. The time is NOW!

A WORLD MISSION AT HOME

As one begins to understand the urgency of this ministry the very uniqueness of it begins to be comprehended. This is NOT the normal neighborhood mission outreach. It is a foreign mission field located in our own backyard. And with it comes all the problems of foreign mission work. These problems are what I have been asked to share with you today.

PROBLEM ONE: THE CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

When one steps into the Asian culture he comes as an outsider. Behind the graciousness lies a mind set and experiential difference that compares with nothing we have ever met. The reverse is also true. And the Gospel we bring is so far removed from anything in their experience, so foreign to their culture, that it comes under immediate suspicion. Where does one begin when he steps into a situation like this:



At my knock a dusky skinned girl, with her long black hair knotted on the top of her head, opened the door a crack. We don't know each other and she hesitates.

"I'm Pastor Steele," I explain in Hmong. "I'm a friend of Pa Ma Yang's." My use of Hmong surprised and impressed her favorably. And, if I'm "ok" with Pa Ma, I'm "ok" to let in.

"Yes, come in please."

Inside the ghetto apartment there was no furniture at all except a soiled and lumpy mattress laying directly in the middle of the living room floor. On it lay a woman, obviously very sick. Beside her, kneeling on the bare floor was a "shaker" woman. The aged shaker drew back as I stepped forward and knelt beside the prone figure.

"Koj lub npe hu li cas?" (What is your name?), I asked.

"Kue," came the weak reply.

"Koj puas mob?" (Are you sick?),

"Kuv muaj mob taubhau." (I have a very bad headache)

"How long has she been this way?" I asked the girl.

"Five days."

"What is SHE doing?" I nodded toward the shaker.

"She is chasing out the spirit of Kou's husband," the girl explained. Kou's husband died two years ago, in Thailand. He wants his wife to join him in the land of the spirits. His spirit comes to her and makes her sick so she will give up the land of the living and come into the land of the spirits with him. When the old lady drives out the spirit, Kue will be well."

"Lord," I groaned. "They didn't teach me anything about this at Sem! You have brought me here to offer these people eternal life. I'm facing the devil's servant in the flesh. I'm the intruder here. WHAT AM I TO DO???"

Bumping into shaman (witch doctors) shakers, and the superstitious beliefs resulting from their work is not all uncommon. They are here and their influence is powerful! Their powers of healing and magic are a formidable force to contend with. To the shaman, Christianity is suspect, even dangerous, since it leads people away from the "old ways." The shaman's influence extends even to those not strongly attached to spirit

worship. Those on the fringes, that would be interested in hearing about Jesus, often dare not break with the old ties for fear they will not be accepted by other family members. Hmong culture is strongly family oriented, and in this new and "foreign" land, family is the one thing that helps a refugee hang on to his sanity. To be ostracized from family would be a burden almost impossible for the newcomer to bear! Those coming to faith have a great need of mutual support and fellowship with each other.

Shamanism is an aggressively hostile cultural barrier. But the non-aggressive barriers can cause great problems too. One that comes instantly to mind is the language barrier.

PROBLEM TWO: THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

The highest and most solid wall standing between us and the Southeast Asian refugees is the language barrier. Cultural differences are bad enough. But when you can't speak the language, all communication stops.

Imagine yourself sitting in the home of a Cambodian family. In every fiber of your being you desire to share the Gospel with the people who have gathered. The family is willing to listen. You've been offered the one chair in the house and the family is sitting around you on the floor, all primed and ready. But beyond polite formalities you can't speak their language. Buddha seems to be laughing at you as he smiles down from the many posters covering the walls. And you pray again, "Lord, help me communicate!"

What does one do? I've tried all kinds of things to pole vault over the language barrier, none too successfully. As a former artist, I take a drawing pad and draw out much of what I'm trying to explain. In situations where I know the people and have an "in", I plan ahead. I can either bring a translator with me, or, I can bring a Cambodian (or Hmong) Bible, locate passages I want, and have one person read aloud. The entire presentation then, is based almost solely on a logically ordered series of readings from the Bible.

But on purely first step evangelism calls, knocking on doors cold, the language barrier is a tough hurdle to vault over. You can't even get acquainted so that you can make a repeat call. And what do you do with the people who come to church and can't understand most of what's said?

We are currently using a number of solutions. Translators for both Hmong and Cambodian Bible Classes, a Hmong language worship service is in the works, and I am learning the Hmong language.

But even an intensive course doesn't make one a Hmong speaker for Bible classes and worship services.

The Hmong language stems from Chinese, and it is very difficult for Westerners to learn. Hmong is tonal and some words are almost impossible to distinguish from others tonally. But the Hmong do. I use every opportunity to practice my limited Hmong language skills, even with Hmong who have some command of English. But in spite of practice it's very easy to make some grand mistakes.

I remember with a red face one communication slip in a conversation with a woman named Ly Lee.

You have to know, that of all the different Asians, Hmong women are most endowed by the Creator with the physical equipment necessary for nursing the many children they bear. Ly Lee is no exception. During the course of this conversation I looked directly at this well endowed woman and in my best Hmong said, "I want to tell you about a nice big person..." When I had gone about that far Ly Lee got a rather startled look on her face and covered her mouth with her hand (Hmong women tend to do this when they are having a "shy" laugh). I knew by her gesture that something must be amiss. Seems I had gotten everything almost right. The word "me", means "person", or, with a slightly different intonation (miv), it means woman's breast. I had just looked Ly Lee in the eye and told her she had "nice big breasts!"

PROBLEM THREE: THE HIDDEN HEART

Oriental stoicism basically prohibits the showing of emotions, other than joy, to outsiders. Whatever is going on inside their heart is carefully hidden. By being "American" I have some idea of what "Americans" are thinking. But what are the Hmong thinking? What is their true reaction to a Gospel presentation? What hurts them inside? How does one find an exposed nerve to clamp the Law and Gospel onto?

Time seems to be the only way to find the answers to such questions. By it I gain experience. And through it I gain opportunities. If you are with a person often enough they are bound to become relaxed with you. Then, sometime, you'll be there when they reveal their hidden heart. May Vang is a vivid example of being there at the right time.



I first met May while talking to her aunt. She rushed in the door from college, crashed down her books and went upstairs. I asked, "Who was that?" and Mao explained that May was living with them, and we went back to our original discussion. But as I went to their home again and again I bumped into May on many occasions. I came to know her as a pretty twenty-three year old who seemed to have the world by the tail. Fluent in English, successful in college, she didn't seem to have a care in the world, or the least need of Jesus. I simply couldn't find a way to get into the depths of her heart.

Over the months, May and I developed a friendly relationship. I was instantly welcomed into the home of Mao and May by both adults and children. But I still hadn't made much spiritual progress. One day I decided to stop by again. May was home alone, caring for Mao's children when I knocked and was welcomed in. May has a delightful sense of humor and we often poked fun at one another. Attempting to turn the conversation to spiritual things I said in a mock hurt tone, "I think you don't like me. You never come to church." May is Americanized enough to recognize a dig, but oriental enough to know you never hurt someone's feelings. Even this jest required a polite answer.

"I like you," she said from the kitchen where she was stirring some pork. "Some day I will come to your church."

"You always say 'some day,'" I kept digging. "If you ever walked through the doors of church I'd have a heart attack with surprise."

May poked her head out of the kitchen. "That's why I don't come. I don't want you to have a heart attack," she smiled in victory.

The conversation went on in that light vein until lunch was served. (Hmong social graces require the offering and accepting of food.) As we ate I brought up the past, mine, and then hers. I was about to take a bite of pork when May set down her chop sticks and turned sideways in her chair. She leaned forward and put her face in her hands and burst forth in the most heart

wrenching sobs I'd ever heard. I sat there, feeling awkward and dazed at what was happening. Then I realized I had unwittingly hit an exposed nerve and now had a way into her heart.

At last May blew her nose and began to speak, revealing her hidden heart. "I've had a bad (meaning tragic) life, pastor. My mother and father were killed by the communists. My older sister was gang raped by soldiers. I was driven off into the jungle with my two smaller brothers. We ate roots and grass for two months to stay alive. Then we ran into relatives and joined them in flight to Thailand. We were brought to America by relatives. But they were so poor they could not keep all three of us kids together. So we were divided up. One stayed in California, and one brother and I were sent here to live with Mao. My brother was murdered six months ago."

It was time for the Gospel.

(N.B. May subsequently attended church. Then, suddenly stopped coming. I went to see what the problem was. Mao told me that Hmong elders thought it was time for her to be married. Since May's parents were dead, they made the decisions in their place. One Friday they brought a boy from Wisconsin to her home. The next day she was married. They live in Wisconsin now. She has had to quit college and go to work to support her husband who is younger than her and still in high school. As is custom, they live with her mother-in-law.)

The Asian refugees are a bizarre combination of a people whose hurting hearts are in need of the Gospel, while the old man of work righteousness and false gods has a firm grip on their minds. To meet their spiritual needs of Law and Gospel in a way that "rings their bell" is hard. They are walking to an entirely different drumbeat than the American. The problem is to "think Hmong," and that's very difficult because the Hmong are separated from the past life which shaped their thinking. I see them only in the context of their American life. But it is the past life in Laos that holds the key to understanding these people. I call that the experiential barrier.

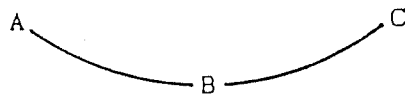
PROBLEM FOUR: THE EXPERIENTIAL BARRIER.

What we hear we tend to understand in the context of the American experience. When a Hmong hears the same words that an American hears, he comprehends them in the framework of the Southeast Asian experience. This seems to apply in even greater measure to anything said in the religious realm. Mention the Holy Spirit and a Hmong will immediately put that into his understanding of the "spirits," which is definitely not the intent of the communication.

Differences in experience make even the way a Hmong learns best different from the way Americans learn. Hmong are a people who had no written language. Thirty-five years ago the French came into Laos and wrote down the Hmong spoken word in English characters, using certain letters as tonal suggestions. However, many Hmong have never had a day of school. In their culture the spoken word is king, and dramatic visual presentations rule the mind. Thus, teaching style must be altered radically from the approaches we commonly use.

One day I got a polite reminder of this from my translator, Sai Long Yang. Sai Long knows how his people think, and how to politely suggest to someone like me a method of teaching more suitable to Hmong people. One day after Bible Class, in his typical circular approach to a subject, he said, "Pastor, there is an old Chinese saying I'd like to share with you that we use in our Hmong culture. 'A picture is worth a thousand words...'" I got the "picture." What Sai Long was saying with oriental politeness was, "show us, don't just tell us. Be concrete and visual in your teaching." I've taken his advice and seem to be understood much better.

Beyond even this, the oriental thought process itself must be considered. We are taught what appears to us a "logical" straight line approach to thought. A----B----C. That is "foreign," "illogical," and "harsh" to the oriental mind. Their thought approach is circular, and if it leads from point "A" to point "C" it does so while making a loop comprised of overlapping circles.



In trying to break the experiential barrier one has to remember that things which are important to Americans have little importance in Asian thinking. Judging from the T.V. commercials, Americans are tremendously concerned about body odor and pain relief. You have to "smell like Chanel" and "Pamprin your pain." Any hospital nurse will tell you Asians will stand three times the pain of Americans and never think twice about it. This kind of cultural difference carries over to the Word of God. Most every American wants to go to heaven. But in the context of Hmong religious experience, heaven is a meaningless concept which they don't believe they will experience. Thus, holding up heaven as a blessing to be received through faith in Jesus is foolish, unless heaven is well explained.

PROBLEM FIVE: THE FEAR FACTOR

We simply cannot fathom the role of fear in the refugee community. It's a part of their religion, it's a part of their past, it's a part of their present. The shaman in Thailand threaten the people by saying, "If you go to America you will be eaten alive by the spirits." Before that they lived in constant fear of being killed by the communists. In America they continue to have fears. Are they doing what is right and acceptable in our culture? Can they overcome the obstacles to this new life and succeed? We, as W.A.S.P., have rarely known hatred for being who we are. The refugees experience the fears associated with prejudice almost daily. Thus, the fear factor erects another wall. These people are afraid of me (initially), afraid to come to church (where many have met prejudice elsewhere), and afraid to open the door to their hurting hearts on the personal things that are troubling them.



YET, Time and time again, those who have been coming to Bible Class have expressed relief and peace as a result of hearing God's Word— a freedom from fear they have never before known.

PROBLEM SIX: SYNCRETISM.

One day Yoeun literally exploded with questions. I was delighted. Cambodes are not culturally accustomed to ask questions, and I was thrilled to receive some feed-back to what I had been teaching. But my delight turned to consternation when he said, "I consider you a god, Pastor." I suddenly felt as Paul must have in Lystra, (Acts 14:8-20).

What had been happening suddenly became apparent. Yoeun, along with some others, had been listening intently and nodding agreement, so I thought they were taking what I had been saying as the one and only truth. What they were really doing was taking my words and fitting them neatly into Buddhist thinking. Yoeun's statement that he considered me as a "god" finally

exposed his mental syncretism. Mahayana Buddhism is a sect which raises Buddha, and other wise teachers, to the position of "gods" because they teach the way to nirvana.

One of the hardest things to ascertain when teaching Asians is how your words are being understood on the other side of those almond eyes. Buddhist's will accept our terminology and fit it into Buddhism. Nirvana equates easily with heaven. Jesus, like Buddha, is a great teacher of the "way." If you want to call Him "Savior," fine, they will go along with that. Salvation? Sure, a Buddhist can and does use the word. It fits well. "Salvation," however, is understood as "the escape from suffering by the suppression of desire." Sin? They use the term. But it means "anything which hinders man's progress toward his self-made salvation." They even fit our definition of death into Buddhist thought. Death is the separation of body and soul, says the Christian. "Ok," says the Buddhist, "We see it a little different, but essentially it's the same." They believe at death there are five component parts of man that separate: the physical body, the sensations and feelings, perception, volition, and consciousness. The Christian says, "soul and body come together at the resurrection. "Of course," agrees the Buddhist. "We believe in re-incarnation too." Can you begin to see how hard it is, while fighting the language and cultural barriers, to keep these people from making syncretistic applications to what is taught?

It is really no different with the Hmong. Since they are so visually and story oriented one would think that Bible History would be the ideal way to reach them. Unfortunately, the Hmong have many ancient stories similar to the Bible stories. They have a "flood story," a "savior story," and many others. Centuries ago these stories may have had their root in the facts recorded in scripture. But today they are inseparably yoked to ancestor worship, shamanism, and animism. By the way, the name of the "first" shaman sounds, in the Hmong language, almost exactly like the name "Jesus." Try and separate that in an Asian's mind!

A positive note: Many Hmong have renounced the "old ways" completely.

PROBLEM SEVEN: THE CLICK OF THE CLOCK.

Pastor Fred Kogler and I are being stretched. As the Southeast Asian ministry grows there are ever increasing demands on time. It alone has become a full-time ministry. To help, Pastor Kogler has voluntarily shouldered a greater load of the work associated with running a congregation of 1500 souls with a Christian Day school of 173 students. Without Fred's sacrifice

this work would not be going on at the scale it is today! Thus, he is stretched. I too am stretched with the remaining congregational duties and exploding work with the Asians. But thankfully, as Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands, Emanuel's members are holding up mine. Some forty people are involved in the Southeast Asian mission work on a regular basis. Others help in various special ways as Asian children flood into Pioneers, V.B.S., and Sunday School. Retirees are involved in weekly mission work projects such as teaching English and the Bible to assigned individuals. Younger members have become drivers bringing children and adults to God's house every week. Entire families have become "Adopters," adopting an Asian family as their special mission concern. Children are working to assimilate their Asian peers into Sunday School, Pioneers, V.B.S., and Sunday worship services. From juniors to senior citizens, Emanuel's members have rolled up their sleeves to be foreign missionaries at home.

And what a stir of excitement this has brought into their lives. Ladies Aid, Mission Society, Sunday School Teacher meetings, Mr. and Mrs. Club, etc., are abuzz as individuals recount their own exciting experiences as missionaries. I can only thank God for the help of these dedicated Christians.

I am going to stop here. There is much more to tell, but the problems illustrated will give you some idea why we call this our World Mission At Home. The walls are high and conversions slow in coming. Yet, the Lord is getting His work done. Souls ARE coming to faith. Some Hmong are now becoming evangelists in their own right, asking others to join them in studying God's Word. Less than a year ago I first began instructing one man. Now we are proclaiming God's wonderful Word on a regular basis to some seventy-five people. The very impossibility of overcoming some of these problems proves to us that this is the Lord's doing, not ours. It is also proof that this is a mission effort God wants us to continue. We stand ready, waiting for our Lord's next leading.

SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



In wrestling with the problems of Asian evangelism we began to develop a modus operandi. There is no other way of reaching the Hmong and Cambodes than getting out and knocking on doors. Experience has been a good teacher. A number of ideas have come forth which have been applied equally well to our American evangelism calls. We believe the unbeliever of the 80's is a new breed of cat. In a sense, not unlike a Southeast Asian mission prospect. The following is submitted in the hope that you may find an idea or three that will benefit your own door to door evangelism.

1. BE AN EVANGELICAL DETECTIVE:

The moment one enters a prospect's yard to the time he leaves should be a search for clues to unmask the real person hidden behind the face that greets you at the door. The yard, furniture, housekeeping, children, photographs, and accessories can all help. More subtle clues come in posture, walk, speech dress, and gestures.

Without arousing suspicion, the evangelical detective will ask questions that direct responses, as Jesus did with the woman at the well. The one aim and goal is to expose the hidden heart of the individual so that God's Word can be applied to their specific need, be it Law or Gospel.

2. TALK ABOUT EVERYTHING BUT THE GOSPEL - UNTIL YOU CAN'T RESIST

The first and second calls are spy missions, not evangelism calls. Go in wanting to share the Gospel with every beat of your heart, but purposely hold off as long as you can. Timing is crucial. Setting is imperative. Seldom does the opportunity to present the Gospel come on the initial visit unless it's forced.

Then it has little value.

So, talk about everything but what you came for. Their children, background, your own family. This may go on for two or three visits. At last an opportunity to present the Gospel will occur that you simply can't pass up. Then it will have meaning and value to the hearer.

3. STAY TOO LONG

Evangelism calls are not an in and out deal. Two long calls in one afternoon are worth far more than five short ones. "In house" time breaks down the separation barriers between individuals. Something happens after a while. The edge wears off, an intimacy develops.

I've had Hmong people get so unnerved by an American being in their home that they could not remember a word of English. Fear had erased everything they had learned. But as they began to relax in my presence, memory was restored and communication began. Americans also get a bit tongue tied with the "rev" sitting in their parlor.

As people begin to relax and speak freely their problems come out, fears and worries are revealed--tangibles, that can be ministered to. This will not happen in fifteen minutes. It means you will have to hit them when they are not busy, when they are in the quiet moments of life. A little planning and a lot of prayer will help "accidentally" get you there at the right time.

4. RETURN, RETURN!

Breaking down barriers and establishing relationships takes time. Be willing to spend it! Nobody is going to "let it all hang out" on the first visit. Return until they throw you out.

Even new prospects that have started coming to church must be revisited. Remember, they are not in the habit of coming to church like second generation Lutherans.

5. RENEW OLD "FAILURES"

Times change, and with it so do situations in people's lives. Yesterday's failure may be today's success.

6. BREAKING THE SOUND BARRIER

Though most "Americans" speak English, most Americans don't speak "Theological English" any more than the Southeast Asians. Words like "Gospel, salvation" and "Forgiveness" are a foreign language to most. Using such "churchy" words sets up a sound barrier between us and the one we want to reach. Avoid them!

7. A PICTURE IS WORTH....

People are visually oriented today. Forget your fine analytical training. Forget your own ability to visualize abstractions. A great many people don't read at all. Of those who do, few comprehend what they read. Be brief, concrete, and use visual demonstrations.

I carry a 5 x 8 sketch book with me, draw out what I'm explaining, and tear off the page and give it to the person when I'm through talking. They have heard it, seen it drawn, and have it for reference.

8. THE SECONDARY PEOPLE

On return evangelism calls "secondary people" often turn up: relatives or neighbors. Don't overlook them. These "secondary people" are easier to reach than your primary contact because you have a built in acceptance factor. You are accepted by the primary person and thus automatically accepted by the "secondary person." Be sure to get their phone number and address!

Note: The primary contact may be more likely to come to church if the secondary person comes. They feel more secure having a friend with them.

9. EVANGELISM IS A FAMILY AFFAIR!

Want your kids to be evangelical Christians? Make evangelists out of them by taking them with you on calls. Kids will get other kids to come to church and Sunday School far easier than you will. With an "in" with the kids you can continue to work on the adults.

In the same way, women relate to women. My wife, through friendship to prospects, has got many Southeast Asians into Hmong Bible class. Evangelism is more successful if it is a family affair!

10. THE S.S. HOOK

Kids can convert adults, and, kids are far easier to get to come to Sunday School and church. By having a congregation member pick up a family's children for Sunday School, you maintain weekly contact with the parents. And, a kid's good report of Sunday School and church will count more with the parents than all your plenteous pastoral platitudes.

11. TIMING

What did you eat for lunch last Monday? Forgot? Me too! To an unbeliever, Sunday church is about as important as last Monday's lunch. If you invite 'em on Monday, they'll forget you by Thursday. Thus, Friday and Saturday are better days for evangelism calls.

And don't overlook the weather. Good weather equals more favorable responses because people feel positive. Overly hot or gloomy days tend to leave people grouchy at anything. Stay home on such days and write next Sunday's sermon!

12. THE FEAR FACTOR

The evangelism prospect is usually fearful of you. So when making an initial call, always go alone. It's simply less threatening. You are one human being establishing a relationship with another. That removes fear. Go it alone!

13. THE ULTIMATE SECRET

You can plan and study about evangelism. You can buy a stack of evangelism books so high a kangaroo couldn't jump over the top. But the ultimate secret of good evangelism is not found in any book. The secret of successful evangelism is getting out on the street and doing it!

Set aside one afternoon a week, perhaps Friday, and go out and knock on doors. We have the commission to do so (Mark 16:16). So what is it that holds us up? Time we say, and that's partially true. (Fortunately, I have a partner who says, "I'll do double duty on shut-ins, hospital calls, administration, etc. You go 'hit the Hmongers'".) But aside from the time, I think there is another reason we are not out there more. It's called FEAR. Yes, even pastors get a little nervous about knocking on a door "cold turkey." Me too! When I go out to a new area I have to drive around slowly and get used to it the day before I start knocking on doors. I even get out and walk around the neighborhood to be certain it is populated with human beings and not four-headed monsters. Then, I go!

The point is, we have to go. The souls are out there. We have to be out there too!

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