

God's grace has opened doors to an unprecedented mission opportunity in communist Vietnam.

Grace

HMONG OUTREACH
IN VIETNAM



"I don't have anything to send to my WELS brothers and sisters in the U.S. to even begin to show our gratitude or appreciation. All we can send is our 'empty' words of Thank You. We trust that the training will continue to equip leaders so that the gospel will spread to many more throughout Vietnam. Pray for us. Pray for our religious freedom in this country, especially for the Hmong in the rural areas. Pray that the many minority people will have the opportunity to hear the gospel and believe it."

PASTOR TSAVXWM HAM, CHAIRMAN OF THE HFC



A LETTER FROM THE HMONG FELLOWSHIP CHURCH



A letter written to WELS after Rev. Bounkeo Lor (pictured on page 2, second from left) and Vicar Hue Thao visited Hanoi, Vietnam, to train 60 leaders of the Hmong Fellowship Church in November 2016.

On behalf of the Hmong Fellowship Church (HFC) in Vietnam, may we express our appreciation to the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod that you have taken your time with Pastor Bounkeo Lor and Hue Thao to train us with the gospel in Hanoi, Vietnam. We thank God and thank both of you. We hope that on this trip, you have seen that we are working hard for the people in Vietnam and you have seen that we want to learn more about the gospel and the true gospel in the WELS. We want to be good believers and good pastors in the WELS. We want to have one belief with the WELS, so that we can tell others that we truly believe just like the WELS. And we will tell others that this doctrine is true. The important thing is law and gospel. And what's more, we thank you for the WELS training for the past three years. Now, we believe that we have salvation. Without that, today we would still be living in the darkness of Satan.

The truth is, we know that those who become Christians in Vietnam will face challenges. However, in Jesus name we believe that our God, Jesus, will help us pass through every problem. If in the future we still have this problem, we will

not give up, because God our Savior will help us and be at our side forever, because we are the sheep of our Savior Jesus.

Finally, we say thank you one more time. We thank Pastor Bounkeo Lor. We believe that you will do everything possible to help us, especially for the training for our 300 pastors and leaders and the 70,000 believers in Vietnam, and the two million Hmong in Vietnam.

We believe that God already answered our prayers though the WELS. Thanks to God.

In Jesus Name,

**THE HMONG FELLOWSHIP
CHURCH**

Signed by its five top leaders and 55 other pastors who attended training by Rev. Bounkeo Lor. (Translated by Hue Thao)

Since 2016 when this letter was written, the Hmong Fellowship Church has grown from 70,000 to more than 100,000 members and formed many new congregations.

THE HISTORY

It all started when Zang Lou, a leader within the Hmong Fellowship Church (HFC) in Vietnam, viewed an online sermon by WELS Pastor Bounkeo Lor. **The clear proclamation of law and gospel and the message of pure grace through Jesus Christ was something he had never heard before . . . and he wanted to learn more.** Zang Lou invited Lor to provide training for the leaders of the HFC.

With every visit Lor has made to conduct training in Hanoi, approximately 60 church leaders have attended to learn more about the truths of the Bible. These same

60 leaders have been taking the message back to their rural congregations, preaching the message of salvation by faith, not by works—something the members had never heard before. HFC leaders have seen the growth and the joy that Lutheran teaching has brought to their congregations and have expressed a desire to become a confessional Lutheran church body.



“This training has changed me a lot as a pastor as well. Before the training I just preached the Law—I treated people with contempt. If I saw a member committing sin, I hated them. If they had addictions, I hated them. Now, as I look back, I see that I was a Pharisee at that time. Now, I hate that time of my life. But since I received the training from Pastor Lor and Professor Bare and the other pastors, I have learned to show compassion to the sinner. I have learned to show Christ to the sinner.”

PASTOR VANG, SHAN ZHOU FU CHURCH

TRAINING INVITATION

Zang Lou finds Rev. Bounkeo Lor's online sermon and invites him to train 60 leaders of the Hmong Fellowship Church (HFC) in Hanoi, Vietnam. **The HFC has 55,000 church members.**



FIRST TRIP TO VIETNAM

Lor makes the first of his training trips to Hanoi.

LETTER TO WELS

The HFC leaders draft a letter to WELS leadership asking for additional training.

SUPPORT BEGINS

WELS Missions begins full financial support of the Hmong outreach effort in Vietnam.

2011

2012

2014

2015



"Today I thank and praise God that the Lutheran church sent Pastor Lor to train us. First, I see very clearly – the training has clearly shown us the Word of God. Each training session is divided into clear small portions we can understand. Second, the training is conducted in Hmong. Even when Anglo pastors come and teach us, it is translated into Hmong. And no matter who is teaching us, the message is always very clear."

PASTOR VUE, ZHOUKAO CHURCH

"I had dreamed for training for a long time. My own ability is limited—I am not an educated person. Many members would come and ask me to share the Word of God with them, but I didn't know how to do it. Since receiving training, I have grown in my confidence in what I believe and in sharing God's word. This has been a big change for me and for the congregations under my leadership. We've stopped searching for theological answers and materials from other churches. We know we have the truth now—and we know where to find it!"

PASTOR LAU, IMMANUEL 1997 CHURCH



PSI VISITS VIETNAM

The Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) visits Vietnam for the first time to aid in Lor's training efforts. **The HFC grows to 70,000 members.**

DIVINE CALL

Lor is called to be full-time Hmong Asia ministry coordinator.

INVITATION TO BUILD

The Vietnamese government invites WELS to build a theological training facility in Hanoi.

WELS VISITS VIETNAM

WELS Missions representatives visit Vietnam for the first time to meet with HFC leadership and assess what is needed for the training facility. **The HFC reports that their church body has grown to more than 100,000 members.**

2016

2017

2017

2018



In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. COLOSSIANS 1:6

THE OPPORTUNITY

Due to their lack of training, pastors in the Hmong Fellowship Church held to a variety of interpretations of God's Word. Congregations and their pastors once fought over which man-made rules were God-pleasing and could earn people passage into heaven. Now, the freedom that comes from the gospel has changed the way they do ministry. The message of free grace received from Jesus Christ has replaced their old law-based preaching: Grace has brought peace to the Hmong Fellowship Church, and church leadership has stabilized as a result. The communist government in Vietnam has noticed this positive change.

The Vietnamese government has invited WELS to build a theological training facility in the capital city of Hanoi.

This is an incredible, unprecedented opportunity for our synod. WELS is currently the only Protestant church with official government permission to work with the Hmong in Vietnam. The Lord is opening a door to reach the more than two million Hmong people who live in Vietnam and the surrounding countries. However, this door can close at any time. Our WELS World Missions team is working quickly to ensure WELS taking full advantage of the time the Lord has provided. We need your help to make the most of this amazing opportunity.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

As the Hmong Fellowship Church (HFC) looks to the future of their church body, they realize the importance of equipping their pastors and church leaders with the truth of the gospel. Before WELS began providing training, a few pastors that served in leadership roles within the HFC had received six weeks of theological education. Many of the other leaders and all rural pastors had only received one or two *days* of training.

WELS is working with the HFC, the Vietnamese Fellowship Church (VFC), and the Vietnamese government to build and operate the theological training facility in Hanoi. The VFC is the official Protestant church body recognized by the Vietnamese government, and they welcome WELS efforts to train these Hmong-speaking church leaders.

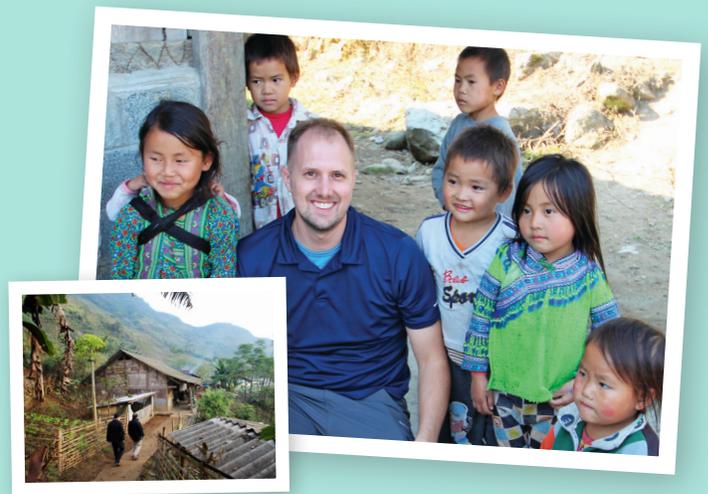
Thanks to WELS training efforts by Lor, Anglo pastors, and the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI), there are 350 HFC pastors who are ready to begin their seminary-level education. An additional 2,500 HFC church leaders will receive catechism training through regional seminars and special courses held at the facility in Hanoi. These courses will also train church leaders on how to instruct others within their rural congregations on the basic truths of the Bible. The goal is that all members of the HFC gain a basic knowledge of Bible doctrine, especially law and gospel, as quickly as possible.

The strength of the HFC's current structure and organization will be a great benefit moving forward, as WELS Missions representatives are confident that what is taught to HFC pastors will be passed down to all congregations by their own trusted leaders. Join us in asking our Lord to bless the training efforts in Hanoi to reach the two million Hmong living in Vietnam and the surrounding countries of China, Laos, and Myanmar.

Your gift would support the following pieces of our ministry effort in Vietnam:

Land Purchase: \$500,000

The Vietnamese government is allowing WELS to purchase land through the Vietnamese Fellowship Church in the capital city of Hanoi. This central location is ideal, as Hmong leaders travel from both the north and south to receive training.



Building Construction: \$500,000

The current training being conducted is occurring in a chapel owned and operated by the Vietnamese Fellowship Church (VFC). By building a new facility specifically for the HFC, WELS would not need to compete for space with other VFC churches. The new campus would include a worship space, dormitories and kitchen facilities that can accommodate 60 students at a time, ministry offices for leaders of the HFC, and four other classrooms for training.

Initial two years of operational costs: \$1,000,000

These operational costs include \$50,000 in one-time expenses needed to furnish the facility. Ongoing operational costs will include salaries for three resident WELS missionaries, five local leaders of the HFC who will be based in Hanoi, two translators, and six local administrative and facility support people. Other large ongoing expenses will be the living and travel costs for the hundreds of rural church leaders who will rotate through the training center on an annual basis, and the travel expenses incurred when top HFC leaders conduct regional seminars in the nine districts throughout Vietnam.

With God's blessing and your support, WELS will be able to provide the HFC with theological instruction and pastoral training for years to come.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Your prayers and gifts will assist us as we share the message of God's grace with even more Hmong people in Vietnam and the surrounding countries. Join us as we watch the Holy Spirit change earthly lives and open the door to eternal life for our Hmong brothers and sisters on the other side of the world.



"I want to thank the Lutheran church for supporting the training. We don't actually deserve to receive anything from the WELS - but they just give and support the training by sending professors and providing the financial ability for the training to take place. For that—I thank you.

Thank you so much. I will never forget you. You helped us to see the Word of God clearly. You have brought us the truth—and that has changed our lives."

PASTOR VANG, SHAN ZHOU FU CHURCH



N16W23377 Stone Ridge Drive · Waukesha, WI 53188
wels.net/give · 800-827-5482

Learn more about Vietnam at wels.net/vietnamhmongoutreach