

Grace

HMONG OUTREACH IN VIETNAM

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



A LETTER FROM THE HMONG FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

*A letter written to WELS after Rev. Bounkeo Lor
(pictured 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 our 70,000 of the believers in Vietnam, and the two million Hmong in Vietnam.

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

In Jesus Name,

THE HMONG FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

Signed by its five top leaders and 53 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 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 Hmong Fellowship Church.

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. Hmong Fellowship Church 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.

- **2011:** Zang Lou finds Lor’s online sermon and invites him to train 60 leaders of the Hmong Fellowship Church (HFC). The HFC has 55,000 church members.
- **2012:** Lor makes the first of his training trips to Hanoi.
- **2014:** Lor is accompanied by Rev. Robert Smith on a training visit to Vietnam. The HFC leaders draft a letter to WELS leadership asking for additional training.
- **2015:** WELS Missions begins full financial support of the Hmong outreach effort in Vietnam.
- **2016:** 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.
- **MARCH 2017:** Lor is called to be full-time Hmong Asia ministry coordinator.
- **2017:** The Vietnamese government invites WELS to build a theological training facility in Hanoi.
- **JANUARY 2018:** Representatives from WELS Multi-Language Publications visit Vietnam to evaluate the types of materials needed by the HFC.
- **2018:** 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.

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

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

This is an 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 is taking full advantage of the time the Lord has provided. We need your help to make the most of this amazing opportunity.



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.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

As the 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. WELS is working with the HFC and the Vietnamese government to build and operate a theological training facility in Hanoi.

Thanks to WELS training efforts, there are 350 HFC pastors who are ready to begin their seminary-level education. An additional 2,500 HFC church leaders will learn the basics of the catechism and be trained on how to instruct others within their rural congregations on the basic truths of the Bible. The goal is that all HFC members gain a basic knowledge of Bible doctrine, especially law and gospel, as quickly as possible.

WELS is collecting a special offering through June 2019, with the goal of raising \$2 million to purchase land, construct the campus, and cover the initial two years of operational costs.

The new training facility would have a worship space, dormitories



and kitchen facilities that can accommodate 60 students at a time, ministry offices for leaders of the HFC, and classrooms for training.

The first two years of operational costs will include some one-time expenses to furnish the facility, salaries for both WELS and HFC representatives, and the living and travel costs for the hundreds of rural church leaders who will rotate through the training center on an annual basis.

With the Lord's blessing and support from WELS members, we pray that this mission effort reaches the **two million Hmong** living not just in Vietnam, but also the surrounding countries of China, Laos, and Myanmar.

THANK YOU!

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

Your support will assist WELS Missions as we share the message of 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

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