



Message From the President

Greetings Friends!

Praise be to God for enabling us to reach our one-year mark as an official organization! The milestone did not come without many blessings and challenges, but God has been faithful throughout the journey.

Since the last newsletter, two prominent leaders of the Hmong Adventist community in America have been laid to rest: Elder Sam Yang from Fresno, CA and Elder Shoua Lue Chang from Charlotte, NC. Both elders were crucial in the spiritual development and nurture of the first Hmong Adventist work in America. Nyob Zoo Ministries owes much to the wisdom and leadership provided by these leaders throughout the last few decades prior to our inception. We certainly feel the loss along with the peace of God knowing that the great reward awaits His faithful servants who are now resting in Christ from their labors. So much of what we are able to do now truly began with the faithful work of these early leaders establishing the foundation of our current Hmong Adventist community of faith.

How do we properly honor those who have passed? This question has been a subject of many discussions amongst our Hmong faith leaders in times past. In the Hmong cultural tradition, it tends to be perceived that the longer the funeral lasts along with its elaborate rituals, the more honored the deceased. But many recognize that much of the lengthy, drawn-out ceremonies have nothing to do with honoring the deceased, but rather, they do more towards appeasing beliefs about traditions and preventing superstitious offenses. And for many of the

Hmong, the idea of a short simple funeral seems incomplete and without substance. So how do Hmong Adventists find balance if such a thing exists?

The Bible clearly teaches that death is a sleep (Psalm 13:3; John 11:13). Part of the reason we grieve so heavily is that we seem to believe that this life is the best experience that there will be for us. But God's word

makes it clear that one day in the near future, our Savior will return and the resurrection of the saints to immortal life is assured (1 Corinthians 15:51-53). Our loved ones are no longer suffering under the weight of evil in this world, and better yet, their next moment of consciousness will be basking in the glory of Christ as He returns to call them home. Hmong Adventists need not to despair in grief any longer, knowing the promises of God are always faithful.

But how can we still honor those who have left us? Perhaps the right question to ask would be: "How do I glorify God before Hmong people as I recognize His work through my loved one's life?" The Bible sheds some light in the way of

spiritual legacies. When God called Moses from the burning bush in Exodus 3, He stated that He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—all deceased ancestors. Moses realized that He was being called by the same God who communed with the spiritual patriarchs that lived before his time. God was using Moses to fulfill a promise to the ancestors who had been faithful in the past. Knowing that God used Moses in this way, should we expect any different for us? As Moses stepped out in faith to continue God's legacy with his ancestors, our generation of believers ought to also heed God's call to

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How DO WE PROPERLY HONOR THOSE WHO HAVE PASSED?

continue the same legacy. Let us honor our ancestors by taking hold of the spiritual banner that they ran with, even through the darkest of times.

Tears often flow like rivers at Hmong memorials. Without a country to call our own, all we really have is our people. As a Hmong person myself, it's hard to put into words. Our community is like a single body and it hurts to lose any part. We love and laugh together. We hunger and thirst and eat together. We fail and succeed together. Existing without your community is like living without a heartbeat. Unshared blessings are worth less than shared sufferings. This is the Hmong way.

But the Hmong may not have realized that God started it all. For when humanity sinned at the beginning, our heavenly Savior left His country. He was on earth

without a country because His own rejected Him. All Christ had was His faithful people as He suffered all the way to the death on the cross. He could not live knowing we were lost. So Christ chose to be lost that we might be found. Why? Because like the Hmong way, God knows that existing without your community is meaningless.

So let us honor our loved ones by living out the legacy of faithfulness they fought for before they slept. Then one day, we'll reunite to experience everlasting joy with God!

In Christ alone,



Cheng Vang



God's Detour Has 10,000 Reasons

Richard (Dick) Hall had heard the amazing stories of missionaries by Eric B. Hare and others in Southeast Asia. His lifelong passion was to be a missionary to Myanmar and spread the gospel to people there. After marrying his wife, Jean, the couple set their sights on the mission field. Dick was also a pilot and wanted to fly his small plane into some of the jungle mountains of Southeast Asia where the gospel had not reached yet.

But no matter what they tried, Pastor Dick Hall could not go to Myanmar. So the Halls decided to try the neighboring country of Laos. The northwest arm of the country was close by but had a difficult mountain jungle terrain that made even landing a small plane extremely risky. The Halls eventually settled in an area known as Luang Nam Tha and began their medical missionary work among the people.

At the time, Laos had many dozens of people groups that were distinct from one another. But one special group known as the Hmong caught the eye of the Halls. Dick noticed that most of them were illiterate and even had trouble in the market places, which would cause traders to take advantage of them and oppress them. Elder Hall decided that he would try to befriend these humble jungle-dwellers and offer to teach them the Thai language. Soon, the Halls began to have many Hmong friends in the area. Pastor

Hall wanted to share the gospel but he couldn't speak Hmong. Dick had become fluent in Thai, while many of the Hmong still struggled with it. Then he decided to use an interpreter for recording the verbal translation of Bible stories and teachings into the Hmong language. Elder Hall captured the audio on a gramophone that would be manually spun to play the messages.



One day, Pastor Hall entered into one of the Hmong villages and showed the Hmong people a black box that opened into a spinning disc. "What is that?" they wondered. All of a sudden, they started hearing a voice speak from the box in the Hmong language. The "spirit" from the box told them about a God in heaven who was returning soon to take His people to heaven. The "spirit" spoke about how this God created the world and how a snake was used by the devil to deceive the first humans. Then the "spirit" spoke about God sending His Son to die for humans. The entire village was amazed at the magical black box and everyone crowded around Pastor Dick Hall to hear the

spirit's voice as the disc was spun. Some were a little scared and wanted nothing to do with the magical box. Others were curious and wanted to know more. Dick decided to go to several Hmong villages and continue sharing the message through the black box.

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While in Laos in the late 1950s, the Halls were heavily involved in medical missionary work among the Hmong people. Most of the Hmong had limited understanding of sanitation and personal hygiene up until these times, so simple cuts and wounds would often result in dangerous infections and sickness. Dental care was non-existent, so Pastor Hall became a largely self-taught jungle dentist. Many flocked to the Halls for their medical needs, believing that Elder Hall possessed powerful healing arts.

Gradually, a community of faith formed around the missionary work of the Hall Family and the first Hmong Seventh-day Adventist group was established in the mountain jungles of Northern Laos. The practice of faith was simple: refrain from pork, alcohol, and spirit ceremonies, while attending worship on the seventh day with other believers.

But things were not always easy. Some were excited about the new religious practices and the peace-loving community of believers, but their loved ones would become angry and force them back into tradition. Others would join only for a season to get support from the missionaries, but did not want to learn any new truths about the God of the Bible. Most of the Hmong were too afraid and unsure of this new religion and strange teachings. Many did not want to trust in a foreigner's religion.

It wasn't long before the Halls realized that the Hmong had no books or any writings. They realized that if these people are to accept the truth of the Bible, they need to be able to read and understand for themselves. So Elder Hall decided to start a school to teach several young boys how to read, write, and work in the service of God. About a dozen Hmong boys, ages 7-13, accepted the call from various villages and began attending the first Seventh-day Adventist school in Laos. Most of them were impoverished and had no support from family or relatives. So the Halls raised many of these precious souls like their own family.

War soon began raging in Southeast Asia, and this caused the Halls and other missionaries to relocate the Adventist school in Laos to neighboring Thailand at a border city known as Chiang Khong. The danger of the war was now on the other side of the Mekong River which divided Laos from Thailand.

The boys in the school could now learn and develop spiritually without the conflict at their doorstep. Most of the Hmong people in Laos were caught in the crossfire and heavily recruited to fight against communism between 1960 and 1975. Many of the same boys did not reunite with family and relatives until the war ended and refugee camps were established in Thailand.

After the school was relocated to Thailand, the Hall Family was called elsewhere to Malaysia for missionary

work. Their brief time in serving the Hmong people at the height of their destitution was by heaven's design. The Halls were able to see a few dozen accept the faith of Christ in the jungles of Laos where the gospel had never penetrated. But the seed of dedication and sacrifice was planted, cultivated, and watered. Over the next sixty-five years,

Hmong souls for God's kingdom would multiply. What started out as a few dozen has since numbered more than 10,000 believers throughout Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and America. What a blessing the detour from Myanmar to Laos came to be!

But truly, it was one family stepping out by faith into the unknown that made the difference.

In 2018, Pastor Richard Hall was laid to rest. Several years later in 2024, his faithful wife, Jean, joined him in resting from her labors. In reflecting upon the legacy of the Hall Family, we are humbled and honored to tell this story. The reunion we shall have with Dick and Jean Hall at the feet of Christ will be unforgettable as we witness our Lord offering them their crowns containing tens of thousands of stars. Amen!

IT WAS ONE FAMILY... STEPPING OUT BY FAITH



First Hmong SDA Church in Laos (circa 1960)

Announcements

For the latest updates and information, please visit our website at www.nyobzoo.org.

CURRENT MINISTRY NEEDS

Hall of Faith Project — The first Hmong ministry institutions were established in the 1950's by our beloved Hall Family. While both Pastor Richard Hall and his wife, Jean, have been laid to rest, their legacy will continue on with your support. These vital funds will go towards establishing and/or improving religious facilities in North America.

Grandma Green Project — In appreciation of the legacy of Grandma Green, Nyob Zoo Ministries has dedicated this project fund to directly support pastors, church planters, evangelists, and Bible workers. Thank you for supporting this vital work among the unreached Hmong in North America.

Partnership

Are you interested in being a partner or a patron to uphold the mission of Nyob Zoo Ministries? We would love to speak with you on further details. You can email partners@nyobzoo.org or write to our address below.

Donations

Since its inception in May of 2024, Nyob Zoo Ministries, Inc. has been granted status as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. This enables donors to deduct contributions made to the organization under IRC Section 170.

Please make checks out to "Nyob Zoo Ministries" and mail to:

Nyob Zoo Ministries, Inc.
P.O. Box 1921
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741

Note: If you are donating to a specific project, please write that project in the check memo.
All projects can be found at: www.nyobzoo.org/projects

We can also accept secure PayPal contributions at www.nyobzoo.org/donate



Prayer Requests

Do you have a prayer request? Prayer requests can be sent by letter to our P.O. Box address below or to the email prayer@nyobzoo.org