



感恩与代祷 Praise & Prayer

3rd Quarter 2019

Unreached People Groups

未得之民的呼声

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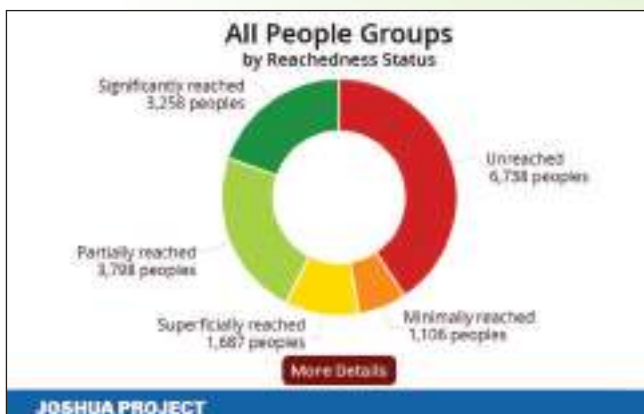
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Foreword

According to Matthew 24:14, the Lord Jesus has said clearly that "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Thus the Lord Jesus had made it very clear here that His ultimate goal of His great commission is to preach the gospel to all peoples. We should not only pay attention to the other signs of the last days but most important of all, let us pay attention to this sign that all peoples shall hear the gospel. Let us look at the unreached peoples with passion for their souls that we may go all out to reach them with the Gospel that will change their destiny. Therefore, to finish the great commission we must build communities of faith in unreached places and among unreached peoples, that the lives of these peoples may be transformed by the power of the Gospel. How can we accomplish this final task?

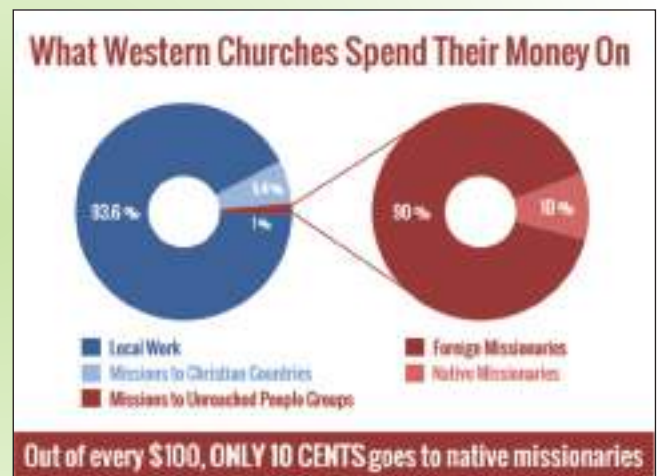
1. Adopt and focus on a people group

Firstly, we have to know who are the unreached peoples and where are they? According to the Joshua project's statistics, there are still 6,700 unreached people groups who have never heard of the Gospel. It is impossible for just one church or one missionary to reach out to all these people groups, thus you or your church need to target one group at a time and focus on reaching them.



2. Strategized and prioritized to reach the unreached people group (UPG)

To adopt a people group, firstly each church has to set aside a budget to focus on the UPG ministry and then intentionally send people out to reach to them. Most of the UPGs live in restricted and protected areas, which are not easily accessible by foreigners and missionaries. Therefore, the best approach is to mobilize the Christian communities of other people groups in the neighboring areas to reach out to the target UPG (the "Go" chess method).



However, according to published statistics, the Western churches are sending only 2.5% of their missionaries to reach UPGs and only 1% of their missions budget goes to evangelistic efforts for the UPGs.

Thus, in order to finish the unfinished task, we have to realign our resources, strategies and priorities to reach out to the UPGs.

<https://globalmissionspodcast.com/051/>
<https://globalcp.org/statistics/>



De'ang (Palaung)



With a population of about six hundred thousand to a million, the De'ang are found mainly in China, Thailand and Myanmar. Today, nearly a thousand people have accepted Christ. It has been more than fifty years since Mr Hermann Fischer (1867-1945), a German missionary, first brought the Gospel to De'ang region. However, it was only in the recent twenty years that the number of believers has increased.



We have been praying and paying close attention to the De'ang people all the while. For many years, our field co-workers have been reaching out to them in vain. Nevertheless, we believe that the Spirit of God will work through His people to accomplish the Great Commission as long as they are willing.

Thank God! Just as the local church was facing a ministry bottleneck, by God's amazing grace, he prepared a young De'ang girl, Wang Shangmei (Ohm Mar Khim in De'ang), in the mountainous area of Myanmar. Born in 1983, Shan State, to a Buddhist family, Shangmei is the youngest among her nine siblings. Though both her parents are devout Buddhists, they believed in providing a good learning environment for their children. Hence, when she was in Primary three, her parents resolutely sent her, together with a few of her siblings, to study in the student centre founded by Mr Herman, the German missionary. Their original plan was purely for the children to seek knowledge and not religious conversion. However, God's unconditional love drew Shangmei to accept Him after her third year in the student centre. She then went over to Thailand to participate in the validation of the De'ang bible translation ministry work. In the process, her passion to spread the gospel to her own people grew.

Under the wonderful guidance and arrangement of God, Pastor Wang Shangmei met Pastor Chein Sin Shue and they got married in 2008. Presently, they have one boy and two girls. They share the same vision and continue to evangelise to the De'ang people. May the Lord continue to bless and use this family in serving the De'ang people.

The outreach strategies of the De'ang Ministry:

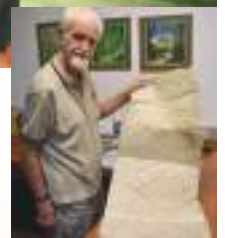
(1) Through the establishment of student centres and schools. Using education as a bridge, the gospel is preached to them, followed by cultivating spiritual growth in the new believers.



(2) Through personal evangelism to their own folk. So far, there were ten De'ang people who underwent equipping and became full-time pastors. They have since returned to their own tribes after graduation and that has brought growth to God's kingdom. Presently, we have about six hundred believers in contact and thirteen preaching points.



(3) Through Bible translation ministry. A compilation of the translated New Testament, together with Psalm and Proverbs, was published and used in 2014. Translation of the Old Testament is expected to be completed in two years.



Thanks and praise to the Lord! The De'ang people were originally a gospel hard soil, but after many years of "loosening" and "cultivating" it, this nation is finally willing to hear the gospel. God is faithful, for "Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy." (Psalm 126:5).





Isan



NEC and other mission organizations have always been doing ministry in Thailand among the minority people groups. In the past, most of the human and financial resources were focused on the northwestern mountainous areas of Thailand. However, the largest ethnic group in Thailand is the Thais. And their needs are unnoticed and neglected in mission efforts. Moreover, Thais are deep-rooted Buddhists with most of them living in towns, therefore, there is not much breakthrough among them. Now less than 0.1% of the Thais are Christian. Indeed, this is the greatest need in Thailand. Therefore, we have shifted our focus to this people group in Ubon Ratchathani three years ago which is in the northeastern part of Thailand.



Ubon Ratchathani is one of the four major cities of Isan. The city is on the Mun River in the southeast of the Isan region of Thailand. It is known as Ubon for short. The name means 'royal lotus city'. Ubon is the administrative centre of Ubon Ratchathani Province. The Ubon urban area had a population of about 200,000. It is 615 km from Bangkok. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubon_Ratchathani)

Isan – an ancient people group of Thailand, who originated from Laos and then ruled by Thailand. Therefore, their culture, language and customs are mostly similar to those of Laos, which are deeply rooted in the teachings of Buddhism and the Thai nation. Therefore, this area is not only an unreached place of the gospel, but also a "hard soil" for the gospel.

The southern part of the Isan area is adjacent to Cambodia and Laos. This area is also inhabited by the ancestors of the Kuys who used to be the elephants' trainers. Their religious beliefs are a mixture of Buddhism and animistic worship. Therefore, this people group is also very resistant to the gospel.

After many field trips and many prayers to seek God's guidance, the Thai office has sent out a national worker, Pastor Thongchai to start a ministry in Ubon in April 2017. Due to the deep-rooted influence of local Buddhist customs and folk idolatry, the initial evangelistic work was difficult as their hearts are closed to the gospel. Therefore, pastor Thongchai changed his strategy and set the ministry focus on the younger generation, before reaching out to their parents through following platforms:

1. English camp, English Bible story-telling

This program is meant to improve the students'

English language and communication skills, which may help them in their studies and career options in future. Most importantly, they will have an opportunity to know the Word of God during the process of learning.



2. Music class

It offers the students an opportunity to explore and discover their area of interest and musical talents which enriches their after-school life. They will learn about Christian faith and the gospel while learning to play the musical instruments (guitar, drums and keyboard) and singing Christian songs.

3. Soccer Ministry (Character building)

Soccer training not only help the students to exercise and enhance their physical fitness, but also train them to be self-discipline, persistent and build up good character. Through the friendly competitions, a team spirit may be formed.



Thanks be to the Lord for letting us see the fruits of the ministry! The various gospel outreach projects mentioned above are not only welcomed by the students, but also effectively established good relations with their parents and most importantly it provided opportunities for "soil-loosening" and "seeds-sowing". Consequently, some young people have accepted Christ through the various ministries. And Pastor Thongchai has rented a place to start a Sunday worship and Bible study class. These young people already have a stable church life and been actively participating in the service of the church.

Hereby, we welcome short-term teams from churches to come over to Ubon to reach out to the local teenagers, students and their parents. May the true light of the gospel bring the transformation and hope to the individuals, families, and even the whole community!



Diaspora



God is He Who created, loves and rules all the peoples. Therefore, some reckon that God has brought many people groups to our country because God sees that many peoples have not turned to Him. And yet the churches are not actively reaching out to them. Thus in this way, we have no excuse for not reaching them, just because they are far away. Others reckon God loves the many peoples so much that He deliberately scatters them among the Christians. Through them they will get to know about God. Viewing it either negatively or positively, diaspora ministry is the heart of God. The church has to care for and evangelize the diaspora populations dwelling among us.

In Malaysia, there are many workers flooding in from Nepal, Vietnam and Myanmar. Some of them are able to find their Savior and the Lord of their life in the foreign land. They have not only earned money in Malaysia but also Jesus and they will bring the gospel back home in the far-flung mountains.

More than ten years ago, some diaspora peoples hungering for the word dropped by the Chinese church in Malaysia. At that time, the Chinese Christians were overwhelmed and could not communicate with the newcomers. All they did was welcoming and serving them with meals. Later, Christians or pastors from the countries of the diaspora peoples were invited to Malaysia to overcome language barriers. Since then, the church has launched a comprehensive diaspora mission strategy. In the past, it was all by chance encounters, such as befriending whomever we met, meeting anyone who came to church to seek help, or reaching those in



the football field.

Now the church is developing the diaspora ministry more effectively. With the help of Christians from their homelands who speaks the same languages, the Malaysian church has opened three schools for the next generation of the diasporas. Every week, the church, led by pastors or congregants, goes straight to their dormitories to conduct English class, carry out medical service and hold evangelistic meeting.



We are very thankful to God that the diaspora ministry is moving forward. Now there is a shortage in manpower. The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Those who are involved, are exhausted. Yet we rejoice as the witnessing bore fruits. We will do everything possible even in the face of hardships to rescue souls. Toil turned to joy when we see a scoundrel becomes a pastor, a party member becomes an evangelist, and a scum being used by God. We appeal to the church and fellow believers to join us in this endeavour. We are not sure how long the diaspora populations are allowed to stay in Malaysia. Let us join hands to do our best while we can to gather the harvest!

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