



Unshackled

Breaking the Hmong People's Bondage

ST. PAUL HMONG OUTREACH MINISTRIES 2021-2023 LWML MISSION GRANT #28

BY BEVERLY VIETOR AND REV. DOUA XIONG WITH EDEN KEEFE, MISSION EDITOR



February 2023 marked the 50th anniversary of the release of 591 American prisoners of the Vietnam War. Our nation prayed for these soldiers and thanked God for their release. As Christians, we pray and seek release of the innocent from prison.

Do you remember the Hmong people of Laos, who served alongside the

United States to defeat the Communist party during the Vietnam War? Afterward, they sought refuge in the USA. When they came, they brought with them their culture and religious beliefs. About 85% of the Hmong people are animists, believing that there are spiritual powers inherited in all things, living and non-living. The Hmong culture practices shamanism and praises the spirits of their ancestors but not the Creator. People who are influenced by spiritism are afflicted, oppressed, and in constant fear — prisoners in their own souls. It is only by the grace of God, through faith in Jesus Christ with the power of His Holy Spirit, that Satan's bondage of the Hmong people can be unshackled, freeing them from this inner prison.

A strongly held tradition among the Hmong is their New Year Celebration. In the U.S., it begins in Green Bay, Wisconsin, travels out to Merced, California, and ends in Fresno, California. The Fresno celebration draws thousands of Hmong from all around the world to meet, greet, send off the old or current year, and welcome the new one. Because of LWML mite offerings and prayers, Pastor Doua, his wife, Sue, their children, and his mission team were able to have a booth at the 2022-2023

Hmong New Year Celebration in both Merced and Fresno, California. They shared the work, words, and love of the Lord Jesus Christ to many Hmong people and met two Hmong individuals from Southeast Asia (Laos and Thailand). They were rejoicing after they heard and believed that Jesus loves them.

The New Year celebration is also a great way to inform parents about the Saturday Hmong Language School. With the help of the Lord's Spirit, 35 adults and students, grades pre-K-college, enrolled. Since this was after the pandemic, the numbers were a great blessing.

The Gospel of the Lord also unshackled the chains of four sinners and brought them to St. Paul Hmong Outreach. They were catechized and baptized on Easter Sunday, 2023. What joy!

St. Paul Hmong Outreach Ministries has been actively reaching out to the Hmong communities in their native tongue for more than 19 years, visiting the prisoners with the truth and knowledge that through Christ Jesus there is no other way to be free. Romans 10:17 states, *faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ*. The Gospel is being heard by the Hmong families in their own language. Families are being baptized and confirmed.

And you will know the truth and the truth will set you free (John 8:32). Jesus is unshackling the bondage of Satan's power and opening the doors of their soul's prison. Welcome home, Hmong POWs — to the eternal home of the one true Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. *Q*

Rev. Doua Xiong, a graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, is married to Sue and they have four children. Rev. Xiong began his vicarage assignment in Merced, California, at St. Paul Lutheran Hmong Outreach in 2014, under the supervision of Rev. Kou Seying, and has been with the Ministry ever since. Beverly Vietor, Vice President of Gospel Outreach, LWML California-Hawaii-Nevada District, has supported missions in SE Asia over 45 years and has partnered with Pastor Xiong in Hmong Outreach since he took the call to California.