

FELLOWSHIP NOTES ~ SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20th, 2022



Missions Month - "Why Missions?"

Biblical Missions includes...

1. Spreading the gospel and making disciples – Acts 14:21a
2. Nurturing (strengthening) believers and churches – Acts 14:21b-22
3. Planting and organizing local churches – Acts 14:23

Why Missions?

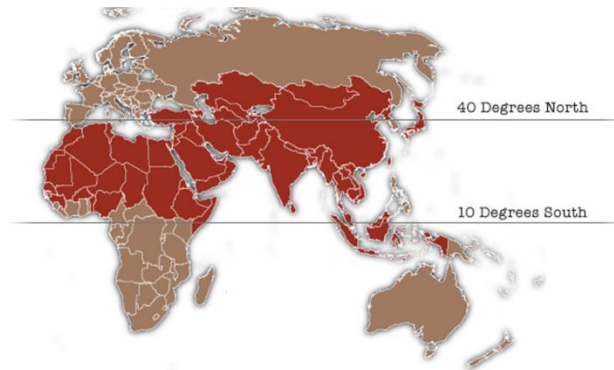
1. Because the harvest is _____ and workers _____ – Matthew 9:37-38
2. Because God has already made preparations for the _____ of all the nations in His eternal kingdom – Revelation 7:9-12

These Include:

- 1.) _____ His church to reach them with the gospel –
Matt. 28:19-20
- 2.) _____ the prayers God's people for their salvation – Matt.
9:37-38
- 3.) _____ their salvation through Jesus Christ – Rev. 7:10
- 4.) _____ them through the future judgments of God upon our sinful
world – Rev. 7:13-17



THE 10/40 WINDOW



- The 10/40 Window is located from 10 degrees south to 40 degrees north of the equator, which includes Africa, the Middle East and parts of Central and SE Asia.
- Nearly 4 billion people live here, including 90 percent of the world's poorest of the poor. It is estimated that 1.6 billion of these people have never had the chance to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ - not even once!
- The seat of every major non-Christian religion - Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Animism, Atheism, and Sikhism - is headquartered in the 10/40 Window.
- In many of the 68 countries represented in the 10/40 Window, witnessing the Christian Gospel means death. Truly, the 10/40 Window remains the darkest and most inhospitable territory to the cause of Christ and represents the greatest remaining stronghold of Satan.
- Two-thirds of the world's population (4 billion) live in the 68 nations of the 10/40 Window.
- 95% of the people are unevangelized.
- 90% of the people are the poorest of the poor, averaging \$250 per family annually.
- 43 of the 50 worst countries in the world for persecution of Christians are here.
- Only five pennies out of every \$100 spent on missions goes to this desperately needy area of the world.

Meet Laos



- Official Name: Lao People's Democratic Republic
- Government: Communist State
- Religion: Buddhist – 60%, Animist – 37.5%, Christian 2.5%
- According to the Global Peace Index, Laos ranks annually among the most peaceful countries in the world. Yet at the same time, it also ranks among the top 50 countries for the persecution of Christians
- Laos has the "honor" of being the most heavily bombed country per capita in the history of mankind. Over 250 million tons of ordinances were dropped by the U.S., military over Laos during the Vietnam War. Approximately 1/3 of those bombs did not explode.

Consequently, each year, a small number of locals in rural areas continue to be killed or maimed from unexploded cluster bombs.

- Christianity was introduced into Laos in the early 20th century. This continued at a very slow pace until 1975 when all missionaries were expelled from the country as communism took over. Kingdom work today grows as missions-minded believers enter the country using various “platforms” that provide legitimate business ventures which allow the Gospel to spread through relationships. Churches are being established slowly and to-date there are an estimated 200,000 believers in Laos.
- There are over 148 ethno-linguistic people groups in Laos out of which 82 distinct languages are spoken. Many of these groups have populations less than 10,000. All of these groups were created to worship the Lord yet remain unengaged and unreached due to barriers of communication, physical access and spiritual bondage.

The So People of Laos



Introduction and History

The So live along both banks of the Mekong River in Thailand and Laos. This is a rugged mountain region with many dense tropical forests. The Lao-Thai name So ("elder brother") refers to the fact that the So were present in this area long before their "younger brothers," the Lao. The So are bilingual, speaking So (a Mon-Khmer language) in their homes and Lao in social settings.

It is said that the Mon Khmer-speaking tribes were the original settlers of this region. However, they were pushed out of the best lands in the early centuries A.D. by Thai-speaking peoples. About 400 years ago, the Thai-speakers forced the So to leave their homes and re-settle on the banks of the Mekong River. They gradually adapted to the lifestyles of the Thai and the Lao. In recent years, Laos has been the location of numerous battles. It has also been the object of political competition among China, Russia, and Vietnam. Recurring warfare and forced relocation has disrupted the lives of the So.

What Are Their Lives Like?

The So of Laos are primarily farmers. They cultivate a wide variety of crops, such as rice, fruit, and vegetables, for both consumption and trade. They are poorer than most of the surrounding ethnic groups and are therefore dependent on the Lao for many goods and services. The villagers also frequently meet with the Thai to trade meat and vegetables for necessary items such as clothing and salt.

Over the years, the So began adopting the practices of the surrounding peoples, especially the Thai and Lao. This brought on many significant changes within their culture. For example, they no longer use their traditional farming methods of burning and clearing plots. Instead, they grow wet-rice on terraced plots, which is the agricultural method of the Thai. They also raise their cattle and till their fields much like the Lao. The fields are prepared with plows drawn by buffalo or oxen. In addition, fishing and hunting have become important activities.

Such things as traditional dress, language, educational methods, housing, and public administration have also changed over the years. Only a few distinctive, cultural characteristics have remained, such as the silk scarves worn by the So women around a bun of hair at their necks.

Among the So, the village is considered the most significant political unit of society. Each village is led by a headman, and each family is led by the father. A young married couple may live with the bride's family until they are able to establish their own home. The So typically live in thatch roof bamboo houses built on stilts. They are not known to be clean people, but rather dirty and disorderly.

What Are Their Beliefs?

Buddhism was introduced into Thailand in 329 B.C.; and today, most of the So profess to be Buddhist. However, most of them have mixed elements of Buddhism with their traditional animistic beliefs (belief that non-living objects have spirits). They often seek help through supernatural spirits and objects. Ancestor worship (praying to deceased ancestors for provision and guidance) is also common. The ancestral spirits are thought to cause illnesses if they are not appeased. Families usually have small altars near their homes where sacrifices and offerings are made to the spirits. The people also believe that each village has a guardian spirit, as well as various spirits that are linked to the elements of nature.

Prayer Points

1. Pray that God will give missions agencies in Laos fresh strategies for reaching the So with the Gospel.
2. Ask the Lord to call Christian medical teams and humanitarian aid workers to go to Laos and live among the So.
3. Pray that God will protect the So from the destructive floods in their region.
4. Ask God to strengthen, encourage, and protect the few known So Christians.
5. Pray that the So believers will have opportunities to share the Gospel with their own people.
6. Ask God to call forth prayer teams who will begin breaking up the soil through worship and intercession.
7. Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among the So.