

Latter-day Saints enjoy blessings of the Church in Laos

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Public Affairs missionaries

Published: Saturday, Oct. 16, 2010

In Laos, once called the "Land of a Million Elephants," Church membership in the capital city Vientiane reaches approximately 200. More than 100 actively attend a branch under the direction of the Thailand Bangkok Mission. Laos was dedicated in 2006 by Elder Jeffery R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve.



Sister Bounmy Buttavong of Laos joined the Church while visiting the U.S. in 1991.

Bounmy Buttavong, the first Laos member, joined the Church in 1991 in Minnesota, while living in the United States. Since she returned to Laos in 2002, she has served as the branch Relief Society president. Many of her family have since joined the Church in Laos and the U.S.

Tiengsak Intravong, 25, a grandson of Bounmy Buttavong, was baptized in 2004. As the first Laos member to serve a mission, he was called to Thailand. He and his new wife, the former Kounngang Khompadith, serve as translators for the Church. The Book of Mormon in Laotian at present is printed in a shortened version. Brother Intravong assisted in the complete translation of the entire Book of Mormon with four other members. Now the translation is awaiting the final approval for printing.

Tiengsak and Kounngang were married in the [Kona Hawaii Temple](#) on Sept. 8 and became what is believed to be the first members from Laos to attend BYU-Hawaii when they enrolled shortly after their marriage. Their families are all active members.

Khampee Keosouphom previously worked 14 years for the U.S. Embassy. After his baptism in 2004, he has been employed by the Church as driver, translator and coordinator of all Church activities. He was

made branch president two months after his baptism. His wife, Booalay, and daughter, Lacrahana, are also active members.

It was through his efforts that negotiations were made for the branch to meet regularly at a private mansion with beautifully groomed grounds. Brother Keosouphom spends countless hours and energy serving members, organizing projects and transporting the senior couples to and from their multiple places such as their commitment to teach English approximately 14 hours per week.

Two senior missionary couples, Elder Edward Fountaine and Sister Joy Fountaine, acting Deseret International Charities country directors, and Elder Gary Nielson and Sister Loretta Nielson, humanitarian specialists, are presently serving for 23 months. The first senior couples to serve in Laos arrived in 1995.

At a recent branch meeting, 99 members of all ages were present, from Primary, school age and young adults to the older generation.

In Laos, 400-500 wheelchairs are distributed each year through Deseret International Charities. The government locates people with disabilities and then notifies a wheelchair company that custom makes every wheelchair for each recipient. The senior missionaries also are actively engaged in clean water projects that involve piping in the water from wells and constructing above-ground water tanks. More than 200 wells and water tanks have been completed. Three to four are completed each month. Not only are toilet facilities provided for schools, but school repairs are made when necessary such as painting, installation of new roofs and the providing of white boards and other supplies.