

Gospel Globe-Trotters

The overseas gospel adventures of Louis and June Eldredge and their six children began in 1966, when the United States government assigned Brother Eldredge, a civil engineer, to work in Bangkok for several years. While staying in a hotel there, family members met "George," an [page 69] orphaned teenager who would come to have great meaning in their lives and to the spread of the gospel in Thailand.

When the family moved 150 miles north to Korat, George joined them. Soon the Eldredges were welcoming dozens of Latter-day Saint servicemen from nearby military bases into their home. In 1967 the Eldredges decided to adopt George, whose real name is Anan, and on Christmas Eve of that year he was baptized by his new father. Soon the gatherings at the Eldredge home began to include many young Thais, and Anan taught them the gospel and translated hymns into Thai for them. When the first missionaries came to Thailand in 1968, Anan was asked to teach them Thai and help translate the discussions. After the Eldredge family returned home to California, Anan received a mission call to Bangkok and went back to his homeland to preach the gospel. Later in his life he supervised the translation of the scriptures into Thai and served as a mission president in Thailand.

Meanwhile, the other Eldredges were having further gospel adventures overseas. In the early 1970s Brother Eldredge worked in DaNang and Saigon, South Vietnam, where he served as a district president, oversaw membership and financial records, and worked closely with the few missionaries serving there. When the Viet Cong invasion became imminent, Brother Eldredge remained as long as possible in Saigon to negotiate with the United States Embassy for the safe departure of Vietnamese Saints. While assisting in the evacuation of members, two native Vietnamese Church leaders became trapped at a roadblock and were imprisoned for many years, though both eventually made it to the United States.

In 1975 the Eldredges went to Islamabad, Pakistan, where they worshipped with a small group of expatriates and shared the gospel with many people. Later, after spending a year learning French in Washington, D.C., Brother and Sister Eldredge went to Abidjan, Ivory Coast, from where Brother Eldredge monitored projects for his work in twenty-four African countries. While there, the Eldredges attended Church meetings in a distant village and also held them in their own home. After Brother Eldredge retired, he and his wife continued to accept consulting assignments from time to time. In 1986 they went to Bangladesh to work until 1989, and in 1991 they served a full-time mission in Thailand.

Several Eldredge children and grandchildren have also served missions to Thailand; altogether, family members have contributed about 22 years of Church work there. "We like to think that the Lord used us as tools to prepare paths by which his work could be successfully accomplished," says Sister Eldredge. Brother and Sister Eldredge are members of the Bloomington First Ward, Bloomington Utah Stake.