

History: Who are the Hmong?



The Hmong are a distinct group of people originated from China dated back to the 14th century. After many civil wars with the Chinese during the 18th century, many Hmong migrated to Southeast Asia. Eventually they made their homes on the mountain tops of North Vietnam, Laos and Thailand. Because of their value for freedom and democracy, the Hmong supported the French during their time of colonization of Southeast Asia in the late 19th Century. Later, they supported the United States' effort to prevent the communists from taking control of Laos in the 1960's. In this capacity, the Hmong became alliance of the United States in a Secret War against the North Vietnamese communist. After the Vietnam war ended in 1975,

the Hmong were targeted by the communists for persecution. They had limited choices, therefore many of them fled to the refugee camps in Thailand and eventually resettled in third countries such as United States, Canada, Australia, France, South America, and other countries. Therefore, the majority of the Hmong that are living in the United States are refugees from Laos. The Hmong are clan and family oriented people. They are known for and proud of their hospitality, friendliness and self-sufficient effort. They like to live close to their family members and clan members so that they can help each other in time of need.

What is the Hmong Traditional Religion?



The majority of the Hmong people practice the religion of worshipping the spirits. Although sociologists and anthropologists labeled the Hmong religion as animism; however, for the Hmong, their religion is known as “The Ways of the Spirits”. Some of the spirits are good while others are bad. The good spirits—mostly are the spirits of their dead ancestors--can be called to help in time of need. The bad spirits—mostly are the spirits of the wild--can cause harm to them at anytime. They

believe that the spirits of the deceased ancestors are still alive and have influenced on the living. At times they called on the ancestral spirits to help them, and at times the ancestral spirits come to protect the living and at another times caused them to be sick

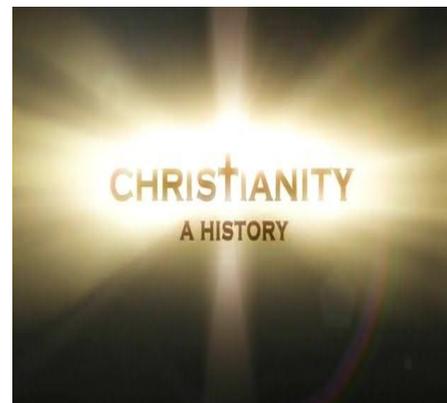
because the children had caused the spirits to be angry or forgot to make sacrifices to the spirits, etc.

They also believe that there is the devil. The devil is always an evil spirit. In the back of their mind there is also a King of the Universe or an Almighty God. They also called on this God for help in time of sickness or when bad things happened to them. However, the core belief of the Hmong religion is **re-incarnation**. They believe that a person has multiple souls. After death one of the person's souls stay with the body at the grave. One soul travels on a journey to be with his/hers ancestors in a place where they will continue to desire food and material possessions. Another soul re-incarnated into this world to be a different person, thing, or animal, etc. and the process will start over and over again. With this type of faith, they practice animal sacrifices and shamanism. Seventy percent of the Hmong in North America still believe in their traditional religion. We must pray for them and work together to bring them the Good News that Christ is the Ultimate sacrifice. Though Christ they have eternal life with the Creator of the Universe.



How did Christianity come to the Hmong?

The Gospel first came to the Hmong people in Laos by the missionaries of the Christian and Missionary Alliance and the Roman Catholic in the late 1940's. By 1975, it was estimated that 7000 Hmong had become Christians. These Christians continued to share the Gospel with the non-Christians in the refugee camps in Thailand. Many more have become Christians while living in the refugee camps. When the Hmong Christians came to the United States, they continued to spread the Gospel and many more have received the Lord Jesus Christ to be their Savior.



The LC-MS Hmong ministries started by way of Lutheran Churches sponsoring Hmong families from the refugee camps in Thailand. With the help of the Hmong people, some Lutheran Churches continued reaching out to other Hmong families and Hmong services and Bible classes were started. From 1980 to 1993 there are three Hmong ministries in the LC-MS. To date there are twenty three LCMS Hmong ministries in eight different

Districts. There are eighteen Hmong leaders are serving these ministries. The LCMS Ministries continue to grow with God's grace. We hope that many more families will come to faith in Christ to be saved from their sins, and that many more leaders will also be trained to continue expand the LC-MS Hmong ministries throughout North America and the world.

What are some of the Potential Obstacles you will face when witnessing to the Hmong?

The following is a list of issues that potentially could be obstacles that you will have to deal with when you are witnessing to the Hmong people. Some people are more passionate about certain issues than others. They are not ranking in order of importance.

Hmong Traditions:

- The Hmong belief system is still very much part of their lives.
- They fear of giving who they are as a Hmong person
- Fear of losing Hmong culture
- Reincarnation is important to them
- Don't understand the Christian religion
- They hope to be with the deceased ancestors
- Sacrifices are important to them
- They are yawning for traditional funeral service

Christian Faith

- There is no God
- Jesus is a white man's Savior
- Jesus was not the Savior but a mere man
- The Bible is only a book – written by men
- Too many young pastors
- Pastors are just workers like anyone else working for money
- The Christians criticize the Hmong religion
- The Christians shun the non-Christians
- There are too many denominations
- The Christians are too serious
- Christianity doesn't provide opportunity to do other things

- Too much hatred, politics, not getting along etc. in Christianity.
- The Christians are committing sins
- Many Christians have bad attitudes
- Focus more on the physical needs than spiritual needs

Others:

- Afraid to find out the truth
- Lazy of going to Church.
- They said they want to go to Church but now is not the time
- Parents forbid young people to go to Church
- Hmong should not believe in someone else's religion
- They have no relatives or friends in Church
- The Christian children joined gangs
- They have committed sins too great for God to forgive
- Some men have multiple wives or desire to have more than one wife
- They want to have more freedom
- They are more loving and caring than Christians
- They want to have more fun

- The Christians go to church too much
- The Christians don't focus on life, but only on God

What attracted the Hmong people to go to Church?

The following is a list of reasons for them to become Christians. These are not ranking in order of importance.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer for the sick • Everyone in their clan is going to church • Curiosity • No relatives or family members to help • Do not know Hmong religion • Desire helps from the Church • Church is giving free stuff • Sponsors are Christians • Friends are Christians • Education • Denomination • Want to know more about God | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents brought their children to faith • Parents let children go to Church • Family problems • Force to go to Church • Bad dreams • Fear of the Devil • Bored with Hmong religion • No one to love • Want to lead a good life • Married to a Christian person • In-laws are Christians • Passionate Pastor • Church members are friendly |
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How can I witness to the Hmong?

The key is to focus on the need of the whole people and not just the spiritual aspect of it. **First**, get to know some Hmong families or peoples. **Second**, get to know what these people believe. **Third**, share the Gospel with them. **Fourth**, invite them to your Church service, Bible class, Sunday school, VBS or other Church functions. **Fifth**, be willing to help out with some material needs, provide transportation for them to come to Church if there is a need. **Sixth**, continue to visit them and keep on encouraging them. **Seventh**, pray for them.

LCMS St. Michael's and Our Savior Lutheran Hmong Ministry

Members



Currently, St. Michael and Our Savior Lutheran Hmong Ministry has 30 families with a total of 125 individuals. The majority of the members are children and young adults. They all were from different denominations and clans. Pastor Lang Yang is the Director of Hmong Ministry. The ministry is in a partnership with St. Michael's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Richville, MI, and Our Savior Lutheran Church and School of Lansing, MI, and the Michigan District.

Mission

We, the members of St. Michael's and Our Savior Lutheran Hmong Ministry, in response to God's mercy and grace, dedicate ourselves to glorifying Him through receiving His gifts of Word and Sacrament, and to share His love, mercy and grace to our fellow Hmong in the community and to all people.

Church Schedules

Everyone is welcome to join us during our time with the Lord on Sunday.

St. Michael's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Saturday Service (2nd and 4th Saturday of each Month)

8:00-9:00 a.m. Bible Class
9:00-10:00 a.m. Worship Service

Our Savior Lutheran Church and School
Sunday Service

9:15 a.m.-10:15 a.m. Bible Class
10:45 – 11:45 p.m. Worship Service
6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Monday Bible Study

Rev. Dr. Lang Yang, can be reached at Cell: 989-239-4758 or
St. Michael's (989) 868-4791 Ext. 204 or Our Savior (517) 882-8665 Ext. 104 or
E-mail: numlaaj@yahoo.com