

CONFIDENTIAL

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MOVING OUT

The time has come for us to give serious consideration to the possibilities of moving our radio work elsewhere.

The warning signs are on the wall. We would be foolish to ignore them particularly in view of the strategic ministry that our radio work could have in the probable event of the departure of all missionary personnel from Laos.

It seems there are two main alternatives, if radio programming (in Lao and Miao) be continued once missionaries have left. Let's consider these in turn:-

1. The work in the studio could continue unhindered

We are not too far from the point where the work in the studio could continue if necessary, without missionary supervision. Nyia has been developing skills in leadership and taking responsibility and if necessary could supervise the work of the studio though possibly at a reduced work level.

However there are two important aspects that are quite likely to curtail this possibility.

- a. The question of finance - both the cost of raw materials and also payment of staff by the church. Running costs would be too high for the church to maintain.
- b. Pressure from the government would probably force the studio work to be discontinued on account of its "propaganda". Radio as such stands in the forefront of church related ministries to be affected.

2. The studio work should be phased out in Laos

The present assets of the equipment alone in the studio are of the order of \$ 6000. All the equipment is in excellent running condition and should therefore be salvaged if possible. Other assets, including tapes and stock items, total a further \$ 1500 approx although worth considerably more on the free market.

The possibility of moving the studio to Thailand has been suggested. Indeed we have the necessary equipment ready to set up a complete studio.

But more important than equipment are the personnel for programming. Lao Christians are a rare breed and, to my knowledge, are at present unknown outside of Laos. Miao are much more plentiful though few have much experience in radio programming (none of the same calibre as Nyia).

Let us assume therefore that we shall need to handpick and send both Lao and Miao personnel out of the country for the express purpose of programming in these languages. What are the possibilities?

i. They could be assigned to work in studios already existing in Thailand. I would recommend FBC in Bangkok and Voice of Peace in Chiangmai. The latter might be more preferable as there the culture and environment are closer to that of Laos. The language is closer too and for the Meo it would be a great advantage to have Meo villages and churches not too far distant both for fellowship and for programming help.

There are snags to this suggestion - possibly the foremost being that of permission to work in Thailand. Maybe by assigning themselves to a bible school for limited studies these problems could be circumnavigated.

Financial support could still be forthcoming through CMA channels.

ii. A Lao couple, at least, could be sent to Manila. FBC would like to see a Lao person there to assist in regular programming with a view to expanding the proposed daily half hour block on the M.W. transmission to one hour. This hour would include a 15 minute newscast in Lao.

How feasible is this? From the financial aspect it would seem that FBC already have a scheme for recruiting such people for a four year term during which time they would pay them an allowance, and also pay their travel to and from Manila (we are presently awaiting details on this).

The next question is 'who to send?' At the recent LCC (Laos Christian Radio Committee), meeting in Savannakhet it was the general feeling that it would be most desirable to send one married couple at least. If an hour block is to be contemplated two couples would be more desirable in view of the heavy programming demands. The LCC ~~mission~~ member missions would probably be able to support additional personnel.

While no ideal couple exists at present there are those who would in the future approach to having the qualifications and experience we are seeking. But in addition to this there is both their availability and willingness to be considered (This would apply to a Meo couple too).

At the LCC meeting it was also recommended that in the event of our sending Lao personnel to Manila a missionary also be sent to assist in supervising the programming and also to help evaluate existing programme materials there.

And what of our equipment? If the CMA is still considering building its own studio in Thailand preference should be given for that. If not the equipment should be put up for sale with FBC Bangkok being given the preference.

Preservation of tapes

While we await further developments before taking action on the foregoing, steps are being taken to ensure that all our valuable recordings will be preserved.

Already more than 30 hours of Lao recordings have been stored on cassettes ready for shipping to Bangkok. This is just a beginning and Meo recordings will be treated too in the same way. The other languages recordings are dispensable. A letter has recently been received from FBC informing of a donation made to them for this express purpose and they are anxious that we follow through. (This applies to Lao language materials only).

If we were to agree to programming in Manila, it would be preferable to have our reel tapes there too for use in programme production although

tapes could be recopied from the cassettes if necessary.

Observations and Recommendations

A high priority should be given to radio programmes in the future. It is likely that these could be a sole voice for the cause of the gospel in Laos and therefore a valuable source of encouragement and inspiration to the Christians.

Programmes on M.W. will be a very viable force to be reckoned with. The need for spiritual leaders to remain in the country must not be overlooked of course and this should be remembered when selecting personnel for Manila.

Preparing radio programmes for FEBC is now our top priority and whatever our plans for the future a good stock of programmes in Manila is essential.

I would therefore make the following recommendations:-

- i. That the feelings of some of the nationals be sounded out in relation to these observations (although not being generally made known)
- ii. That one Lao couple and one Neo couple be selected and our suggestions made known to them for consideration and prayer
- iii. That Lao programmes be given top priority in the meantime
- iv. That Neo programming be restarted on a regular basis
- v. That the work in the studio continue as normal for the present time for at least as long as is reasonably possible.
- vi. That we should continue to copy off onto cassettes as many valuable recordings as possible for shipping to Bangkok for safe keeping.
- vii. That both FEBC and Voice of Peace be sounded out as to the possibility of absorbing personnel from Laos if necessary.
- viii. That we should seek the Lord's special wisdom at this time and be particularly sensitive to His will.

respectfully submitted,

FAS/ng