

The So people

OF

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A 30 Day Prayer Guide







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The writings in this book were put together by a team of eclectic workers passionate about reaching the So. Specific names and locations have been changed in order to protect others.



Laos is a country that has often gone unnoticed. One could almost say that it's been forgotten. But today is a new day. Today we will remember Laos.

Of all the countries in Southeast Asia, Laos is the poorest and least developed. It is isolated, untouched and beautifully diverse with over 148 ethno-linguistic people groups. This accounts for 6.5 million residents.

The Lao Kingdom of "a million elephants" was created by King Fa Ngum in the 14th century. By the late 1800's, Laos was colonized by France. In 1945, the U.S. entered Laos during the American-Vietnam War. However, on December 2nd, 1975, Lao communist forces, supported by Vietnam, declared independence and established the Lao Peoples Democratic Republic (Lao P.D.R). Laos is now one of the five remaining communist countries in the world.

During the American- Vietnam war, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) launched a secret campaign dropping over 260 million bombs on communist forces. Many bombs did not immediately explode and these oft-hidden detonations still cause casualties today. Additionally, CIA operatives used missionary work as a plausible cover for their entrance into the country. Because of this, Christianity has unfortunately been seen as a tool of foreign governments (especially of the U.S.) to strategically undermine the stability of the Lao P.D.R.

Throughout the country, Christians are regularly persecuted in both political and social arenas. Persecution from the government occurs in a variety of ways, including: time in jail, kidnapping, unfairly repossessing land and property, and refusing to promote in the workplace. Within families and communities, intense cultural, religious, and social pressure is put on those who commit to following Jesus.

Laos is very slowly opening up to the Western world. The economy, trade, infrastructure and tourism are growing. More importantly, the Church is growing as the Kingdom of God advances. More people are remembering Laos.



The So people

WHO ARE THEY?

The So people are descendants of some of the original tribes of mainland Southeast Asia. They speak a Mon-Khmer language and have a distinct culture and worldview. Other names for the So include: Mangkong, Kha So, So Tri and Lao Teung. These people are subsistence agricultural farmers and most live below the poverty line. The So are devoted Animists who worship ancestors and spirits. They have many superstitions and ceremonies.



WHERE DO THEY LIVE?

Today the So live in the same region in Laos as they did thousands of years ago, with the exception of an additional group of So living in Northeast Thailand (40,000). Our research indicates approximately 60,000 So people in the provinces of Khammoune and Savannakhet in central Laos.

HOW MANY FOLLOW JESUS?

As of 2013, there are about 70-75 So believers located in Laos and about 25-30 in Thailand. Of the total So population, only 0.05 percent follow Jesus. They are classified as an Unreached People Group (UPG).



This 30-day prayer guide was created to introduce you to the So people of Laos. We encourage you to use it in as many different ways as you possibly can.

Commit to 30 days of prayer. Take a few minutes each morning or evening and read one page. You can pray through it during your personal time with God or use it with a spouse, friend, or coworker. Use it in small groups, prayer groups, or during family devotions. When you're finished, pass it on to someone else until it is completely worn out!

The work to reach the nations begins with prayer and is sustained by it. Your partnership is essential in breaking down strongholds. It allows for workers in the field to move with confidence, find hearts that have been prepared by the Spirit, and preach the Gospel unabashedly,

Join the vision. Let's ask God for a movement of reproducing churches among the So people . . . simply because He is worthy.

★ FOR HIS *GLORY* AND *RENEWAL*, ★
YOUR FELLOW *PRAYER* WARRIORS

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people... This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

Day 1



Origins

"Blessed are the poor
in spirit, for theirs is the
kingdom of heaven."
(Matthew 5:3)

The So people along with other small indigenous tribes, have lived in isolation for centuries. Their histories have mostly been influenced by whichever major kingdom was ruling at the time.

The first kingdom to which these tribes paid homage was the mighty Khmer empire who dominated much of Southeast Asia in the early centuries A.D. As the Khmer power during the 16th century began to decline, Tai-speaking tribes began to push the So out of the best lands.

In the late 18th century, Chao Anou, the Lao king of Vientiane, unsuccessfully attempted to rebel against its ruler, the Kingdom of Siam (Thailand). This failed uprising caused major repercussions for the city of Vientiane and the thousands of indigenous peoples under its influence, including the So tribe.

In response to the threat of losing power, Siam forcibly relocated tens of thousands of people from the east bank of the Mekong River to what is now known as Northeast Thailand. (Depopulating a region was a common wartime practice of the day.) The remaining So in Laos, who were not relocated, are now spread throughout Khammoune and Savannakhet Province - the primary residence of the So tribe today.

★ ★
Pray that the *Kingdom* of God
would come to the So and *reign*
forever among their people.
★ ★

Day
2



The Thai So

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.
John 4:23

After being relocated by the armies of Siam in the 1800's the Thai So have long since settled and made Thailand their home. The Thai So have retained much of their language, culture, and oral histories. Today they live in relative comfort compared to their ancestral brothers and sisters in underdeveloped Laos. Historically, the Thai So have been resistant to the Gospel.

In the past, a series of evangelistic story booklets were created in the So language using the Thai script. These were distributed to thousands of So who enthusiastically accepted them, although very few came to faith.

Currently, there is one So Church in Northeast Thailand comprising about 25-30 faithful believers. Also, nearby, there is a small team working on translating the Bible into the So language. The translation is being done using the Thai script for the So in Thailand.

★ *Pray* for the *Word* of *God* to come into the lives of the *So*, both in Laos and Thailand - and that they would be *eager* to not only hear but also *believe* and *obey*. ★

Day 3



First Fruits

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."
Acts 2:38

Missionaries with New Tribes Mission were some of the first to arrive in Northeast Thailand to share Jesus with the Thai So. In faith they lived among the people, learned the language, and labored for the Gospel.

One rainy day, two men found themselves stuck in mud on a remote jungle road with no way to pull their vehicle out. So they waited. Out of the surrounding jungle appeared So tribesmen dressed in nothing but the traditional scarf around their waist.

One man, whom they later learned was named Naiso, approached and asked, "What are you doing here?"

"We have come to tell the So people about the One who made the world and everything in it," responded the missionaries.

Without hesitation Naiso said, "I've looked at the stars and have often wondered where they come from. Will you teach me?"

Naiso was baptized in 1969 in a small puddle of knee-deep water filled with leeches. He was one of the first Thai So believers. This was God's appointed time. He was His first fruits. The task is not yet complete. There are many more that belong to Him.

Today in Laos there are 55-60 known baptized believers among the So. Most have been baptized recently, and more will soon be. We celebrate with the ones who have publically declared their commitment to Jesus! We know that this is just the beginning of a greater harvest to come.

★ *Pray* that all who come to *faith* will be *obedient* to the Lord in baptism and allow His *Holy* Spirit to *transform* their lives. ★

Day 4



THANK
YOU
FOR
OZ-YA-R-P

Breaking Ground

The Lord is my light and
my salvation—whom shall
I fear? The Lord is the
stronghold of my life—of
whom shall I be afraid?
Psalm 27:1

In 1969, the dusty streets of a tiny town in Central Laos, called Thakeak, saw the arrival of two single women from Overseas Missionary Fellowship. They came to sow the Gospel among the So.

The women would sit under trees and explain the Gospel in Lao, using posters and recordings in So. They also did medical work to treat common diseases. One of these workers recalls a response they would often receive, "What you teach is very good, but it cannot be for us. We are So and cannot leave the ways of our ancestors or the spirits that our parents worshipped."

Hearts were hardened. Minds were darkened. The spirits kept them in bondage. Spiritual oppression was especially intense during full moons on the third lunar month when demons would come and possess the So women. The work of the women was only sustained through intense prayer.

Breakthrough came when God delivered an opium addict to become the first So believer in Laos. His zeal led to the conversion of several other families, including a spirit medium.

In 1975, Communist forces declared victory in Laos, bringing an end to the American-Vietnam War. All missionary workers departed, leaving behind less than a dozen So believers. It would take another 33 years before the work among the So in Laos would continue.

Praise God for all the pioneers who
have gone before us. Pray for the
current team to persevere and see
more breakthroughs among the So.

Day 5



The Sacred Spirit

They sacrificed to false gods,
which are not God—
gods they had not known...
Deuteronomy 32:17a

“Where do you believe this world comes from? The trees, fields, and mountains . . . who made them?” We asked this question as we sat down with several So elders.

They responded, “We have no idea where the world came from. But the “Yiang” was here before everything existed. It was the one who established the customary laws that our ancestors followed. We continue to follow these laws today.”

The So believe that the “Yiang” or “Sacred Spirit” must always be appeased. Not following the timeless traditions of their forefathers would bring sickness, harm, and misfortune. This belief system, where the spirit world and physical world are interconnected, is called Animism.

The life of every So village revolves around ceremonial offerings and sacrifices to spirits of the dead. The people also believe that each village has a guardian spirit, as well as various other spirits that are linked to elements of nature. Charms, amulets, tattoos, and potions are commonly used to provide protection and good health.

Buddhism is promoted by Lao people as the national religion. However, it has not taken root among the So. Buddhist temples, or “Wats,” are rare in So villages. Those that exist are either empty or housed by non-local Lao monks.

★ *Pray* that the So would come to know the one *Spirit* who is *greater* than *any* other spirit and that they'll be able to *worship* like *never* before. ★

Day 6



Living Off the Land

The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field
Luke 10:2

So people are experts in finding food. If you were to peek inside their hand woven baskets you would find an assortment of edible critters: fish, crabs, eels, snakes, and a variety of insects too many to name.

They are subsistence farmers, living off the land as they have for centuries. They cultivate a wide variety of crops, such as rice, fruit, and vegetables.

In the past they used a method of slashing and burning land to grow rice. Now they use terraced plots to grow rice and buffalos to plow the fields. During the planting and harvesting season, villages will be empty because everyone, whether young or old, will be out working in the rice fields.

The So are much poorer than surrounding ethnic groups and heavily dependent on the Lao for many goods and services. Every morning groups of So women can be found selling their seasonal produce to people passing by on the main road. They often trade meat and vegetables for items such as clothing and salt.

★ ★
Pray for more workers to be *found*
among the So, to *reach* the So - all the
resources are in the *harvest*.
★ ★

Day
7



Least of These

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.
Matthew 25:40

What does abject poverty look like? It is a daily struggle for the basic necessities of life: food, shelter, and clothing. This is a harsh reality for many So villages in rural Laos

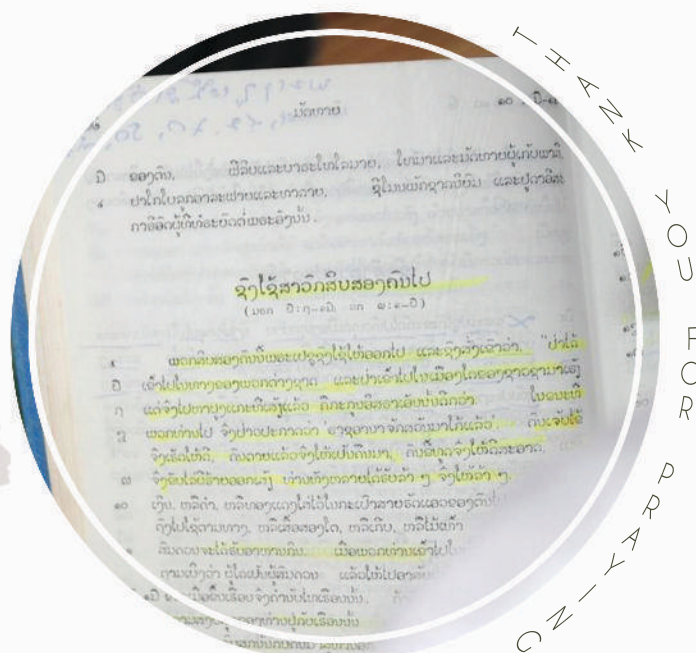
Clean water is hard to obtain. Many people get sick from waterborne diseases. Common water sources are hand-dug wells, springs, streams, rivers, and rain. For the less fortunate, they (mostly women and young girls) must carry buckets of water over their shoulders for quite some distance.

Sanitation is not a priority for the So. Ninety percent of the time, not even a single latrine in a So village can be found. Almost all families practice open defecation, usually in a nearby bush or forest. Unclean animals are also very much a part of village life.

Medicine is considered a luxury. Simple painkillers like Tylenol are unavailable. The best thing parents can do to provide relief for a child's fever is a wet rag. Another option to help a loved one is to see a witch doctor and ask the spirits for healing. This is also quite costly as they must offer an animal as a sacrifice.

★ *Pray* that the *So* would find riches, healing, and hope in the *Father*. Ask for more people to be the hands of *Jesus* through social *development* projects. ★

Day
&



Language of Love

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.
Hebrews 4:12

"I didn't know that God could understand So. Now I can pray in my own language!" exclaimed a So woman who had come to faith years ago but was never encouraged to use her own native tongue.

The So in Laos are bilingual. Their heart language is So, which they use in homes and social settings. In formal settings, such as schools or markets, they speak Lao.

So is Mon-Khmer in origin and sounds very different from Lao, the national language. It has unique sounds that are not found in the Lao language and does not have tones while the Lao language is tonal.

The So spoken in Laos is an oral language. This means it does not have a written form. With no written script, literate So believers use the Lao Bible. Although this is great, it is not as powerful as singing, praying, and hearing the Word of God in their first, "heart," language. So is the language that speaks to the core of who they are. It is their language of love.

★ *Pray* that *Bible* stories would soon be recorded in the So *language* so they can hear "God's *Love* Story" in their own *tongue*. ★

Day
9



THANK
YOU
FOR
OZ-YAR-P

Dust and Mud

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.
Ephesians 2:4-5

The So people live in areas that are highly susceptible to natural disasters. These disasters cause food shortages and greatly affect the rural population.

The climate in Laos is described as “tropical monsoon,” with two main seasons: the dry season and the rainy season. During half the year a person’s feet may be caked in dust, while during the other half of the year, their feet will most likely be sloshing in mud.

November through May is dry season. The roads are dusty and the plants are brown and yellow. This season is prone to harsh droughts.

From May to November there are constant showers. The rain brings color, lush forests, and lots of mud. This season is prone to destructive floods and many So villages are also completely cut off and inaccessible by road. Travel is difficult and resources are hard to obtain. Believers are not visited for months at a time.

Only the most determined individuals can go on visitations, those who are willing to brave the rivers, rain, and mud.

Ask the *Lord* to *rain* down His *blessing* on the So. *Pray* for His *mercy* to *sweep* over them like floodwaters.

Day
10



Families

Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.
Acts 8:18

Young Lintong lives in a rural So village. He and his younger sister have been raised by their grandparents since the death of their parents. When asked what happened to his mom and dad, he told this story.

"My father and mother died because they were cursed by others. Some people in my old village did not like them and put a curse on them. They both got really sick and died. So now my sister and I have come here to live with our grandpa and grandma."

The family is the most important social unit in the So culture. Many homes contain anywhere from 3 to 4 generations under one roof. They are committed to taking care of one another and expect the young to follow this cultural pattern. Children are taught to follow the traditions and beliefs of the family. If the elders worship the spirits, so will the children. Decisions are always made together, with the good of the family in mind. Sometimes, family is more important than school, especially if they are needed at home.

When So people choose to follow Christ it is never an individual decision. If Lintong's grandfather, the head of the household would choose to follow Jesus, then his entire household would most likely do the same. Young Lintong would experience the same faith and freedom in Jesus as anyone else in the family.

★ *Pray* for heads of households to *trust*
in *Christ* and *lead* their families
and children to do the *same*. ★

Day
11



SO WOMEN

How beautiful you are, my
darling! Oh, how beautiful!
Song of Solomon 1:15

So women are hard workers. Their daily routine consists of cooking from scratch, washing clothes by hand, and planting crops. In the heat of the day or in the drizzle of the rain, women are providing for their families. It's not uncommon to see a So woman working in the rice fields with a baby tied to her back. They are tough and often times vulnerable.

Many have husbands that are unfaithful. It is not surprising to meet a So woman who has been married twice and have both husbands leave her. They seem to accept this and some even say, "It's better to be married and left, than to have never been married at all."

Giving birth and raising children can also be quite difficult for So women. In rural villages there are no doctors or medical care. Children are born in the home using traditional methods where there is a high rate of infant mortality.

Their lives are full of hardship, brokenness, pain, and abuse.

★
Pray for the So *women* of
Laos to *embrace* their one
true Groom who will never
leave them or *forsake* them.
★

Day
12



Knowledge

The fear of the Lord is the
beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy
One is understanding.
Proverbs 9:10

We parked our vehicle on the side of the road to ask for directions from a group of So men. They were sitting together drinking rice whiskey in the traditional Lao-style house on stilts. Most of the men were shirtless. But one man stood out. He was clean cut, wore a nice shirt and long tan pants. He immediately greeted us and introduced himself as Lat.

Lat was very smart and knowledgeable. He gave us clear directions to the next town and mentioned that his father was the governor of that district. Lat was So. This was his village. He was visiting relatives. Lat had just returned from the capital city, Vientiane, where he studied Law at the local university.

We asked him, "Lat, do you know of any other So person in this entire province who has gone to university like you?"

Lat answered, "No, I don't. I don't know of a single So person who has gone to study like me."

Among the impoverished So in Laos a college education is extremely rare. Only individuals with the means, like the governor's son Lat, can pursue further education.

The So youth have minimal opportunities to improve their standing in society and seek a brighter future through education. Most of the youth will live their entire lives in the same area in which they were born. They will work, live, and fear as they always have. Most will have some basic schooling. A lucky few will go beyond that and move to larger towns for work, and maybe, just maybe, study at a local university.

★ *Pray* that *education* would
change *lives* and the Holy Spirit
would bring *understanding*,
knowledge, and wisdom. ★

Day
13



The Mediator

For there is one God and
one mediator between
God and mankind,
the man Christ Jesus.
2 Timothy 1:5

One of the most important roles of every So village is that of the “mediator”, better known as a shaman or spirit doctor. This is a man or woman who speaks to the spirits on behalf of the people and informs them when and how the spirits should be appeased.

Years ago there was a young woman who gave birth to a beautiful baby. Her joy was short-lived because she became terribly sick. The best and only thing she could do was seek the assistance of the spirit doctor. He would tell her what was wrong.

The shaman came to her aid and contacted the spirit that was afflicting her. He said it was the unsatisfied spirit of her deceased mother who caused the pain. In order for the young woman to be healed she must travel to her mother’s old village and offer a sacrifice – by shedding the blood of a small animal. She hadn’t given an offering to her dead mother for quite some time.

The sick woman was in no shape to travel. Her relatives asked permission to do the ceremony immediately. The shaman agreed. Right there in the woman’s house a sacrifice was made to the demonic spirit. As soon as they had finished with the offering the woman was instantly healed.

Pray that the So would *see* through
the *false* hope of demonic power and
put their *trust* in the *only* Mediator
who came and *died* for their sins.

Day
14



Elders

Stand up in the presence
of the aged, show respect
for the elderly and revere
your God. I am the Lord.
Leviticus 19:32

The So people love their elderly. Families will care for them in their own homes until the day they die, and continue to care for their spirits long into the after-life. Respect for those who are older, wiser and experienced is an inherent part of both So and Lao culture.

The elders carry a strong weight of influence. Their opinions are sought before an important decision is made that affects the entire village.

The elders are also the keepers of history. They remember the stories from their grandparents and their grandparents before them. They are the best at sitting around a fire and telling stories of war, life in the jungle, and even a great worldwide flood.

The elders are the owners of tradition. They want their values and beliefs passed on to the next generation when they die because they know that death is imminent.

Time is running out for this generation of So elders. Many have yet to hear about Jesus, the Creator of the universe and hope of all mankind. Wouldn't it be amazing if they could leave a legacy of faith rather than uncertainty? What would happen if they could tell stories of freedom rather than fear? How would life be different if they passed on traditions of life rather than death?

★
Pray for So *elders* and those
with *influence* to trust in Jesus
and leave behind a *legacy*
of faith-filled *followers*.
★

Day
15



The Afflicted

He heals the
brokenhearted
and binds up
their wounds.
Psalm 147:3

Physical affliction, suffering, and disease are common in many So villages. The people are desperate for any type of help or relief.

Kham was one such man who suffered greatly. For many months he could not even sit up. He simply lay underneath his house waiting for death. His family attended to him.

One day, Kham's family was approached by two friendly strangers. Kham's father made the strangers some tea and explained how the local hospital and the spirit doctors could not help his son. He asked with desperation, "Do you have any good medicine?"

The two men replied, "No we do not, but we have power from God."

"Please tell us more about this power!" responded the father, genuinely intrigued.

For the next half hour the entire family sat and listened to a story about a God who created the world, how mankind rejected him, and how he sent his son, Jesus. They heard how Jesus cast a demon out of a man with just his words. They heard how Jesus died, was buried, and came back to life.

The family was ready. They wanted to trust in Jesus. The two men explained that they must first remove the spirit strings from around Kham's wrists and neck. As they laid hands on the sick young man, the strangers led the entire family in a prayer to trust Christ.

★ *Pray* for Kham's *household* to
be *free* of every *affliction*
and *share* the story of
God's power with *others*. ★

Day
16



a church is born

This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how.
Mark 4:26

Tongsin was possessed by evil spirits. The demons began to torment him shortly after his three year old daughter had died. He was now completely crazy and lived in the wild, stealing food from villagers at night.

Villagers took Tongsin and bound his wrists and ankles with rope, then locked him in a bamboo cage they had built. It was for his own safety. They tried to help him but no one could, not even the village shamans.

One day Tongsin's brother came to him and suggested he call out to Jesus. This brother did not know anything about Jesus but heard from elsewhere that He could help. That was enough for Tongsin. He begged, "Jesus, oh Jesus, please help me. I am desperate." As Tongsin was pleading with God the bindings on his wrists loosened and fell off.

Tongsin's mind was restored. He shared with village leaders and elders what had happened. No one could deny that he was a changed man. Tongsin could not help but seek to learn more about Jesus. He traveled far to find another believer. He took instruction seriously and destroyed every idol, charm, trinket and object that had to do with the demons and the old way of bondage.

His faith and freedom has become so contagious that many have come to him for prayer and healing. In the last three years, Tongsin has personally led over 20 families to Christ! Tongsin now leads the first So Church in Laos.

★ ★ ★ ★
*Pray for a church to be
established within walking distance
of every So village in Laos.*

Day
17



Out of Reach

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.
2 Peter 3:9

Latsamy sat in a narrow motorized boat with five other Christian friends. Their goal was to reach a remote So village in order to encourage new believers there.

An hour into the trip the clouds darkened and the winds began to pick up. Any wave over a foot tall would cause serious damage to the small wooden vessel, so they slowed to a crawl and began to pray. Latsamy remembered the story of Jesus calming the storm and in his mind saw Christ standing over the stern.

The boat wasn't big enough for him to stand up in, so Latsamy raised his hands and shouted, "Jesus, you've stopped the winds before. Please do it now for us so we can reach your people!"

He knew without a doubt that the Lord wanted them to get there, yet the winds grew stronger and in the end they had to turn back. Feeling discouraged, the believers gathered together on the shore from where they first embarked. There was nothing to do except hold hands, pray, and wait patiently. Slowly, the winds began to die. Not a single raindrop fell.

Praising God they continued their journey over an enormous lake and up dangerous rivers. They arrived five hours later at dusk and over the next few days saw God do amazing things amongst the So in that village.

So communities cannot be found in any major towns or cities. Rather, these people congregate in remote areas that are hard to access, such as: mountain ranges, inland rivers, and low lying valleys. Bringing Jesus to them takes a considerable amount of time, effort, and risk.

ask God to *open* the *road* for
His *workers* to bring His
salvation to all So villages.

Day
18



person of peace

When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you.
Luke 10:5-6

Noy had a message to tell. He was compelled to share it in this particular So village. But would they accept his message? More importantly, would they accept him, a Lao person, as the messenger?

Noy remembered the words of Jesus in Matthew 10, "Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house... If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it." He realized that he did not need to worry about people's response. His job was to find the ones God had already prepared - a "person of peace."

With renewed confidence Noy approached a So family sitting together in their home. He discovered a sick man in terrible pain named Uncle Ging. Uncle explained how they spent a lot of money on different medicines, spells, and potions but nothing worked to relieve his pain.

Noy offered, "There is one Spirit that can heal you and he does not require money. Are you interested?"

With eyes wide, Uncle Ging responded, "Oh yes! Please tell me and my family about this Spirit!"

Uncle Ging and his entire household came to faith that day. Shortly after, the pain left and he was healed. Uncle Ging welcomed the messenger, accepted the message, and invited others to hear the good news. He was a person of peace.

★ *Pray* that God would *reveal* persons of *peace* in each new area and use them to *lead* *many* more to *Christ*. ★

Day
19



power of the gospel

Heal the sick, raise the dead,
cleanse those who have leprosy,
drive out demons. Freely you
have received, freely give.
Matthew 10:8

La used to be a normal 16 year old girl until she was overtaken by a sinister power. She stopped talking and eating. She stayed huddled in dark corners. She cowered at the sight of people and light. She drooled. She was possessed by powerful evil spirits.

Local Lao believers shared the Gospel with La's family. They fasted, worshipped, and prayed over the demon possessed girl for hours. A large crowd had gathered because of the wailing and commotion. Finally La was delivered. She spoke her first words after months of silence, "Thank you. God bless you." The villagers were astonished. Several families have come to Christ since.

Many healings and deliverances are taking place among the So today. People are experiencing the power of the Gospel through miracles. They are hearing it proclaimed by mouth. And they are feeling its presence through selfless acts of love.

ask that displays of God's *power*
would open *hearts* to hear
and *receive* the death, burial,
and *resurrection* of Christ.

Day
20



extraordinary prayer

Continue steadfastly in
prayer, being watchful in it
with thanksgiving.
Colossians 4:2

Prayer is the greater work. Every journey begins with prayer, is sustained by it, and ends with it.

The So people live in utter darkness. Most have never heard of Jesus, let alone talked with Him or offered up praise. So we pray on their behalf. We ask God to break strongholds, raise up workers, and establish His church . . . and we're doing it on motorbikes.

Prayer walking teams are an integral part of the strategy to reach the So. Whether it is a group on motorcycles, bicycles or in air conditioned vehicles, people are praying on site with insight. Short-term teams are praying in So villages where prayers have never been uttered. Best of all, they're taking their stories home to mobilize others to pray.

One such team was on a prayer journey and came to a village of a known believer named Mr. Kham (see Day 15). The team of foreigners waited down the road, praying, while Noy, their Lao guide, went to visit this brand new believer. When Noy returned to the team 40 minutes later he reported that Mr. Kham was just baptized in a small pond! God answered their prayers as they were praying.

Ask that *extraordinary* prayer be
rooted into every facet of the So work.
Pray for more teams to *engage* in
prayer *walking* among the So.

Day
21



THANK
YOU
FOR
OZ-YA-R-P

persecution

"Remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering."
Hebrews 13:3

Persecution comes in many forms. Sometimes it comes from low-level officials who self-interpret the law. Sometimes it's from village elders who want to maintain the spiritual harmony of the community. Sometimes it's from family members who fear backlash from evil spirits. The common view for believers in Laos is that persecution must be minimized and that safety precautions must be taken before serving Christ.

The church in Laos has endured much suffering. It is common for police carrying weapons to threaten villagers with handcuffs and force them to sign documents denying their faith in Jesus. Many have signed. Persecution is very effective in weeding out uncommitted believers.

The So in Laos are new to Jesus and unexposed to Christianity. Miraculous healings, displays of God's power, and social welfare projects give a picture, and even definition, of Christians in a few So villages. Local village leaders see Jesus as a good thing. This small window of opportunity has allowed the Gospel to spread.

As the fame of Jesus spreads so has His notoriety among district authorities. Recently district police officers visited the home of a So church leader. They asked questions, confiscated Bibles and continue to watch him closely.

★ *Pray* for local *believers* to develop a *biblical* view of *persecution* and that they would *consider* it pure *joy* to *suffer* for *Christ*. ★

Day
22



Training Trainers

"Anyone who loves me will
obey my teaching..."
John 14:23-24

In the spirit of 2 Timothy 2:2, believers in Laos are being trained to train others to be obedient disciples. Each time a group of So disciples meet together they ask each other this question, "How have you obeyed Jesus this week?" They are then reminded of the goals they have made before God and are encouraged to pass on what they have learned to other leaders.

Loving accountability is one aspect of a discipleship process called Training for Trainers. A typical meeting would consist of: 1) caring for one another through prayer and counsel, 2) worshipping together, 3) accountability, 4) casting vision, 5) learning a new Lesson / Bible story, 6) practicing the lesson 7) setting goals, then, 8) sending them out in prayer.

Remember Tongsin, the demon-possessed man (see Day 16)? He has faithfully multiplied himself by starting new groups that have then produced still more groups. The goal is for these groups to become churches that obey the teachings of Christ and fulfill the functions of the church – which means they are teaching others to do the same.

Making disciples is extremely time and energy intensive, as well as very dangerous in a country like Laos. Travel difficulties and security are some of the many obstacles. But the cornerstone of discipleship is to obey the commands of Jesus, no matter what the cost. This is love.

★ *Pray* for So *believers* to
passionately *obey* Jesus out of a
profound love for Him and teach
others to do the *same*. ★

Day
23



Oral Learners

"All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.
1 Peter 1:24-25

"Today I will tell you a true story. A story that was written down by men as they were led by the Creator God. Long ago, before our forefathers, before anything was formed, in the very beginning, God existed. Before God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in it, there was nothing. The earth was dark and empty and God's Spirit was floating above the waters.

God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. God saw that the light was good. He separated the light from darkness and called the light 'day' and the darkness He called 'night'..."

Experts say that many people in the world are primarily Oral Learners. In a poor and developing country like Laos, where over 27% of people are illiterate, it is clear that most people will prefer learning through stories and visuals.

The So people in Laos are Oral Learners and have passed on stories for generations. But many have yet to receive God's Story. They have yet to hear of a glorious Creator, a heart wrenching separation, a rebellious people, and a magnificent sacrifice where Jesus makes sense.

God's story has now come to the So. Currently, short bible stories are being crafted and taught to So leaders to pass on to others.

★ ★
Pray for So believer's to *develop* a
strong Biblical *foundation* as they
memorize and pass on "God's Story."
★ ★

Day
24



Kingdom Movements

And the things you have heard
me say in the presence of many
witnesses entrust to reliable
people who will also be
qualified to teach others.
2 Timothy 2:2

The Kingdom of God is contagious. It advances in power and love. People are transformed when they allow Jesus to reign in their hearts. They can't help but speak, share, and shine in dark places. They can't help but declare his glory among the lost. This spiritual invasion is taking place all around the world as entire communities make Jesus their King.

More churches have been newly started in the last century than in all of church history combined. This phenomenon of exponential growth is described as a Church Planting or Multiplication Movement (CPM). CPM's are defined as, "a rapid and multiplicative increase of indigenous churches planting churches within a given people group or population segment" (David Garrison).

How will it be possible to reach 60,000 So people in Laos within this generation? Will one church suffice or will it take a movement of So churches planting So churches that are obediently winning the lost and reproducing themselves?

Years must be invested in So leaders. At the same time those So leaders must invest years in other So leaders, and so on. As people are being trained and mentored to obey all the commands of Jesus, the result is explosive growth beyond our wildest dreams. Kingdom movements cannot be contained.

★
Pray for So leaders to *invest* heavily
in other *leaders* resulting in generations
of churches that are *obedient* to Christ.
★

Day
25



Worldview

Do not conform to the
pattern of this world,
but be transformed by
the renewing of your mind.
Romans 12:2

Ms. Daowan is the only So person among a little gathering of Lao believers. She deals with intense pressure from family members to follow tradition and worship the spirits instead of following Jesus.

“My relatives tell me that I still need to make merit at the temple in order to appease the spirits. They ask, ‘Don’t you care about the spirit of your mother and father?’ I don’t know what to do. Can I follow Jesus and still make good merit at the temple for my family?”

It is not easy for the So people to gain a clear and Biblical view of who God is. Since Ms. Daowan was born she has understood the world through the lens of Animism syncretized with Buddhist beliefs. In order for her to fully grasp the character of God, her entire belief system must be addressed.

Addressing centuries of old belief systems and worldviews will take time. A long-term discipleship process is necessary. Some So leaders are being trained to memorize chronological Bible stories. These stories lay a solid foundation for understanding the character of God and gaining a biblical worldview.

★ *Pray* for more *story* tellers to address
the So *worldview* so that the
minds and *hearts* of the So can be
transformed to see *God* clearly. ★

Day
26



Messy Discipleship

Thus you will walk in
the ways of the good
and keep to the
paths of the righteous.
Proverbs 2:20

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★
Pray for So *believers* to see
clearly what displeases the *Lord*
and *grow* in conviction and
passion for *righteousness*.
★

Day
27



catalyst

Then I heard the voice of
the Lord saying, "Whom
shall I send? And who
will go for us?" And I
said, "Here am I. Send me!"
Isaiah 6:8

Huge fires always begin with a single spark or flame. In the same way, church multiplication movements always begin with obedient faith-filled individuals. We call them catalysts.

The definition of a catalyst is a person or thing that precipitates an event. Catalysts are starters. They have an apostolic-like gifting and are willing to break new ground in areas where no churches exist. An average catalyst will not have a college degree. Most won't ever write a book or speak at a conference. But all will suffer and be used by God to bring change, altering the spiritual landscape of entire communities.

These catalysts will look like the people they are trying to reach. They may be from the same culture (So) or a similar culture (Lao, Bru, Thai So, etc.). They will also understand the worldview and language of the people and be able to communicate the Gospel and train leaders effectively.

There are only a few So believers in the entire country of Laos, and only a few hundred believers of a similar culture who live close by. Finding these catalysts is extremely difficult. That's why it's important to cast vision and train as many believers as possible to obey Jesus. Out of the many, only a few will go and change the world.

ask the Lord to raise apostolic
workers from the harvest who
will be used to launch a movement
of reproducing churches.

Day
28



Missional church

Therefore go and make disciples
of all nations, baptizing them in
the name of the Father and of
the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
and teaching them to obey
everything I have commanded you."
Matthew 28:19-20

Currently there exists one church among the So in Laos. They meet in the homes of several families rotating every Sunday. Each week, under a thatched roof, they worship the One who created the karst mountains that form the backdrop of their village. Even if it takes 4 hours on a boat to reach the nearest town and even if they are an obscure, distant village on a map, nothing can prevent them from being the bride of Christ and sharing in the love of Christ.

The formation of healthy churches that are fulfilling the functions of worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and mission is the goal. How does this happen in a movement of churches planting churches? They are taught one simple and reproducible lesson at a time.

These foundational lessons include oral versions of the Gospel, persecution, baptism, communion, and other foundational doctrines. The next lessons taught are Bible stories, beginning with Creation, and moving all the way through to the life of Jesus and the life of the Church. This entire process can take up to several years!

In every lesson they are accountable to pass on what they know. As they are growing in obedience, they are teaching other groups to do the same. The worship, Word, and mission of God is being hard-wired into their very D.N.A.

★ ★
Pray for the So *church* to birth
healthy churches that pass
on the *Missional* D.N.A. of *Jesus*.
★ ★

Day
29



Vision

You were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Revelation 5:9

Sai stood with Tongsin, a So leader, on the edge of a scenic river looking at a primitive village on the opposite side. "Do you know of any believers among the Yellow Leaf people over there?" Sai asked.

"Not yet but someone must tell them." replied Tongsin.

Sai turned to look at Tongsin, "One day, God will use you and the So to reach all the ethnic groups around here, the Yellow Leaf people included. I had a dream that you will preach the Gospel to many villages. I believe it will become true because it is God's vision to have every tribe to worship him in heaven."

Casting vision is the core of discipleship. Vision is giving others a clear mental picture of what could be, fueled by the conviction that it should be. What better vision to cast than God's vision of every ethn  falling in glorious worship before Him.

God's redemptive purpose extends beyond the So and includes every people group on earth. He's allowed us to take part in spreading His fame. He's gone before us and prepared hearts for worship through the Holy Spirit. Our lives make sense in light of God's end vision.

★ Ask that *vision* casting will be ingrained into every part of the *discipleship* process.
★ *Pray* for all believers to be *captured* by the vision of God's *heart* for all nations. ★

Day
30



a coming King

For the earth will be filled
with the knowledge
of the glory of the Lord as
the waters cover the sea.
Habakkuk 2:14

Jesus promised that he would one day return and establish his physical Kingdom. In the meantime, we pray for that kingdom to come, for us to allow its reign in our hearts, to experience manifestations of its power on earth, and see little vignettes of its beauty.

What a blessing that almost one hundred So believers proclaim Jesus as King! They are experiencing the power of God through miracles and healing, just as early believers did in the pages of the New Testament. They can see his majesty and craftsmanship in the color of the mountains, jungles, caves, rivers and skies. They can worship and live out the Kingdom of God here on earth.

But so many still remain captive to the evil one. Over 60,000 So cannot recognize the glory of God all around them. They can't see that they were made in His image. They don't know that they are a unique reflection of Him. They are unaware that He is coming soon.

When Jesus returns, where will the So be on that day? We hope that thousands upon thousands will be standing alongside us. We hope to be holding hands with those we prayed and labored for. We hope to celebrate Jesus as one Body.

God's Spirit is still working, calling, and redeeming a lost world to Himself - people of every color, language, tribe, and nation. He is love. He is worthy. He is King.

★
Pray for God's *reign* to come to
every *heart* and *his* glory
be made *known* to all peoples.
★



Thank you for spending the last 30 days *praying* for the So people of *Laos*! We *hope* that you are left with a *deeper* understanding and *love* for these people...but your prayer *journey* is not over yet. You may be thinking, "What next?" Below are some *practical* ways to *get* involved.

★ 1. COME ON A PRAYER JOURNEY

Travel to Laos and prayer walk through rural So villages.

Praying on site with insight will open your eyes to God's heart for the So and the many other unreached people groups in Laos. Your work on the ground will assist long-term workers in reaching the people and your experiences will mobilize hundreds more to pray.

We have informational brochures, videos and a book titled: "Lao Prayer Journeys: The Unofficial Guide" available for download.

Please email: pray4theso@gmail.com



★ 2. BECOME A PRAYER PARTNER

Stay connected to the So work in the field through monthly prayer updates.

Do you want to hear how Tongsin is doing? Do you want to track with the So church? Do you want to read about more miracles? Monthly updates called, "The So Stories," provides you with relevant information so you can pray insightfully.

To sign up directly go here: <http://bit.ly/thesostories>

Or follow on Facebook here: <http://www.facebook.com/thesostories>

★ 3. GIVE TO THE WORK

Contribute towards the work of reaching the So in Laos. All donations can be made online or by post.

For online giving visit: <https://secure-q.net/donations/OMFInter/1443>
Please include the project name and number, "So General Project L88050".

For checks please send to:

OMF International
10 West Dry Creek Circle,
Littleton, CO 80120-4413

Please make checks payable to, OMF International, and include a separate note with the project name and number, "So General Project L88050".



If you've prayed through this prayer guide,
please let us know your thoughts or impressions
by e-mailing us at pray4theso@gmail.com