

HeRD #118 - Laos Mission Priorities - 1903

The Laos Mission list of missionary assignments for 1903 provides one gauge of the its priorities. In one sense it is difficult to measure those priorities precisely since nearly every missionary on the list had several assignments. On the other hand, however, most of them had primary assignments. An analysis of those assignments indicates that the Laos Mission invested most of its time and energy to general oversight activities and to institutional work (hospitals & schools). In 1903, 12 missionaries (27%) gave their time to general station work. This work involved everything from pastoral care and evangelism to educational work to book keeping. Another 12 (27%) were primarily involved in educational (7 missionaries) or medical work (5 missionaries). Still another 9 missionaries (20%) had language study as their first assignment. Four members of the mission (9%) were primarily engaged in translation, literary work, and oversight of the mission press. There remained another 7 missionaries (16%). Two of these 7 had evangelism as their primary assignment. Only one took his first assignment as pastoral care. One engaged in women's work and one in home visitation. The list does not clarify the primary work of three other missionaries, all women.

General mission administration, including oversight of building construction, consumed large amounts of missionary time. Institutional work was, by 1903, a key priority that also took up large amounts of time. The nurture of the church was a secondary activity and, as such, received relatively less missionary time and attention.

Source: No author, "Laos Missionaries and their work," *Laos News* 1, 1(April 1904): 28-29.