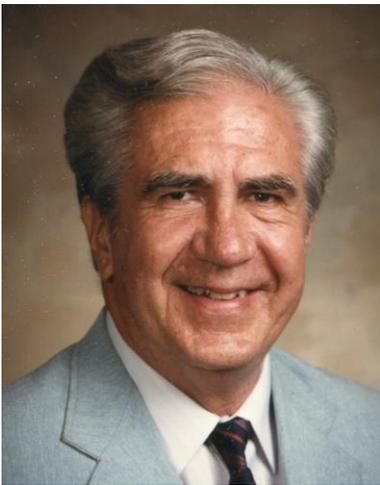


Date: August 23, 2018  
From: Alisha DeJesus/Cathy Holmes  
To: Members of the IM Board, Missionaries, IM Board Alumni, Missionary Alumni, NLC and Staff  
Re: Paul W. Lewis, ABFMS Burma/Thailand alumnus, goes home

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## Paul W. Lewis, ABFMS Burma/Thailand alumnus, goes home



Paul White Lewis, American Baptist Foreign Society (ABFMS) alumnus passed away on July 25, 2018 at Pilgrim Place in Claremont, California at the age of 94.

Paul was born in Denver, Colorado on June 30, 1924. He was raised in a Christian home. At the age of nine, Paul accepted Christ. He was a member of Galilee Baptist Church in Denver. Paul made an early commitment to serve wherever God would lead him. He earned a bachelor's degree at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Paul was ordained on May 28, 1943 in Denver at the church where he grew up.

On August 22, 1944, Paul married Elaine Thomasson in Denver. They grew up together in Denver and had attended the same church. Following their studies at Baylor, they went on to Eastern Seminary in Pennsylvania to prepare for missionary service. On January 21, 1947, Paul and Elaine were appointed missionaries with the American Baptist Foreign Society (ABFMS) designated to serve in Burma.

The Lewises served in Northern Burma from 1947 to 1966, where they worked primarily with Lahu and Akha peoples. Paul, working with a national consultant, was able to translate the New Testament into the Lahu and Akha languages. He also compiled an Akha-English Dictionary of nearly 400 pages. In addition, the Lewises produced a Lahu hymnal and other types of Christian literature to help meet the many needs of tribal people. Paul and Elaine started the Lahu Theological Seminary, which continues today with over 200 students.

While on home assignment in 1960, Paul and Elaine adopted two boys, Warren and Robert. In 1966 when the Burma government announced that visas for missionaries and most other foreigners would not be renewed, it was necessary for the Lewis family and their missionary colleagues to leave Burma. After a two-year stay in Denver, the Lewis family was assigned to serve in northern Thailand. Paul and Elaine worked primarily among the Akha and Lahu peoples, with Paul giving most of his time to the Akha and Elaine to the Lahu, though they also worked together extensively.

Paul and Elaine had a great concern for ministry, helping people to a truly abundant life in Jesus Christ. In addition to evangelistic work, preaching, and teaching ministry, they gave attention to training village works in public health and family planning. This included basic education as well as occupational training to help people better their standard of living, through agriculture and Thai Tribal Crafts (which has done so much to increase the earning power of women).

Their deep interest in the culture of the people among whom they served led them to write the book People of the Golden Triangle, which has been published in several languages.

The training of leadership to carry on the work of evangelism, discipling, education, and social welfare occupied much of the attention of Paul and Elaine. They rejoiced in seeing the growth of strong leaders among the Akha and Lahu peoples relatively young in the Christian faith.

In April 1990, after following in the footsteps of Christ in ministry in South East Asia for 43 years with 19 of those years in Burma and 24 of those years in Thailand, Paul and Elaine retired. They served their home church in Denver for three years and then became residents of Pilgrim Place in Claremont, California. They remained active locally as well as made several mission trips overseas. Elaine passed away on May 29, 2008.

Paul was preceded in death by Elaine and his son, Robert. He is survived by Robert's children; son Warren and his wife Teri and their children.

A memorial service for Paul was held on August 4, 2018 at Pilgrim Place. The Burmese choir from Judson Memorial Church shared in the service.