



INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICES, INC.

1903 n street, n.w. washington, d. c. 20036

*Steve C Woodson*

Larry Woodson  
Luang Prabang, Laos  
October 16, 1964

NOV 14 1964

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Laos has in effect two capitals. The city of Vientiane is the government capital, where all of the business is taken care of and Luang Prabang is the Royal Capital where the King maintains his residence. Luang Prabang is located about 120 miles north of Vientiane.

Presently my work is in Luang Prabang, which is an exquisite French Colonial town nestled in the Mekong valley and surrounded by beautiful green mountains. My work itself will be at the regional teacher training center which is located on the edge of the village. Here the students come for a one year training program, at the completion of which all of them return to villages and teach. I teach at one of three such schools in Laos. Here I am an advisor to the director which means there is no set job. This means that one day I will spend most of my time with the agricultural phase of the program and the next could be assisting with the planning of future buildings. I will go into more detail about the school and my job in the next letter.

Before closing I had better tell you a little about the organization I am working with. IVS (International Voluntary Services) is a non-profit organization chartered under the laws of the District of Columbia in 1953. It was organized out of concern for needs of people overseas who were to a great extent unreached by the prevailing technical assistance and economic aid programs. IVS has become especially concerned with the rural people who seem to suffer major disadvantage for participating in the social and economic development programs being undertaken throughout the world. Most of the people in underdeveloped

or emerging countries are rural people and it is important that they find new opportunities and satisfactions in their native rural setting rather than migrate, untrained, to the urban centers.

IVS volunteers overseas live and work among these disadvantaged but aspiring people working along lines that will bring satisfaction in their lives. The programs suited to their development must be based on the needs of the people concerned, their interest, their abilities, and resources available to them. A large part of the work consists of practical operations in related fields: the IVS electrician is in charge of the power plants; the plumber supervises installation, maintenance and repair of plumbing and sewage disposal; the Animal Husbandryman oversees the livestock breeding farm and agricultural programs. Other personnel are skilled in nursing, home economics, carpentry, and similar basic programs.

This newsletter is my introduction to Laos. I have avoided putting down first impressions because they will be tempered by time. In following newsletters I will describe the local situation in more detail.

This newsletter is one of the courtesies afforded team members by IVS/Washington. If you don't receive any mail from me other than this don't feel neglected. This serves as the easiest and fastest way for me to keep in contact with you not to mention cheapest.

I will close for now. If you want to continue receiving this newsletter please write me by the 15th of next month, otherwise your name will be removed.

Cordially,

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P.S. Permission to publish this letter, in whole or in part, must be secured from International Voluntary Services, Inc., 1903 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.