

A Door Opened by English

By David Tran

Celebrating Mission, April 2026

My Journey of Faith and Mission

Back in 2010, my life was built on a very simple foundation: logic. I was a person who relied on my five senses. If I couldn't see it or prove it, it wasn't part of my world. So, when my cousin invited me to a free English class, I saw it as a practical opportunity—a way to improve my skills for my career. I didn't realize then that God was using a language lesson to start a much deeper conversation with my soul.

The Witness of Ms. Mai

For four years, I was a regular student in that class. My teacher, Ms. Mai, was unlike anyone I had met. She didn't just teach us grammar; she lived out a kind of love that I couldn't quite explain. She spoke about God with a conviction that felt both strange and attractive. Even though I was still looking at everything through a lens of logic, her life was a witness I couldn't ignore.

The first real crack in my skepticism happened in 2013 at a summer camp in Dalat. I listened to a preacher and heard a classmate talk about how God had changed her family in ways that seemed impossible. I remember thinking, "Is it possible there's a God beyond my logic?" I went forward during an altar call that night, mostly because I was curious. I figured I had nothing to lose—if it wasn't real, I could always walk away.

From Curiosity to Conviction

However, the real change didn't happen overnight. After that camp, I started attending a local church and studying the Bible with Ms. Mai and a small group of new believers. This was where the "logic" of the Gospel started to take hold. As we went through the Scriptures, I stopped looking at the Bible as just a book and started seeing it as a mirror.

Through His Word, God began to convict me of the sins I had been enslaved to. It wasn't an abstract feeling; it was a heavy burden. I realized I couldn't keep living the way I was. One night in February 2014, I finally stopped negotiating and just prayed: "Lord, if You are real, please save me from this burden. If not, I don't want to follow You anymore." God answered that prayer immediately. He didn't

just lift the weight; He gave me a peace and a purpose that my logic had never been able to provide. From that point on, I knew I wanted to follow Him with my whole life.

The Three-Month Miracle

Not long after my conversion, I felt a strong pull to share this news with others, but I felt like I lacked the tools. When Ms. Mai asked if I would consider going to a Bible school in the United States, my first instinct was to say no. It felt too big, too risky, and I knew my family – who are Buddhist and practice ancestor worship – would be deeply upset.

But the Lord kept confirming that this was His path for me. Once I said “yes,” I saw doors open that shouldn’t have been able to open. I had to handle all the paperwork, the English exams, and the visa process in secret. I managed to get everything done in just three months, which anyone who has dealt with international visas knows is nearly impossible.



When I finally told my parents, they were shocked and tried to talk me out of it. It was a painful time, but I stood firm. Then, just one week before my flight, God did another miracle: their hearts softened. They told me they would support me. I flew to the U.S. in 2016 knowing that if God calls you to a place, He will handle the obstacles in your way.

Duc Tran attending Liberty University

New Fields — BGEA and ALWM: Partnering for the Future

I studied in the States for two years and came back to Vietnam in 2018 to help Ms. Mai with the ESL ministry. To be honest, I never liked teaching before. But when I saw it as a way to reach young people with the Gospel, my heart changed. I began to love the classroom because of the lives being changed there.

Duc Tran teaching his first ESL Class





David Tran (next to end on right) with Franklin Graham (middle wearing cap) and the BGEA team at Can Tho Festival, December 2024

In 2021, the ministry faced a huge challenge when Ms. Mai passed away. We lost our leader, and soon after, many of our donors stopped their support. It was a season of loss and confusion, and eventually, I decided to continue my ESL work separately. It was during this transition that God opened a new door: an opportunity to work with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA).

I served as the Office Manager for the Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) Festival, coordinating church leaders and stadium arrangements for a massive evangelistic event. It was a year-long project that stretched me in ways I never expected. Later, I worked on another festival in the Mekong Delta. These experiences matured me and gave me a heart for all of Vietnam, not just the students in my classroom.



The filled stadium at the evangelistic Festival



In June 2025, a friend connected me with ALWM and Pastor Bill Moberly. This started a new chapter where I'm learning to serve in a more holistic way—through pro-life ministry, medical missions, and clean water projects. It's been seven months now, and I'm seeing how God uses these practical needs to open hearts to the Gospel, just like a free English class opened mine.



David Tran making presentation to Hmong tribal leader

Left: Dr. Hang and her team on a medical mission trip



Mr. Hai and Duc Tran helped install a clean water system given to a Hmong tribal church in Duc My, Nha Trang (middle of Vietnam), September 2025

A special part of this work is my connection with Dr. Hang. She worked with Ms. Mai for many years, and she is also the mother of my good friend Hanh, who went to school in the States with me. It's amazing to see how God keeps these threads together across generations.

Looking back, the theme of my life has been simple: God calls, we answer, and He opens the doors. I don't rely on my own logic anymore; I rely on His plan. If He can take a skeptical student from an ESL class and lead him to the mission field, He can use anyone who is willing to say "yes."

To learn more, contact David.

Learn more about ALWM's work in Vietnam.

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David Tran, born in 1991, is a Liberty University graduate in **Christian Ministries and Discipleship**. Based in Ho Chi Minh City with his wife, he serves the Lord through ESL ministry, his local Baptist church, and mission work with the **BGEA** and **ALWM**. David is dedicated to making disciples and reflecting Christ through medical missions and clean water initiatives.

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Links:

Dalat: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Da_Lat

Buddhist: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Buddhism>

Vietnam: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Vietnam>

ESL: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_as_a_second_or_foreign_language

BGEA: <https://billygraham.org/>

HCMC: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ho-Chi-Minh-City>

Festival: <https://billygraham.org.uk/p/newsletter-historic-evangelism-in-vietnam/>

Mekong Delta: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mekong_Delta

ALWM: <https://www.alwm.org/>

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