

RESEARCH ON THE PHENOMENON OF DƯƠNG VĂN MINH

Abstract: *Since entering the period of Đổi Mới (1986), along with the changes in social life, the religious life has also changed dramatically, especially in ethnic minority areas of the northern mountainous provinces and the Central Highlands. The most prominent was the “conversion” movement of a part of the Hmong people who have renounced the traditional belief to join other religions such as Catholicism and Protestantism. In that trend, a part of the Hmong did not convert to Protestantism or Catholicism, they chose “the third way”, they followed Christianity but they retained their spiritual values of the traditional religion. Dương Văn Minh was a phenomenon. Based on the viewpoint of religious study, this paper presents the process of formation, development and basic characteristics of Dương Văn Minh phenomenon as a “new way of worship”, “the third way” of a part of the Hmong people in Vietnam today.*

Keywords: *Phenomenon; Dương Văn Minh; new way of worship; the White Hmong.*

1. The process of formation the phenomenon of Dương Văn Minh

The phenomenon of Dương Văn Minh appeared in the second half of the 80s of the twentieth century, it has had over 30 years of existence and development. The process of formation and development of this phenomenon can be divided into three periods: *The first stage, from 1987 to August 1989 - Dương Văn Minh*

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propagated Vàng Chứ religion; *The second stage*, from August 1, 1989, to September 30, 1990 - propagating about the Savior Dương Văn Minh; *The third stage*, since 1995, Dương Văn Minh finished his term in prison, returned to his hometown, continued to implement the intention of establishing a new religion, propagating the strange religion of Dương Văn Minh

1.1. Period of propagation Vàng Chứ religion (1987 - 01/8/1989)

Dương Văn Minh (is called Dề Vènh Mềnh, Giàng Văn Mềnh, Giàng Sồng Mềnh or Giàng Súng Mìn in the Hmong language), a White Hmong, born on May 9, 1961 (lunar calendar), in Xí Đìêng village, Thượng Thôn commune, Hà Quảng District, Cao Bằng Province. In 1982, Dương Văn Minh and his family migrated to Ngõa hamlet, Ngòi Sen village, Yên Hương commune (now Yên Lâm commune), Hàm Yên district, Tuyên Quang province.

Dương Văn Minh's search for "new ways of worship" or "new reason" for the Hmong began in 1987, after listening to FEBC radio (from Manila, Philippines)¹. This radio used the Hmong language to spread Protestantism under its name *Vàng Chứ*². The program talked about the good future of the Hmong if they followed Vàng Chứ, Dương Văn Minh and his associate (a White Hmong) actively propagated about the Vàng Chứ religion. They identified themselves as the people of Vàng Chứ, propagated that Vàng Chứ was the one who would save the Mong people from sufferings, followers of Vàng Chứ would be happy, they did not need to work, they would have food; people who did not follow Vàng Chứ would be eaten by tigers, swept away by water. They created an atmosphere of tension, confusion, fear, and expectation and hope in the Hmong community.

In this context, Dương Văn Minh and associates urged people who wanted to follow Vàng Chứ to register, pay money, throw ancestors altars away, practice to fly, wait for Vàng Chứ to

welcome to Heaven³. However, after a period of propaganda about Vàng Chử religion, Dương Văn Minh gave up this religion, identified himself as the Savior, and propagated for his new religion. His work was actively supported by Dao Dinh Hoang⁴ and other associates.

1.2. Period of propagation the Savior Dương Văn Minh (01/8/1989 - 30/4/1990)

After the renunciation of the Vàng Chử religion, the propagation of the new religion was well prepared by Dương Văn Minh and Dao Dinh Hoang with concrete steps. They discussed a propaganda plan to entice the Hmong to follow the religion. The plan was implemented in three stages as follows:

The first stage: Creating the event of incarnation of God in Dương Văn Minh, building a welcome gate, making flags and banners, initially enticing people to throw the ancestral altar away, spreading news of the earth collapses, threatening of wild animals to people who do not follow the religion.

The second stage: After establishing a base in Yen Huong, Dương Văn Minh and his associates visited the Hmong in the other regions⁵ to propagate and entice people into the religion, raising money and material.

The third stage: Building a church, appointing Dao Dinh Hoang as a priest, Dương Văn Minh as Jesus, openly following Christianity, using the masses to pressure the authorities to deal with requests for propagating Christianity to Hmong people⁶.

First of all, the event of incarnation of God in Dương Văn Minh through the mediumship ritual aimed to create sacredness. This “initiation” took place at around 22:00 on August 2, 1989, at Yen Huong commune, Ham Yen district, Tuyen Quang province. Dương Văn Minh performed the mediumship ritual to meet 4 people from Heaven, including a man named Jesus – “who was previously crucified on the cross”. At noon on August 2, only

Jesus stayed and said to Dương Văn Minh that “Do not perform the old-style worship anymore, throw away all worshipping objects in order to block the path of evil harassment”⁷. When Dương Văn Minh woke up, he told the story to everyone and spread the news about the “doomsday”. He said that “In 2000, the Earth and the Sun will crash into each other, they will explode and everyone will have died, whoever wants to live must pray to God and follow me. Those who follow Dương Văn Minh will go to heaven, where the Hmong have a country, they are literate, labor by mechanization, have a happy life, have golden dishes, young people are not old, the old people will be transformed, the dead will come back to life”.

Dương Văn Minh propagated that: “In October 1989, there will be heavy rain, strong winds, it will become dark for three days and three nights”. These words intimidate those who do not believe him, follow him. And he taught people the new way of worshipping by breaking the altar of the ancestor, house ghost, door ghost. The new way of worshipping used tobacco for ritual instead of incense. Dương Văn Minh instructed people to remove the ancestral altar, how to expel “house ghost” (ma nhà), “ancestor ghost” (ma tổ tiên), hold an invocation ceremony for 50 Hmong families in Yên Hưng, Hàm Yên who had joined the religion and sent an associate to Cao Bằng province to perform new worship and collect money from the Hmong believers⁸.

Dương Văn Minh, Dao Dinh Hoang, and associates wrote slogans in Vietnamese, Hmong and Chinese characters affirming: “Savior Dương Văn Minh was born at 12 p.m. on August 1, 1989”, then they built the welcome gate for everyone to come and see the messiah Dương Văn Minh “coming down” at Mr. Dao Van Ta’s house (his father-in-law). Each person who came there must pay Dương Văn Minh money, cigarettes, tea, and sugar⁹. In order to sanctify the messiah Dương Văn Minh, Dao Dinh Hoang, and his associates even spread the news, “Dương Văn Minh is a divine

person, the Savior Jesus” and called “Hmong people quickly inform their relatives, on the 9th of October, arrive at the residence of the savior Dương Văn Minh in Yen Huong commune, Ham Yen district to celebrate the healing ceremony, remember to bring tea, cigarettes, and money”. At the request of the “messiah” Dương Văn Minh, a group of people performed an invocation ritual. Many Hmong people from Thai Nguyen, Cao Bang, Bac Kan provinces, and some other places in Tuyen Quang province came to “Savior” Dương Văn Minh for healing, hoping to be freed from suffering¹⁰.

After a period of active activities, Dương Văn Minh and Dao Dinh Hoang propagated and attracted many Hmong people in Thai Nguyen, Bac Kan, Tuyen Quang, and Cao Bang to follow their religion¹¹. In order to promote the propaganda for his “new way of worship”, Dương Văn Minh also established an organization, claiming to be Jesus, appointed Dao Dinh Hoang as a priest (father), and built a house to practice their religion. On March 26, 1990, Dương Văn Minh slaughtered buffaloes, cows, pigs, and chickens to inaugurate a new house and invited Hmong people to come to celebrate. Many Hmong people gave up production and sold buffaloes, cows, and horses, came to congratulate the “savior” Dương Văn Minh¹².

1.3. Period of propagation about “the belief of Dương Văn Minh” since 1995

After finishing his prison term in 1995, Dương Văn Minh continued the intention to find a new religion or a “new way of worship” for the Hmong. Thus, in 1997, he and his associates went to Bao Lam district, Cao Bang province to secretly prepare for the launch of the “strange religion Dương Văn Minh”. At the same time, I sent associates to the Evangelical Church of Vietnam (North) at 2, Ngo Tram Street, Hanoi to seek support, however, their demand was rejected because “the strange religion” did not belong to the Protestant Church.

In 2000, Dương Văn Minh returned to Ngòi Sen village, Yên Lam commune, Hàm Yên district, Tuyên Quang province and held four meetings to prepare for the launch of “the new religion”. At the first meeting in March 2000, Dương Văn Minh urged his associates to apply to authorities at all levels to introduce their religion with the name: “*The belief of Dương Văn Minh, the only belief and forever*” (*Tín ngưỡng Dương Văn Minh là tín ngưỡng duy nhất và mãi mãi về sau*). At the second meeting in May 2000, he asked his associates to write an application to celebrate the 10th anniversary of religion. At the third meeting in October 2000, he assigned the person in charge of the missionary work in Tuyên Quang, Bắc Kạn, Cao Bằng, Thái Nguyên provinces and the person to prepare the facilities for the “opening day”¹³. In the fourth meeting in November 2000, he set up the organization and personnel of the “religion”. The organization of the “religion” included: a Managing Board led by a General Manager; Security Committee; Youth Committee; Text Drafting Committee; Women Committee; Committee for Elders at the central level. Each village was led by the village leader, the deputy village leader, the leader of the faith committee, the youth secretary, the leader of the woman association, leader of the elderly association. The Text Drafting Committee has drafted a number of documents such as the Security Management Convention (*Bản Quy ước về quản lý an ninh*) with 21 articles¹⁴. The purpose of this document is to control people entering and leaving Ngòi Sen village, the permanent residence of Dương Văn Minh. They also composed songs for the “opening” ceremony of the religion¹⁵.

In December 2000, Dương Văn Minh repeatedly submitted an application to the Prime Minister, Chairman of the People’s Committee of Tuyên Quang province proposing to recognize “*The belief of Dương Văn Minh, the only belief and forever*”¹⁶. On December 15, 2000, Dương Văn Minh wrote a letter to the Government and the Prime Minister; The General Secretary and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam with the

proposal for explaining: 1) The belief with the Cross symbol of Dương Văn Minh belong to which belief 2) Solution through the force that overwhelmed the Mong people; 3) Request resolution of the case within 4 days. Moreover, Dương Văn Minh affirmed that he was not guilty, if the authorities think he has committed a crime, they must publicly prove it; he identified himself as a “guru”, he wrote as follows: “I have been given the role of a person to teach the people in 1995; I became a monk in 1997 and I have returned to my homeland to continue my work¹⁷ and it will be completed by the end of 2000¹⁸”.

Although the appearance of Dương Văn Minh in 2000 was sudden, however, his demand for the establishment of a new religion was no longer associated with “proclaiming the king and welcoming Vàng Chứ” as he did. This work has been thoughtfully prepared by him and his associates for many years. In his application to establish a new religion, Dương Văn Minh and his associates explained that this belief is consistent with the wishes of the people, bringing benefits to the people, is a “true” religion, a “good” religion, it removes superstition, does not teach bad things, does not against the Party and the State, it teaches the Hmong a “good” path; Dương Văn Minh is a good person, he teaches to do good business, the right path; he does not fight with the State, with the Party, he only helps the State, the Party¹⁹ and it is not involved with Vàng Chứ religion²⁰.

In a letter, his associates affirmed that “Dương Văn Minh has had much good advice, taught people to love and help each other; I found that the work of Dương Văn Minh is in accordance with our thoughts and aspirations; We voluntarily accept the belief of Mr. Dương Văn Minh as the only belief for us since 2001 and forever”²¹. Thus, the presence of Dương Văn Minh was not Vàng Chứ or Jesus, he was a physical person of flesh and bone with supernatural abilities and powers. His religion was accepted by a part of the White Hmong people, considered it as a “new reason”, a “new way of worship”.

The reappearance of “Duong Văn Minh’s belief” was more carefully prepared and organized. He planned to hold the “enthronement” ceremony in front of a large number of “followers” at the end of December 2000 or in early January 2001. However, this plan was not allowed by the government. In March 2001, Duong Văn Minh left, but the “beliefs” that he intended to establish still existed, it was widely believed by the White Hmong. In September 2001, his associates²² in Yen Lam commune, Ham Yen district, Tuyen Quang province, an application demanded the authorities of the commune, district, and province to return them the altar, rattan chair, banner that was seized in 2000 and asked to launch “the Duong Văn Minh’s religion”, but they demands were not accepted. In May 2007, Dao Dinh Hoang held the 6th birthday “celebration” of “opening” Duong Văn Minh’s religion in Yen Lam commune, Ham Yen, Tuyen Quang. He announced that Duong Văn Minh would return, people would have a happy life, and would be supported by foreigners. Therefore, about 2,000 Hmong people mainly came from Cao Bang, Tuyen Quang, Thai Nguyen, and Bac Kan to attend the ceremony. In September 2007, followers of Duong Văn Minh in Tuyen Quang and Cao Bang submitted an application to the authorities for permission to build a “funeral house” (*nhà đò*).

Since a new symbol appeared- “funeral house” (*nhà đò*)- associated with the sacred objects including the swallow, the toad, the cicada, and the bow symbolizing the cross, becoming a “soul” sign of Duong Văn Minh’s phenomenon, it has marked an important turning point of this phenomenon in a new way, a “new way of worship” of the Hmong. The activities were associated with the symbol of “funeral house” (*nhà đò*) and have spread among the White Hmong community. There have been more than 7,700 followers in over 100 villages, in the provinces such as Tuyen Quang, Cao Bang, Thai Nguyen, Bac Kan, and Lao Cai.

2. Identify the phenomenon of Dương Văn Minh

The Founder- Religious leader

Dương Văn Minh was born in 1961, a migrant White Hmong. Believers considered him “as not a god, as a man who taught them how to do business, do good things, the right way, good advice, making people love to help each other and widely unite; his work is in accordance with their thoughts and aspirations”.

Thus, Dương Văn Minh has been believed by a part of the White Hmong people. They considered him as a spiritual “leader” because he did not only teach them “a new way of worship”, he also instructed them on the right path, goodness, to love and help each other. He has become an image, a “savior” of a part the White Hmong people on the way to modernize their traditional belief, to give up polytheism with many bad practices. “The new way of worship” is innovative, simple, and saving more money, suitable for modern society, it also does not completely abolish the traditional belief, religious consciousness of ethnicity.

Time to appear

The Dương Văn Minh phenomenon appeared in 1987, this was the time when a part of the Hmong had religious changes from their traditional beliefs to Protestantism called Vàng Chú. This is also the period when Vietnam started conducting the renovation, moving from a centralized mechanism of subsidization to the market economy, integrating into the world. The socio-economic situation was in deep crisis, people’s lives, in ethnic minority areas, in particular, was extremely difficult. In this context, religions recovered, new religions appeared and developed including the phenomenon of Dương Văn Minh. Over 30 years, the Dương Văn Minh’s phenomenon has existed and developed despite many difficulties such as the objections of the government and the Hmong who believed in the traditional beliefs and Protestant denominations²³.

The distribution area and the community of followers

Dương Văn Minh phenomenon firstly appeared in Tuyen Quang province, then it spread to the residence of the White Hmong. This phenomenon has developed and distributed in 5 provinces such as Tuyen Quang, Cao Bang, Thai Nguyen, Bac Kan, and Lao Cai (since 2014). These are mountainous areas, the residence of ethnic minorities with many difficulties in people's lives. The location where "the religion was launching" is the land where Dương Văn Minh and a number of followers have just migrated. Dương Văn Minh had lived in Xí Đĩnh village, Thuong Thon commune, Ha Quang district, Cao Bang province. During the Vietnam-China border war, implementing the migration policy, Dương Văn Minh and his family migrated to Yen Lam commune, Ham Yen district, Tuyen Quang province. Most of the people who migrated to new land lacked land for production, their life was very difficult.

Followers of Dương Văn Minh's religion were mainly the White Hmong migrants. They have been a "community of believers who were voluntary, shared a faith in the principles and teachings of a religious leader"²⁴. And the number of followers has constantly increased, although it was not as much as other Protestant denominations. In 1990, while Dương Văn Minh was in prison, Hmong people in Tuyen Quang, Cao Bang, Thai Nguyen provinces continued to practice the "new way of worshiping", a group converted to Protestantism. By 2001, there were 5.121 Hmong people in 33 communes and 16 districts of 4 provinces: Tuyen Quang, Cao Bang, Bac Kan, and Thai Nguyen followed the Dương Văn Minh phenomenon²⁵. By March 2010, Bac Kan province had 56 households, 321 Hmong people divided into 3 groups of 3 districts followed the Dương Văn Minh phenomenon²⁶. Cao Bang province has 338 households, 1,766 followers divided in 15 groups of districts such as Bao Lam, Ha Quang, Hoa An and Tra Linh²⁷. In 2014, the distribution of

followers as follows: Cao Bang province had 8 villages of 3 communes in Bao Lam and Ha Quang districts; Tuyen Quang province had 2 villages in Ham Yen and Yen Son districts; Bac Kan province had 2 villages in Bac Nam and Cho Moi; Thai Nguyen province had 1 village in Vo Nhai district. There were 56 households, over 300 believers in Vo Nhai district; over 120 households with nearly 550 believers in Dong Hy district²⁸.

By 2016, there were 1,352 households, 7,701 believers in 101 villages or hamlets of 50 communes, 17 districts, 5 provinces (Tuyen Quang, Cao Bang, Bac Kan, Thai Nguyen, and Lao Cai). Compared to the number of believers in 2015, there was an increase of 149 households, 734 believers (an increase of households: 12.39%, a rise of believers: 10.54%); believers increased by 21%²⁹ from 2013 to 2016.

The majority of believers has been the White Hmong who migrated for various reasons such as the Mong people in Bac Kan who migrated from Cao Bang after the border war in 1979). They “have faded” of traditional cultural values, customs as well as traditional religious activities”³⁰. Moreover, the Hmong generally believe in the traditional polytheistic beliefs such as ancestor worship, worship the ghost of the house, and the ghost of the village with many cumbersome, expensive rituals. The time when Dương Văn Minh “started his religion” coincided with the transformation of the faith of the Hmong community from the traditional polytheistic beliefs to the monotheistic religion, especially Protestantism. Due to their beliefs with many outdated, cumbersome, and costly rituals, they believed in the new religion when people have listened to the simplicity of the “new way of worship”. This community of believers has lived in remote and border areas, the communities firmly united by their “kinship and family relationship with Mr. Dương Văn Minh and his associates so their faith has been difficult to change”³¹.

About the document

This religion's documents are mainly handwritten or oral documents created by Dương Văn Minh and his associates based on the Bible, Christian hymns (Protestantism), with the image of Jesus. Dương Văn Minh became the son of God who came to save the world. The song composed on December 19, 200 in the Hmong language as follows "Jesus has returned before the year 2000, to save people from devils. The father did good things for everyone, the country so everyone believes in him. And in 1997, Godfather sent his son to return to save. Father said where he rests. On November 15, 2000, the son of the Godfather came back"³².

About the "doctrine"

The phenomenon of Dương Văn Minh is based on doctrine, canon law, hymns of Protestantism, it takes the image of Jesus, the Cross as a symbol associated with spiritual symbols of the Hmong. Mr. Dương Văn Minh and his associates also compiled a number of teachings to suit the cognitive ability of the Hmong believers; to introduce some spiritual-cultural features of the Hmong into the teachings and especially uphold the personal role of Mr. Dương Văn Minh the "religious leader". He is a self-proclaimed Savior, assigned by God to "teach and guide people" and is acknowledged and trusted by believers. Initially, Dương Văn Minh and his colleagues listened to FEBC radio to propagate about Vàng Chứ. Vàng Chứ was sometimes identified with the phenomenon of "proclaiming king" inherited in the Hmong. Vàng Chứ was sometimes to be a messiah, identified with Jesus. People propagandized about welcoming Vàng Chứ³³. Finally, Dương Văn Minh relied on it and stated that he received "revelation" from Jesus. In particular, Dương Văn Minh said that when he received divine revelation, he was reborn. He was the Savior who was sent by Godfather to help the Hmong.

About the "canon law"

It is clearly shown in *the convention and charter on the organization of the renewed Hmong life (Bản quy ước, điều lệ tổ chức đời sống người Mông đời mới)*, drafted by Dương Văn Minh³⁴. It includes 4 parts with the following basic content as follows:

The first part: Twelve “commandments”³⁵ of the religion prescribe the things that must not be done and should be done, they are called “the renewal of the Hmong life from 1989 to present”. It is summarized into 6 main contents as follows: First, living in the hygiene, abstinence such as not eating animal blood, especially “blood soup” and dead animals without bleeding (Article 1); Second, do not do evils such as alcohol, gambling, and drugs (Articles 2, 5, 6); Third, preserving the village customs, culture and family happiness such as not fighting, cursing each other, contradicting, deceiving (Articles 3, 4, 10, 11); Fourth, do not commit crimes such as murder, burning houses (Article 7); Fifth, not to dispute, encroach on the land of others (Articles 8, 9) and Sixth, unite to help each other in production.

Thus, the commandments are completely consistent with the criteria to build a new village, a cultural family that the Central Committee of the Vietnam Fatherland Front is launching to build new countryside.

The second part: birthday anniversaries and cultural activities during the holidays, regulations on birthdays of the “religious leader” (Mr. Dương Văn Minh); New Year’s Eve rituals, and cultural activities. In particular, it is specified that on the birthday of Dương Văn Minh (the 9th of the 5th lunar month) every year must be solemnly held, with banners with the words “the 9th of May is the birthday” (written in Quốc ngữ and Latin Hmong characters); there are tea tables, flowers, 4 men sitting in four corners to congratulate and young men and women sing 2 songs to congratulate Dương Văn Minh’s birthday.

Regarding the New Year's Eve ceremony, it is prescribed that at midnight of the Lunar New Year's Eve, young men and women sing 2 songs to celebrate the new year. There must be a banner with the words "entertainment activities to welcome new year" written in Quốc ngữ and Latin Hmong characters. The entertainment activities are held on two days: New Year's music and dance were held on the 2nd day of the new year: "A group of female singers sing a song, then everyone participates in folk singing and dancing, plays "khèn" (flute) to celebrate the new year. On the 8th day of the new year, the elderly, youth, boys, and girls gather to organize a festival to summarize the spring festival. It shows that Dương Văn Minh has intended to create "solemn" days (birthday) as well as "holiday season" for his new religion like holidays and seasons, Masses of Catholicism, or Protestantism. These are the new points that make the difference between the followers of the Dương Văn Minh phenomenon and traditional beliefs.

The third part: the wedding ceremony must have 3 flower tables, 5 presiding people (1 woman, 4 men), 4 presiding people sing 4 songs. The bridegroom's family brings a tray of offerings to the bride's house to "pay for her parents' care", including 1.6 million Vietnam Đồng in cash, 60 kg of meat, and 24 bottles of soft drink. These are completely new things that are not in the tradition of the Hmong. It can be said that Dương Văn Minh wanted to renovate the marriage of the Hmong according to his "new way of worshipping".

The fourth part: regulations on the funeral: the family of the dead person has to register with local authorities; funerals must be organized in a thoughtful, dignified, and economical manner, not to invite the magic-man, not to slaughter cattle or poultry for hospitality. The dead must be buried within 24 hours. In particular, the convention stipulates that each village has to build "01 small house to store funeral items", which is 100 meters away from the residential area. The house has a table, there is the symbol of a

swallow, a toad, a cicada, and a cross on the table. There are 4 words: NTUX (the heaven), TÊZ (the earth), HNUZ (the sun), HLI (the moon). The swallow is the symbol of a stretcher; the toad is the symbol of a drum; the cicada is the symbol of a “khèn” (a kind of the Hmong’s instrument) and the cross is the symbol of an arrow. Thus, the funeral is the most distinctive feature because it has created the symbols of the religion, the differences of Dương Văn Minh’s phenomenon from Protestantism, and it still retains the cultural identity of the Hmong people.

About the ritual of worship

At the end of the year 2000, Dương Văn Minh prepared the facilities: a flag, a chair, an altar for the launching ceremony. The flag was rectangular with a cross in the middle. The chair for Dương Văn Minh was made of rattan with an image of a cross behind it. The altar was made of wood³⁶. Followers of Dương Văn Minh religion have had religious activities every Thursday and Sunday like the other Protestant denominations in the area. They have had collective prayer, singing songs to praise Jesus, especially praising Mr. Dương Văn Minh as “the religious leader”. Since 2015, Mr. Dương Văn Minh and believers have held the birthday anniversary and New Year’s celebration in order to turn Dương Văn Minh’s birthday into a “solemn” day, the new year celebration as the “holiday season” of the religion³⁷.

About the symbols

The funeral house stores funeral items such as a swallow, a toad, a cicada, a cross, they are outstanding symbols and have an important meaning to the “new way of worship” of Dương Văn Minh³⁸. The funeral house has a simple architecture, is a small house with an area of 8 m² to 12 m². It has chairs, tables to place the coffin for the dead. The tables and chairs were engraved with 4 symbols, including the image of a swallow, a toad, a cicada, and a cross, the cross symbolized the bow of the Hmong. Some places

also have a “khèn” (the Hmong flute). Followers of the phenomenon Dương Văn Minh explained that the “swallow” replaced the rooster in the traditional belief of the Hmong, it is a sacred animal that guides the dead souls to come to Heaven with their ancestors. The toad is a sacred animal that represents the sound of crying drums report to God (Ông Trời) “someone has died on the Earth”. The cicada a sacred animal represents the sound of crying “khèn” for the dead and the cross is a symbol of the bow protecting the dead along the way and “protecting the souls of the dead” is also a symbol of Jesus- their Savior. When someone dies, people bring tables and chairs engraved with the sacred animals from the funeral house to the house of the dead put to the coffin. If there is no funeral house, people can bring the sacred animals at home or they will create the new sacred animals when someone dies. In addition, followers of Dương Văn Minh's religion hang a white cloth with the Sun's image printed on it. They explained that the Sun represents the event that human beings were born of God (Ông Trời) and must worship God (Ông Trời). The Sun is also a symbol of Yang (Dương), also a symbol of the Dương (or Giàng) family of the “religious leader” Dương Văn Minh. The white cloth symbolizes purity and purity, also a symbol of the White Hmong.

Thus, the symbols of the sacred animals such as the swallow bird, the cicada, the toad, and the cross (representing a bow) are close to the religious consciousness of the Hmong. It shows that Dương Văn Minh phenomenon advocates preserving the cultural features, religious consciousness of the Hmong in their “new way of worship” although they do not return to the traditional beliefs by denying ancestor worship, worship of house ghost, door ghost.

About the organization

Since its inception, Mr. Dương Văn Minh has recruited his associates, such as Dao Dinh Hoang. In 1989, after establishing a “new way of worshipping”, Dương Văn Minh directed the establishment of a group in charge of praying and propagating. In

2000, he set up an organization, consisting of the religious leader Dương Văn Minh, the departments at the central level and at the village. These departments assigned by Mr. Dương Văn Minh. In 2011, Mr. Dương Văn Minh reorganized the Central Board of Directors with 11 members directly managed by Ly Van Ninh (from Cao Bang), assigned people to be in charge of the other provinces (Cao Bang, Tuyen Quang, Thai Nguyen, Bac Kan), each province had a leader and a deputy in charge. In the village, each village had a leader and a deputy in charge.

In terms of religious studies, the Dương Văn Minh phenomenon is a type of new religion - a “new way of worship” of the Hmong. This “new reason” (lý mới) is not a complete religion or sect with all the teachings and rituals of a religion, it is in the process of building, *looking for a new model of religious life*³⁹ or the *modernization of traditional beliefs of the Hmong*⁴⁰ based on Christian ideology, modification to suit new circumstances to meet the spiritual needs of a part of the Hmong and retention the traditional values. The appearance of the funeral house with sacred animals such as the swallow, the toad, the cicada, and the cross is the result of the cultural acculturation between Christianity and local culture. The new form of religious activities - the phenomenon of Dương Văn Minh has a unique nuance of the White Hmong people in Vietnam.

3. Conclusion

The phenomenon of Dương Văn Minh can be seen as a turning point in the conversion process of the faith conversion movement from traditional beliefs to Christianity of a part of Mong people in Vietnam in the last decades of the 20th century, early 21st century. That is the acculturation of Christianity with the local culture and beliefs, it formed a new form of religious activities related to Christianity, especially Protestantism. Obviously, Dương Văn Minh's self-confession as “Savior” is unacceptable to Christians, including Catholics and Protestants because Christ (Savior) is Jesus

Christ only. Furthermore, the promotion of the symbols of the funeral house with sacred animals as well as the Sun and the celebration of Dương Văn Minh's birthday as a "Christmas" has shown its opposition to the notion of idolatry and the 5 fundamental doctrines of Protestantism (only Grace, only Faith, only Scripture, only Jesus Christ, and only God is glorified). Therefore, the phenomenon of Dương Văn Minh was not recognized by the Protestant denominations, even FEBC- the evangelical missionary agency condemned that: "Giàng Súng Minh or Dương Văn Minh is not a good man, Giàng Súng Minh is not the one who saves humanity, he is a fake pastor, he tricks you, he was born in this earth, he is not a man of God Father, jumping down from Heaven, you do not believe in him and follow him, are not afraid him, he is a liar, a scammer"⁴¹.

In fact, the phenomenon of Duong Minh with the aforementioned characteristics is not only unique in Vietnam, a similar phenomenon has appeared in many places in the world along with the development of Protestantism. For example, the introduction of Protestantism into Korea also formed an organization called "World Mission Society Church of God", the object of worship from Jesus Christ to the prophet Ahn Sahng Hong⁴².

It can be said that the Dương Văn Minh phenomenon is a new religious phenomenon of the Hmong people, an objective entity that was born and developed due to socio-economic conditions in order to meet the needs of the spiritual life a part of the Hmong people. In fact, after 30 years of existence and development, the Dương Văn Minh phenomenon has formed stable religious communities with a firm belief, a well-defined religious lifestyle (religious practices on every Thursday and Sunday), with the religious leader (Dương Văn Minh) and religious symbols. In other words, the Dương Văn Minh phenomenon is a new kind of Hmong religion which has been modified and modernized on the basis of

the fusion of the Christian faith with some traditional religious practices and rituals of the Hmong people in new circumstances. It has been followed and accepted by a part of Hmong people as their “a new way of worship” or “a new reason”. The result of this conversion is life difficulties. And they want to eliminate obsession about “ghost” in the old custom. They have received spiritual and economic benefice. On the other hand, followers of Dương Văn Minh have an ethnic, kinship, family relations. They voluntarily participate without coercion. Therefore, they do not easily give up. The sacred animals’ symbols in funerals have become a profound spiritual symbol of believers. This phenomenon “has been formed” and lasted for 30 years, it has been deeply rooted in the thoughts of a part of the Hmong ethnic group”⁴³ and “the influence of Dương Văn Minh has penetrated the spiritual life of believers”.

The emergence of the Dương Văn Minh phenomenon can be seen as a process of “modernizing” the Hmong’s traditional beliefs in order to eliminate outdated customs, to preserve the values of ethnic cultural identity. The phenomenon of Dương Văn Minh expresses the aspiration of a part of the Hmong people who wanted to convert to another religion (Christianity in this case) as well as to preserve some fundamental concepts of their religion, traditional culture. It is clearly shown the funeral house with the sacred symbols of the swallow, the cicada, the toad, the cross. It is a fusion of Christianity and traditional beliefs of the Hmong, a kind of “modernizing” the Hmong traditional religion to suit the new situation, to meet the spiritual needs of people. This religion, on the one hand, helps to preserve the feelings of family members for the deceased, on the other hand, it saves time and money as well as avoids some outdated customs⁴⁴.

Moreover, the twelve “Commandments” of Dương Văn Minh’s phenomenon are progressive, consistent with the policy of the State in building a cultural life such as no drinking wine, no fighting, no cursing; no gambling; no land disputes; organizing a simple

wedding ceremony; the funeral must be reported to the authorities, to be dignified, economical, and sanitary, do not keep corpse more than 24 hours.

However, the phenomenon of Dương Văn Minh – “a new way of worship” of the Hmong people is in the process of formation; it is spontaneous, lacks systematization, does not have a system of teachings and a philosophy of religious practices; especially it lacks a well-defined concept, religious faith is not clearly shaped.

In short, over 30 years of establishment and existence, the phenomenon of Dương Văn Minh has been deeply ingrained in thought and lifestyle and it has become an indispensable spiritual and religious need of a part of the Hmong people. It is a type of new religion based on Christian ideology and traditional beliefs of the Hmong, modified to suit the new situation. However, this phenomenon is in the process of being formed, so it is necessary to have an appropriate policy in order to meet the spiritual needs of people and to stabilize the ethnic minorities’ region, to contribute to the sustainable development of the country.

Notes:

- 1 Far East Broadcasting Company-FEBC was established in 1945, in Shanghai, China, moved to Manila, the Philippines in 1948. It is a Protestant missionary agency, broadcasting in 149 languages, including the Hmong language.
- 2 *Vàng Chừ* religion emerged in 1980 in Colorado (USA), derived from the Christian Alliance then developed to California state led by a Hmong named Trouw Và Kùng (or Chou Và Cồng) so the Hmong in America called Vàng Chừ Trouw Và Kùng religion. They take advantage of the story that in the past, a king of the Hmong fought with the Chinese and was killed. Before dying, the king said: “I will resurrect in a thousand years, I will make the happy life of the Hmong, there will be a country for the Hmong”. They called on the Hmong to follow the Golden Chu religion, to wait for the arrival of Vàng Chừ, the Golden Chu for the country and for a happy life. Since then, they have called on the Mong to follow Vàng Chừ religion, to wait for the arrival of Vang Chu, to have a happy life. FEBC radio propagated Vàng Chừ religion to the Hmong community in Thailand from

1984 to 2003, about 20% of the Hmong people in this country converted. Vàng Chử religion also emerged in Laos in 1984 or 1985. By 2001, about 10% of the Hmong people in Laos converted. In the mountainous provinces of northern Vietnam, Protestant missionaries identified the king (*Vangx Tsur* or *Vua chủ*, *Vương chủ*, *Vangx Tsur Ntux*, *Vua chủ trời*- King of Heaven) in the history or myth of the Hmong with Jesus Christ, associated the king proclamation with religion, welcomes *Vàng Chử* - a character that has been sanctified, a new symbol. It met the spiritual needs and longing for a king, the Hmong people will have a happy life". Therefore, the hope and waiting for *Vàng Chử* - a new king, the savior who will come to change their lives, has attracted many Hmong followers. From Tuyen Quang, Vàng Chử religion quickly spread to many areas of the Hmong people in the Northwest. By 1990, Vàng Chử religion penetrated 164 communes in 8 northern mountainous provinces where the Hmong lived such as Tuyen Quang, Ha Giang, Cao Bang, Bac Kan, Thai Nguyen, Son La, Dien Bien, Lai Chau, Lao Cai, and Yen Bai.

See Vương Duy Quang (2005), *Văn hóa tâm linh của người Mông ở Việt Nam - Truyền thống và hiện tại* (*The spiritual culture of the Hmong in Vietnam - Tradition and present*), Nxb. Văn hóa-Thông tin, Hà Nội, pp.183-186.

- 3 Vương Duy Quang (2005), *Văn hóa tâm linh của người Hmông...* (*The spiritual culture of the Hmong in Vietnam - Tradition and present*), *ibid*, pp. 173-174.
- 4 Đào Đình Hoảng (or Thào Sênh Chơ), a White Hmong, native land: Mã Ba, Hà Quảng, Cao Bằng.
- 5 Dương Văn Minh went to Bắc Thái (Bắc Kạn, Thái Nguyên); Dương Văn Phụng và Lý Văn Khìn went to Cao Bằng; Đào Văn Đình, Sầm Văn Khào went to Chiêm Hóa; Lý Văn Phụng went to Yên Sơn, Hà Tuyên (Hà Giang, Tuyên Quang)
- 6 Nguyễn Hồng Dương (2014), "Hiện tượng tôn giáo mới phái sinh từ Kitô giáo ở nước ta hiện nay" (The phenomenon of new religion derived from Christianity in our country today), in: *Chủ nghĩa hậu hiện đại và phong trào tôn giáo mới ở Việt Nam và thế giới* (*Post-modernism and new religious movement in Vietnam and in the world*), Nxb. Đại học Quốc gia Tp. Hồ Chí Minh, p. 283.
- 7 Nguyễn Hồng Dương (2014), "Hiện tượng tôn giáo mới phái sinh từ Kitô giáo ở nước ta hiện nay" (The phenomenon of new religion derived from Christianity in our country today), *ibid*, p. 282.
- 8 Vương Duy Quang (2005), *Văn hóa tâm linh của người Hmông ở Việt Nam - Truyền thống và hiện tại* (*The spiritual culture of the Hmong in Vietnam - Tradition and present*), *ibid*, p. 209.

- 9 Nguyễn Hồng Dương (2014), “Hiện tượng tôn giáo mới phái sinh từ Kitô giáo ở nước ta hiện nay” (The phenomenon of new religion derived from Christianity in our country today), *ibid*, p. 283.
- 10 Vương Duy Quang (2005), *Văn hóa tâm linh của người Hmông ở Việt Nam - Truyền thống và hiện tại* (The spiritual culture of the Hmong in Vietnam - Tradition and present), *ibid*, p. 210.
- 11 Nguyễn Hồng Dương (2014), “Hiện tượng tôn giáo mới phái sinh từ Kitô giáo ở nước ta hiện nay” (The phenomenon of new religion derived from Christianity in our country today), *ibid*, p.283
- 12 Vương Duy Quang (2005), *Văn hóa tâm linh của người Hmông ở Việt Nam - Truyền thống và hiện tại* (The spiritual culture of the Hmong in Vietnam - Tradition and present), *ibid*, p. 211.
- 13 They have prepared facilities including altars, rattan chairs, flags, banners and 2 tons of rice to serve believers during 3 days with the presence of “Central, provincial, and district authorities”.
- 14 This convention was made on December 17, 2000, had 7 parts: Part I: 1 article stipulated time for traveling, working of a day; Part II: 3 articles stipulated traveling within the village); Part III: 12 articles stipulated the order in the village; Part IV: 1 article stipulated the organization and management board of village; Part V: 2 articles stipulated the responsibilities and duties of the management board); Part VI: 1 Article stipulated scope of management; Part VII: 1 Article stipulated effective implementation.
The Security Management Convention stipulated: absolutely forbid carrying guns (rudimentary weapons) to travel in the village (article 4, part III); Visiting Dương Văn Minh must report to the village management board, each visiting (30 minutes or 1 hour) no more than 1 hour.
- 15 An associate wrote the lyrics in Hmong language. There was a song based on the melody of the song: *Tiếng hát thành phố mang tên Người* by musician Cao Viet Bach, giving praise to Dương Văn Minh.
- 16 In which, there is an application to report the change of belief, with the content: 1) Dương Văn Minh and some Hmong people ask for a conversion of belief; 2) Dương Văn Minh does not intend to disrupt the policies of the Party and State of Vietnam and 3) Willing to open the door for authorities to exchange and to interview with Dương Văn Minh.
- 17 An application on December 16, 2000: “In 1989, I had left. In 1995, I returned from prison for 5 years. In 1995, I was granted the role of a mentor. In 1997, I practiced a religious life and am returning to live with my wife and children and the local government. I come back, I do my job, the year 2000 is going to be successful. I make an application to the government”.

See: Vương Duy Quang (2005), *ibid*, p. 214.

- 18 Nguyễn Hồng Dương (2014), “Hiện tượng tôn giáo mới phái sinh từ Kitô giáo ở nước ta hiện nay” (The phenomenon of new religion derived from Christianity in our country today), *ibid*, pp. 284-286.
- 19 In a letter from Dương Văn Minh’s associate: “All the brothers with the same Hmong language, Dear the senior leaders of Vietnam. There is a cross in heaven and on earth, it teaches all people to live in harmony. Since 1989, the cross had taught all the Hmong to change without superstition do not worship ghosts,... The cross does not teach bad things, not to destroy the country, the Party or State. We have lived in Vietnam for several generations, no one taught people a good way to go. From 1989 to 1999, there were no ghosts, we could see the best way. This person (Dương Văn Minh) taught the way to behave for all people, he taught good things that satisfied all people, everyone loved him. He taught the right way, He was not a person who returned to dispute the State, he just saved the Party and the State. Please tell the Party and the State that there is a medicinal plant, it is a tree that saves people, all people love it”. See: Vương Duy Quang (2005), *ibid*, pp. 213-214.
- 20 Vương Duy Quang (2005), *ibid*, p. 213.
- 21 Vương Duy Quang (2005), *ibid*, p. 214.
- 22 Including Dương Văn Hùng, Dương Văn Dũng, Dương Văn Phùng, Đào Thị Hoảng, Thảo A Trắng and Thảo A Mua.
- 23 Nguyễn Hồng Dương (2014), “Hiện tượng tôn giáo mới phái sinh từ Kitô giáo ở nước ta hiện nay” (The phenomenon of new religion derived from Christianity in our country today), *ibid*, p. 295.
- 24 Nguyễn Quang Hưng (2017), “Vấn đề ‘tôn giáo mới’ ở các tỉnh miền núi phía Bắc (qua trường hợp nhóm người Mông theo Dương Văn Minh)” (The ‘new religion’ issue in the Northern mountainous provinces (through the case of the Hmong group following Dương Văn Minh), Kỷ yếu Hội thảo *Biến đổi tôn giáo - Một số vấn đề lý luận và thực tiễn ở Việt Nam hiện nay*, Viện Nghiên cứu Tôn giáo (Proceedings of the Conference on *Religious Change - Some theoretical and practical issues in Vietnam today*, Institute of Religious Studies), Hà Nội, p. 69.
- 25 Tuyen Quang province has 225 households, 1,544 followers; Cao Bang province has 405 households and 2,718 followers; Bac Kan province has 59 households, 394 followers; Thai Nguyen province has 77 households, 465 followers. See: Vương Duy Quang (2005), *ibid*, p. 219 and Hà Đức Miêu (2005), *Sự chuyển biến về thái độ của đồng bào Dao trong những khu vực chịu ảnh hưởng của Tin Lành, thuộc Đề án Thực trạng và giải pháp đối với vấn đề đạo Tin Lành ở vùng Tây Bắc*, (*Changes in attitudes of Dao people in Protestant-affected areas, the Project Situation and*

- solutions to Protestantism in the Northwest*) conducted by Steering Committee for the Northwestern Region of Vietnam and Institute for Religious Studies, Hà Nội, pp. 22-23.
- 26 In Cốc Nghè, Cỗ Linh villages, Pác Nặm Distict; Lũng Lịa village, Nà Phặc Town, Ngân Sơn Distict; Đồng Luông, Quảng Chu villages, Chợ Mới Distict. See: Provincial People's Committees of Bắc Kạn, Department of Home Affairs, *Báo cáo Tổng kết công tác quản lý nhà nước về tôn giáo năm 2009 và quý I/2010 (Report on State management of religion in 2009 and the first quarter of 2010)*, No. 219/BC-SNV, Bắc Kạn, 15/3/2010.
- 27 Provincial People's Committees of Cao Bằng, Department of Home Affairs, *Báo cáo tình hình tôn giáo và công tác quản lý nhà nước về tôn giáo trên địa bàn tỉnh Cao Bằng (Report on religious situation and state management of religion in Cao Bang province)*, in March 2010.
- 28 “Ba không” và hành trình bài trừ cái xấu” (*‘Three no’ and the journey to eliminate evil*), Thái Nguyên Journal Online, 13/10/2016.
- 29 Tuyen Quang province has 697 households, 3,498 people, 40 core members, in 35 villages, 12 communes, 5 districts; Cao Bang province has 405 households, 2,400 people, 18 core members, in 35 villages, hamlets, 17 communes, 4 districts; Thai Nguyen province has 174 households, 954 people, 13 core members, in 12 villages, hamlets, 8 communes, 3 districts; Bac Kan province has 155 households, 796 people, 24 core members, in 16 villages/ hamlets, 11 communes, 5 districts; Lao Cai province has 11 households, 53 people, in 2 villages, 1 district. See: Steering Committee for the Northwestern Region of Vietnam, *Report on the situation and results of implementation of the Government Office's Notice No. 289/ TB-VPCP dated August 24, 2015 on the work of fighting and handling Dương Văn Minh organization (Báo cáo tình hình, kết quả thực hiện Thông báo số 289/TB-VPCP ngày 24/8/2015 của Văn phòng Chính phủ về công tác đấu tranh, xử lý “tổ chức Dương Văn Minh)*, in October 2016, p.1.
- 30 Nguyễn Quang Hưng (2017), “Vấn đề ‘tôn giáo mới’ ở các tỉnh miền núi phía Bắc (qua trường hợp nhóm người Mông theo Dương Văn Minh)” (The ‘new religion’ issue in the Northern mountainous provinces (through the case of the Hmong group following Dương Văn Minh), *ibid*, p. 71.
- 31 Ban Chỉ đạo Tây Bắc, *Báo cáo tình hình, kết quả thực hiện Thông báo số 289/TB-VPCP ngày 24/8/2015 của Văn phòng Chính phủ về công tác đấu tranh, xử lý “tổ chức Dương Văn Minh, tháng 10/2016* (Steering Committee for the Northwestern Region of Vietnam, *Report on the situation and results of implementation of the Government Office's Notice*

No. 289/ TB-VPCP dated August 24, 2015 on the work of fighting and handling Dương Văn Minh organization, in October 2016).

- 32 Nguyễn Hồng Dương (2014), “Hiện tượng tôn giáo mới phái sinh từ Kitô giáo ở nước ta hiện nay” (The phenomenon of new religion derived from Christianity in our country today), *ibid*, p. 289.
- 33 In many places, the missionaries also propagated to welcome Vàng Chứ, people have to learn to fly, do not bury the dead deeply (if the dead is buried deeply when Vang Chu appears, he/she can not follow him to heaven. Therefore, some people climbed up a tree to learn to fly, fell down, and broke their legs or died.
- 34 *The convention and charter establishing the organization of the Hmong's new life from 1989 to present (Translation from Latin Hmong script). Bản Quy ước, điều lệ thành lập tổ chức đời sống người Mông đời mới từ năm 1989 đến nay* (Bản dịch từ chữ Mông Latinh).
- 35 *Twelve commandments*: “1. Do not eating animal blood, especially “blood soup” and dead animals without bleeding; 2. Do not drink wine and beer; 3. Do not fighting, cursing; 4. Do not contradict, conflicting, stealing, depriving; 5. Do not gamble; 6. Do not use drugs; 7. Do not kill people, burning houses; 8. Do not dispute the land of others; 9. Do not encroach on the land of others; 10. Do not scramble spouses others; 11. Do not cheat or deceive others; 12. unite to help each other in production”.
- 36 Nguyễn Hồng Dương (2014), “Hiện tượng tôn giáo mới phái sinh từ Kitô giáo ở nước ta hiện nay” (The phenomenon of new religion derived from Christianity in our country today), *ibid*, p. 289.
- 37 For example, during the Lunar New Year (from February 9 to February 22, 2016), every day had about 250 or 300 Hmong people came to Ngòi Sen village, Yên Lam commune, Tuyên Quang province to attend the “Spring Festival”, Praising Dương Văn Minh. On the occasion of Dương Văn Minh’s birthday (on May 9 of lunar calendar, June 13, 2017) and celebrating a new house at his home in Tuyên Quang (July 7-8, 2016), there were over 600 people from other localities came to congratulate.
- See: Ban Chỉ đạo Tây Bắc, *Báo cáo tình hình, kết quả thực hiện Thông báo số 289/TB-VPCP ngày 24/8/2015 của Văn phòng Chính phủ về công tác đấu tranh, xử lý “tổ chức Dương Văn Minh, tháng 10/2016*, pp. 1-2.
- 38 In 2007, Dương Văn Minh and his associates mobilized believers at 9 groups in Cao Bang to build a “funeral house” (also known as Dương Văn Minh’s house) built by bricks, the area about 8m² to 12m², there was a wooden table 1.8m long, 0.7m wide, 0.4m high, a chair with 0.4m height, put a cicada on the chair.

- 39 Nguyễn Phú Lợi (2015), “Nhận diện hiện tượng tôn giáo mới ở Việt Nam trong bối cảnh toàn cầu hóa và hội nhập quốc tế” (Identify the new religious phenomenon in Vietnam in the context of globalization and international integration), *Thông tin khoa học lý luận chính trị*, No. 6 (7), p. 15.
- 40 Nguyễn Quang Hưng (2017), “Vấn đề ‘tôn giáo mới’ ở các tỉnh miền núi phía Bắc (qua trường hợp nhóm người Mông theo Dương Văn Minh)” (The ‘new religion’ issue in the Northern mountainous provinces (through the case of the Hmong group following Dương Văn Minh), *ibid*, p. 70.
- 41 Nguyễn Hồng Dương (2014), “Hiện tượng tôn giáo mới phái sinh từ Kitô giáo ở nước ta hiện nay” (The phenomenon of new religion derived from Christianity in our country today), *ibid*, p. 295.
- 42 The World Mission Society Church of God was originated from the Church of God Jesus Witnesses. In 1964, Ahn Sahng Hong established the Church of God Jesus Witnesses in Busan (He was a pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist). After his death in 1985, a schism took place, the Church of God Jesus Witnesses was divided into two sects, the New Covenant Passover Church of God, the “Witnesses of Ahn Sahng-hong Church of God” established by Zahng Gil-jah (known as the World Mission Society Church of God).
- 43 Ban Chỉ đạo Tây Bắc, *Báo cáo tình hình, kết quả thực hiện Thông báo số 289/TB-VPCP ngày 24/8/2015 của Văn phòng Chính phủ về công tác đấu tranh, xử lý “tổ chức Dương Văn Minh, tháng 10/2016*. (Steering Committee for the Northwestern Region of Vietnam, *Report on the situation and results of implementation of the Government Office’s Notice No. 289/ TB-VPCP dated August 24, 2015 on the work of fighting and handling Dương Văn Minh organization*, in October 2016).
- 44 Nguyễn Quang Hưng (2017), “Vấn đề ‘tôn giáo mới’ ở các tỉnh miền núi phía Bắc (qua trường hợp nhóm người Mông theo Dương Văn Minh)” (The ‘new religion’ issue in the Northern mountainous provinces (through the case of the Hmong group following Dương Văn Minh), *ibid*, p. 70.

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