

Leprosarium Report - 1966

As we look back over the past year of 1966 our hearts rejoice in the ever expanding work of the Leprosarium. In spite of increasing hostilities the work continues to advance. As circumstances change it is necessary to adopt the leprosy program to the immediate needs of the people. Daily dependance and guidance is sought from the Lord in order to maintain the continuous treatment for those dependant upon us for their medicines. With the expanding growth of the Leprosarium Directional Center in Banmethuot we see ever increasing opportunities for improved patient care and for personal evangelism.

Description of Medical Work

A total of 1969 people with leprosy were reached in 1966. Of this number 133 were registered as new patients, 50 discontinued treatment and 35 deaths were reported. At present the number on treatment is 1884 with 154 patients residing at the Leprosarium. 355 are located in the 5 treatment villages and the remaining 1375 are out-patients attending monthly clinics. The number of patient contacts receiving prophylactic medication at present total 2114 persons.

During the first months of 1966 when increased hostilities occurred in the four provinces where we serve in the highlands, the out-patient attendance fell far below normal. In one clinic area alone only 19 patients were seen last January, but during the year the number has increased so that in December over 200 persons were seen from this area.

Relocation of villages means relocating clinics to serve the people. Where restrictions are rigid, tribal messengers, usually patients, have carried the medicines and as soon as conditions permit many patients return to treatment.

We were saddened by the necessity in February of closing one treatment village. This village had been established in 1957. Dak RTih is in Quang Duc Province and the civilian population in

this area between kilometer 214 and 250 on Route 14 was evacuated by the government. Sixty percent of the patients resident in Dak Ktih were transferred to the Leprosarium or to treatment villages in Darlac Province. The remaining forty percent were left to be absorbed into the relocated villages. These as well as others now receive treatment as out-patients from the District Center at Kien Duc.

The story is different in Pleiku for we have seen the re-opening of three monthly clinics. Patients unable to get their medicines at the regular clinic points now are coming to Pleiku clinic to obtain their leprosy medicine. During the first seven months a total of 300 individuals stayed overnight in Pleiku guest house making a total of over 729 nights. Since August medical service has been given in the guest house thus turning it into a hospital situation. Two patient nurses are now being trained to care for these people. During these last five months 45 patients were admitted, and received a total of 532 days of hospital care. The Bahnar work continues to grow with two branch clinics at Kon Krah and Dak Jak principally for the purpose of discovering new patients.

Thirty-two national medical and paramedical workers and (a) three missionary nurses have served (b) 5,875 out-patients at (c) 40 dispensaries or clinic points. (d) 81,692 visits were recorded. Twenty-four infants were delivered. The laboratory reported 1900 tests completed.

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- (a) District missionaries in Phu Bon province also assisted in the treatment of out-patients. Two nurses were also present during the latter part of the year, but have been mainly concerned with Radey language study.
- (b) This number includes leprosy patients, their contacts and non-leprosy village people.
- (c) This number is constantly changing because of security and the relocation of the villages. Also included are the 12 clinics where pastors give out medicine.
- (d) Visits include those for monthly medication treatment of general illnesses, dressings for wounds and ulcers, and immunizations. "any patients were unable to attend clinics at the beginning of the year thus the decrease for 1966.

Hospital care was given in Pleiku and the Directional Center in Banmethuot as well as at the Leprosarium. Sixteen nationals of the above mentioned personnel gave care to 361 individual patients. The number of days of hospitalization totalled 24,596, an average of 68 days of care per patient.

The need for a doctor is urgent for many of our patients need special attention. We have been fortunate to have the services two afternoons a week of one of the Mil Phap doctors working at the province hospital.

In March of 1966 we were privileged to have the assistance of the 3rd Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, temporarily located at Banmethuot. Twenty surgical procedures were performed including one amputation and seven tendon transplants for the correction of drop-foot. Although the end results were not as good as anticipated the opportunity to begin this type of rehabilitation surgery was an encouragement to us.

Through the courtesy of the dentist with the 155 army unit we have been able to help many of our patients needing dental surgery. He has thus far done 40 teeth extractions and examined 45 people for future repair work.

National Workers

The Leprosarium now employs 48 full time employees and 20 part-time making a total of 68. They are employed as follows:

Medical Department	32
Office	3
Maintenance, supply and construction	13
Village Supervision	13
Children's School and Literacy	7
Total	<hr/> 68

Missionary Personnel

Two district missionaries have co-operated with the eight staff missionaries in the ever expanding program of the Leprosarium. Rev. R. McNeel is actively engaged as superintendant and builder while Mrs. McNeel receives and sorts all packages sent to the Leprosarium. She also handles all correspondence relative to the packages and acknowledges all gifts of monies received. Mrs. Betty Mitchell is book-keeper for C.C.F. funds, distributes clothing and blankets to our patients, and is in charge of provisioning the children's Hostel.

With the stationing of two more nurses in Banmethuot we at last have an increase in our medical personnel although one is still in full time language study and the other in part time. Miss Mildred Ade, R.N. has turned her duties as acting medical director over to Miss Ruth M. Wilting R.N.C.M. Miss Ade is now in Dalat in Vietnamese language study.

Miss Olive Kingsbury R.N. continues to supervise the district work in Pleiku province. She is very busy with the medical needs of the people and the reopening of monthly clinics. With the influx of those returning from the mountains the Bahnar work is growing and Miss Kingsbury has added this responsibility to her work. The work in Phu Bon Province continues under the guidance of Rev. and Mrs. Robert Reed.

Connected with any work there is always the necessity of reports and records. Miss Dawn Deets R.N. supervises this work along with the district out-patient work in Darlac province. We are indeed happy to have Miss Betty Olsen R.N. and Miss Eunice Boschult R.N. as added members of our medical staff. Miss Olsen continues in Radaay language study and has opened a room for the treatment and care of ulcers. Miss Boschult assists in many different areas and since Miss Ade left for Dalat she has become co-ordinator for the C.C.F. projects. Miss Joan Waller R.N. is continuing her Vietnamese language study in Dalat.

The Leprosarium Committee is the guiding body of the Leprosarium and is responsible to the Joint Committee for the work of the Leprosarium. This committee is composed of the director, Rev. Le K. Cung, the medical director, the superintendent, the treasurer, Rev. Franklin Irwin, and Rev. Ham Nie Hrah, advisor.

Since the capture of our three, Dr. Ardel Vietti, Rev. Archie Mitchell and Mr. Daniel Gerber, four and one-half years have passed. Although these have been long sad years they have also been fruitful years for the Leprosarium. We know that the Lord has used these three during this time and that they will be fruitful years for them also. We pray that the Lord will continue to help them in the work they are called to do and that we might soon see them released.

Construction and Maintenance

During the past year the following projects have been completed under the direction of Rev. R. McNeel.

A. Bannethuot

- 1. Four new wood and tile duplex residences for national workers with families. Each family unit consists of three rooms. These are equipped with electricity.*
- 2. The renovation of the former Bannethuot clinic house for occupancy by two single national workers.*
- 3. The renovation of three rooms behind the Ralay church for occupancy by missionaries. This included ceilings, painting, plumbing, bath, screens, wiring, repairing of walls and calcimining.*
- 4. The renovation of the Hostel-Missionary residence included kitchen, porch, stairway, doors, bedroom partition, toilets, painting, enclosed garage to make an additional room, and work area improved with cement floor.*

5. Construction of wood and tole six bay garage shelter with guest house and caretaker's quarters.
6. New barbed wire fence for Leprosarium Directional Center.
7. Fencing of single ladies' residences.
8. Establishing of the new office building.
9. Renovation of old office area, to medical and surgical unit.
10. Wood and tole four bed ward with electricity and plumbing added to the medical unit.
11. Renovation of sixteen room former workers quarters to include shoe shop, therapy room, offices, fuel, food and clothing storage and general warehouse facilities.
12. New furniture for 8,9,10, and 11 above as well as for the two segregation villages.

B. Ea Tuor and Leprosarium

1. Construction of tole and cement clinic building.
2. Construction of wood and tole residences for Dak RTih refugees.
3. One cottage dismantled and materials utilized in other construction.

C. Pleiku

1. Construction of wood and tole triplex worker's residence (9 rooms)
2. Construction of wood and tole duplex servants quarters (6 rooms)

Maintenance and repairs were carried out at Ea Ana and Ea Tuor clinic buildings, on mission residences, vehicles, Banmethuot Mission and Bible School property.

Special Projects

The primary school at the Leprosarium continues with 57 children enrolled. There are 43 first graders and 14 in the second grade. We now have 21 children housed in Banmethuot who attend the 3rd and 4th grades in the public school. The Christian Children's Fund supports this project.

During the past year five patients resident at the Leprosarium

have learned to read. This was made possible by the admittance to the Leprosarium of a young educated man from Pleiku Province.

A rabbit-raising project was started by Rev. Reed in order to help supply additional protein food for the patients in Plei Tomak Village (Phu Bon Province). Twenty-five pairs were sold to patients in this village and 4 pairs have been placed in Darlac treatment villages.

Miss Kingsbury has been busy instructing three girls from the treatment village of Plei Thok to sew. Thus far they have learned to make the simple black tribal skirt and to sew a very simple blouse. After some further instruction in tailoring it will be possible for these girls to return to help in their village.

There is much work for expansion in the field of prevention. This year a special effort was made to put wooden handles on all pots and pans of the patients at the Leprosarium and the treatment villages. Thus far 164 wooden handles have been put on the cooking pots to prevent burns. This is necessary since the patients do not realize when they burn their hands thus causing ulcers and sores.

In October the foot care room was opened and now special attention is being given to those having ulcers. We find it very difficult to teach the patients that they must examine hands and feet every night for ulcers and blisters. We try to explain that leprosy itself does not cause their sores. More often it is caused by injury to tissue which has no feeling. We also must pay special attention to the first ulcer and the prevention of such.

Next to the foot-care room is a small seemingly insignificant room, but, during the past year this has become the center for one of the most important phases of our work. Under the direction of Miss Dawn Deets leprosy patients with foot deformities have been able to obtain special shoes to aid in the prevention of foot ulcers. Thus far 44 pairs of shoes have been made.

Evangelistic and Church Work

Since it is now necessary for so many patients to come to Banmethuot to obtain their medicine we have had to add another clinic day. During these three days clinic workers bring the message of God's love to the patients before they receive their leprosy medicine. For the ones arriving early in the morning we have a service at 8:30. This is repeated for a new group an hour later. The third service is held at 10:30. A different national worker is in charge of each service. This is an integral part of the leprosarium program and all of our Christian national workers share in it. These same young men when they take medicine to the village clinics also minister to the spiritual needs of the village patients.

During the past months it has been especially thrilling to hear one of our workers, a believer of only six months witness to the patients of the power of the Gospel to change lives. Formerly, like many of them, he had scoffed at it, but, now it has become the most important thing in his life. At each clinic session a verse of scripture is memorized. During the past year 952 of the patients have memorized the verses.

Two short term schools were held in Pleiku, each for ten days; also one leadership training class for adults was held. Informal classes are held in the clinic each evening for those of the patients having to stay overnight in the guest room. Plei Mrong continues to respond to the Gospel message and last year twenty three were added to the list of believers. Easter was a happy time when two of our patient nurses were baptized. Also the believers in Plei Mrong have begun to tithe, sending this money to the pastor in Pleiku. It is indeed a thrill to see the response of the people and the spiritual advancement of the believers.

As we look at the Bible School students here in Banmethuot we are reminded of the fruits of labor, for three of the students

are leprosy patients. One student is the son of a patient. Another is a young man who came in contact with the gospel through the invitation of patients for the local pastor to preach in their village.

Members of the Leprosarium staff minister in three near by villages and from time to time help in the local church. Some are also active in hospital visitation and literature distribution. Through this ministry and the leprosy clinics, 6900 pieces of literature has been given out, and 383 pieces sold. Rejoice with us for the 23 others, not patients, who prayed. Some of these are our own workers and others were reached by the ministry of our workers. A total of 58 inquirers has been reached through the ministry of our workers in the clinics and segregation villages.

Finances

We want to thank all who have had a part in giving us another prosperous year. Funds and goods have been received regularly, and for this we are indeed grateful. Agencies and societies which have contributed to the leprosy program are:

The Departments of Health and Public Welfare of the
Vietnamese Government

U.S. Aid

Mennonite Central Committee

Christian Children's Fund

World Vision

The Christian and Missionary Alliance constituency in
the United States and Canada.

How thankful we are to the many Women's Missionary Prayer Bands for their faithfulness. We are indeed conscious of the much needed prayer support that is behind us. This is one of the most effective ministries these groups can have for us, for it is only by prayer support that we can continue in the work given to us to do. The packages of bandages and used clothing have been

many, numbering 1165 (plus 12 drums). This is an increase of 465 packages over the previous year. A total of 508 letters were written acknowledging packages received. Also 303 letters were written during the year to acknowledge gifts of money received. Over 7,500 bundles of clothing were given out to needy people during the past year. Due to the inadequate supply of blankets only 200 were given out.

The Coming Year

This coming year we hope to see more advances in many directions, we are anticipating:

- 1) Recruiting and training of additional personnel.
- 2) Continuing construction in Pleiku, at the Leprosarium and in our segregation villages.
- 3) As the needs change we expect to open new clinics and villages to meet the normal demands.
- 4) Continued development of the Directional Center in Banmethuot
- 5) Classes for instruction in:
 - a) Physio Therapy and rehabilitation for the handicapped.
 - b) Preventive medicine
 - c) Literacy classes for the people in the Segregation villages.
 - d) Short term schools for Bible instruction.
 - e) Refresher courses and further education for our village nurses.

As we look forward our hearts are encouraged by what has been done the past year. We know that we go forward in the strength of the Lord and that we can accomplish all things according to his will for the work. Pray with us for the advancements and the strengthening of our lines. May we see a real awakening among the tribal people to whom we minister.