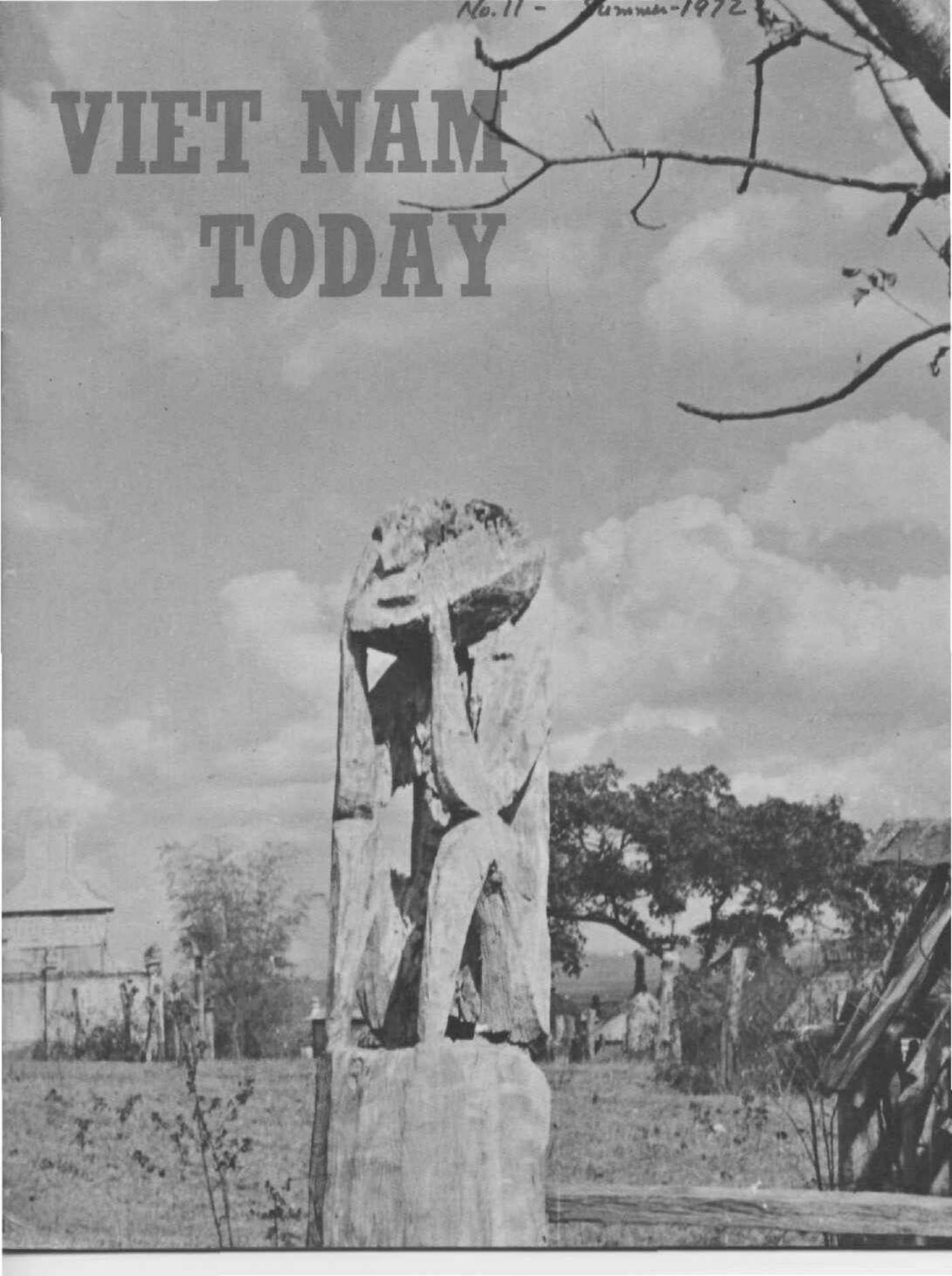


No. 11 - Summer - 1972

VIET NAM TODAY



VIET NAM TODAY

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SUMMER 1972 NUMBER 11

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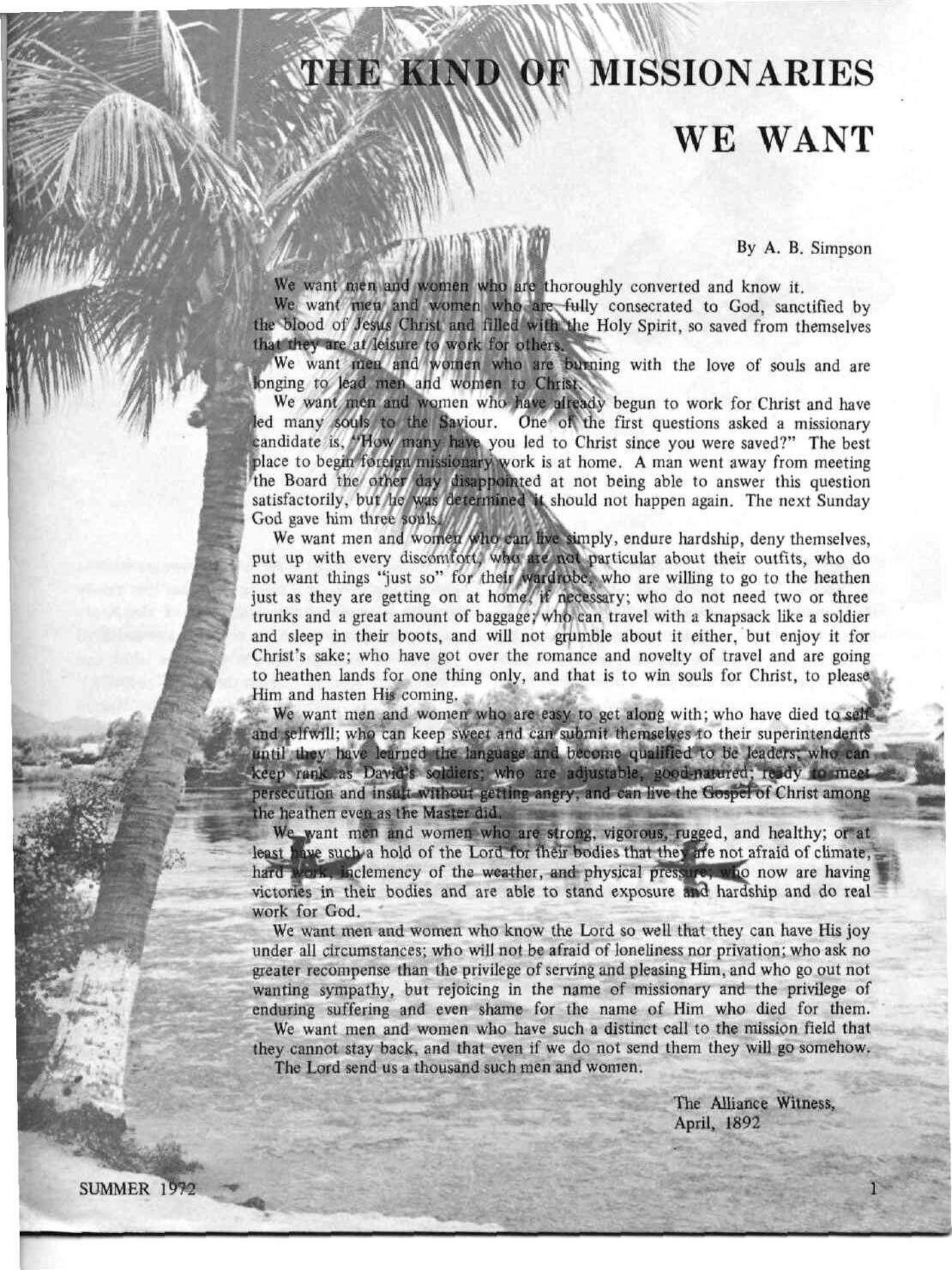
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THE KIND OF MISSIONARIES WE WANT

By A. B. Simpson

We want men and women who are thoroughly converted and know it.

We want men and women who are fully consecrated to God, sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit, so saved from themselves that they are at leisure to work for others.

We want men and women who are burning with the love of souls and are longing to lead men and women to Christ.

We want men and women who have already begun to work for Christ and have led many souls to the Saviour. One of the first questions asked a missionary candidate is, "How many have you led to Christ since you were saved?" The best place to begin foreign missionary work is at home. A man went away from meeting the Board the other day disappointed at not being able to answer this question satisfactorily, but he was determined it should not happen again. The next Sunday God gave him three souls.

We want men and women who can live simply, endure hardship, deny themselves, put up with every discomfort, who are not particular about their outfits, who do not want things "just so" for their wardrobe, who are willing to go to the heathen just as they are getting on at home, if necessary; who do not need two or three trunks and a great amount of baggage; who can travel with a knapsack like a soldier and sleep in their boots, and will not grumble about it either, but enjoy it for Christ's sake; who have got over the romance and novelty of travel and are going to heathen lands for one thing only, and that is to win souls for Christ, to please Him and hasten His coming.

We want men and women who are easy to get along with; who have died to self and selfwill; who can keep sweet and can submit themselves to their superintendents until they have learned the language and become qualified to be leaders; who can keep rank as David's soldiers; who are adjustable, good-natured; ready to meet persecution and insult without getting angry, and can live the Gospel of Christ among the heathen even as the Master did.

We want men and women who are strong, vigorous, rugged, and healthy; or at least have such a hold of the Lord for their bodies that they are not afraid of climate, hard work, inclemency of the weather, and physical pressure; who now are having victories in their bodies and are able to stand exposure and hardship and do real work for God.

We want men and women who know the Lord so well that they can have His joy under all circumstances; who will not be afraid of loneliness nor privation; who ask no greater recompense than the privilege of serving and pleasing Him, and who go out not wanting sympathy, but rejoicing in the name of missionary and the privilege of enduring suffering and even shame for the name of Him who died for them.

We want men and women who have such a distinct call to the mission field that they cannot stay back, and that even if we do not send them they will go somehow. The Lord send us a thousand such men and women.

The Alliance Witness,
April, 1892



In one of the most critical areas of present missionary endeavor, our Field Chairman relates the results of:

OUR MISSION

By Tom Stebbins

When Dr. Louis King presented a new approach to Mission-Church relationships called "Modified Dichotomy" to the Green Lake '71 Conference for EFMA and IFMA mission leaders, he was not advocating a fashionable new theory or ideal, but a very practical, biblical plan for Mission-Church cooperation. In January 1972, just three months later, he introduced that plan to the field which today comprises the Christian and Missionary Alliance's greatest responsibility for evangelism and church planting - Viet Nam.

In recent years the question has often been asked, "Has the task for which missionaries were sent to Viet Nam some sixty years ago been completed yet?"

"No!" replies one missionary after an extensive church growth study in every corner of the land. "We have an even greater responsibility than that of Viet Nam's pioneer missionaries."

"But," someone else adds, "You have a strong national church of over 50,000 baptized believers! Isn't it time this maturing Church assumed total responsibility for evangelizing its own people?"

One would almost need to write an entire book to give an adequate reply to this question. But briefly it might be answered that in the light of Viet Nam's mushrooming population, its countless unevangelized villages, the midnight hour in which we labor, and Christ's command to "preach the Gospel to EVERY creature," it is imperative that Church and Mission pool all of our personnel and financial resources in order to share Jesus Christ with every person in Viet Nam.

But how exactly does a Church and Mission work together in a joint task of evangelism? There has been a wide variety of interesting approaches to this delicate matter. In some countries the Mission, like scaffolding on a house, has been dismantled and missionaries have become "building materials" in the construction of the National Church. This approach has too often resulted in depleted missionary force, a cut-back in missionary giving and reduced evangelistic pursuit on the field. In other countries the Mission has applied a "fresh start" approach, turning everything already established over to the National Church and moving its missionary force into unevangelized geographical areas or strata of society. This has

CHURCH AGREEMENT



sometimes caused serious misunderstanding in the hearts of the National Church brethren and a vacuum in certain areas of the younger Church's total life and ministry.

When Dr. King and Rev. T. Grady Mangham, Jr., Foreign Secretary and Areas Secretary of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, visited Viet Nam in January, 1972, it was to meet with the leadership of Mission and Church in order to form a working relationship which would both strengthen the Church to meet its New Testament responsibility and at the same time allow the Mission to fulfill its evangelistic mandate.

As Mission and Church leaders gathered for four days at the former Mission school in the cool highlands of Dalat, a spirit of unity and love knit our hearts together in one common purpose "to cooperate together in a program to communicate the Gospel to every person in Viet Nam, and, relying on the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, to win sinners to Christ and to establish them in an ever-increasing number of churches to the glory of the triune God."

This purpose was unanimously adopted as the introduction to an official accord which states concisely how the Mission and Church in Viet Nam agree to remain as separate, equal organizations cooperating closely in the work of Christ's Kingdom. The agreement clarifies this vital relationship between Church and Mission, particularly in the areas of administration, personnel, finance, relationships with other groups, and fellowship in the worldwide Christian and Missionary Alliance.

As this significant Mission-Church summit meeting adjourned and we returned to our varied posts, it was with a clearer understanding for one another's part in Christ's Body and in His total plan for the evangelization and extension of His Kingdom into Vietnamese hearts. All delegates were keenly aware that a documented agreement in itself will never accomplish this tremendous task to which we have all been commissioned. But of one thing we were certain - such an agreement will provide the "tracks" on which Mission and Church may move together more smoothly and effectively toward reaching this urgent goal.

If... with ALL your heart...

*A true story as related by a local pastor
in the city of Saigon*

It had been a hot, busy day, and Tam was glad it was about over. He was tired and thoughts of a cold shower, good meal and leisurely evening were pleasant. As he turned in his lane his son ran out to meet him, waving a piece of paper.

"Dad—" he began. Tam put up his hand in mild protest. "Wait a minute, son, until I get in the house and out of these hot shoes."

Five minutes later he was relaxing in his dim, cool living room.

"All right now, what is it you want me to see?" Tam glanced over the piece of paper his son handed to him. Suddenly he gave a sharp exclamation — "Where did you get this?"

A little frightened, his son replied, "A man came to the house this afternoon and said this was an invitation that I was to give you."

Tam hurriedly put his shoes back on, stood up, checked an address on the paper and started out the door. "I have to go now. This is important," he answered his wife's demand to know why he was leaving just as they were about to eat.

It took a while for him to reach the house he was looking for, but he had already forgotten his hunger and fatigue. He knew he had found the right place when he saw the church with the cross and the words 'TIN LANH' written high above the front door. Next to the church was the house he assumed

to be the home of the pastor, so he knocked on the door and was welcomed in.

Discarding the usual preliminary social amenities, he asked, "Are you the Tin Lanh pastor?"

"Yes."

"My son gave me this when I arrived home from work this afternoon. I see that it is an invitation to attend special services which are to begin soon, but I could not wait. I have been looking for a Tin Lanh church for such a long time. Please tell me about the Good News — I have tried every other religion, but my heart is still empty and unsatisfied. Perhaps you can help me."

Although somewhat astonished by this direct approach, the pastor gladly explained the old, old story of Jesus and His love. Tam sat quietly, interrupting only occasionally to clarify a point. When the pastor finished and asked if he had any questions, he replied, "No, I would like to become a Christian right now."

Simply and earnestly he prayed, asking forgiveness for his sins and inviting the Lord Jesus Christ to enter and control his life. When he lifted his head it was plain to see that he had found the peace he had been seeking for so long.

Tam, with his wife and son began attending every service the church held - Sunday school, Sunday morning worship, church and home prayer meetings - He could not seem to hear often enough to satisfy his hunger and thirst. The time he spent in prayer and Bible study revealed itself in the way he talked and lived.

One night, two weeks after Tam had found God, his wife was awakened by the sudden glare of a light just switched on. Puzzled, she glanced at her watch. Midnight! And here was her husband, freshly bathed and shampooed, dressed in his best clothes. What had come over him? Seeing that she was awake, he sat down on the bed and quietly explained that tonight he was going to be with the Lord.

"Don't grieve," he said. "This is a thing of great joy to me. When you see that I have gone, I want you to go immediately to the pastor and do as he says. Do not follow our daughter or son-in-law for they are not Christians."

Though disturbed, his wife acquiesced and watched as Tam lay down, fully clothed, upon his bed, closed his eyes and fell asleep. He seemed to be all right, so finally, she too, slept. She awoke about five thirty the next morning, went over to her husband and found him as he had said.

Today, two years after his funeral, Tam's widow and son are faithfully following the Lord. They miss their husband and father, but they do not grieve as those who have no hope — for they are looking forward to seeing him again. They are grateful that, before his death, Tam found the Saviour, and then led them, too, to Him.

Has not God promised. . . .

"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with your whole heart."

In cooperation with



The Pocket Testament League and the evangelistic team of Rev. Pham van Thau are no strangers to the people of South Viet Nam. Along the plains, down in the delta and up into the highlands they have gone with the most precious of all possessions – THANH GIANG, the Gospel of St. John. This attractive little booklet has come as a gift from God's people all over the United States and Canada. No other single piece of literature in the history of the Evangelical Church of Viet Nam, has been so carefully "planted" in the hands of village leaders, officers, soldiers, prisoners, business men and women, students and peasants. Over two million copies of his living Word of God have been distributed in Viet Nam since the inception of this valuable ministry in 1965. In 1971 alone, 250,000 copies were distributed.

Frequently the PTL team cooperates with a local Tin Lanh church in a mini-crusade. Having secured permission from the local village authorities, a tent is set up in a good location – usually the central market area. As the strains of "Jesus Saves" ring out over the stalls of vegetables and fruits, Mr. Thang climbs to the specially built deck of the PTL truck and invites those who pass by to pause a few minutes and hear a message of hope and joy given by Rev. Thau. At the close of each presentation an invitation to accept Jesus Christ is made and copies of THANH GIANG are distributed to all who will receive them.

Recently an evangelistic tent campaign was held in Bao Loc in the central highlands, with the PTL team cooperating with the local church. The church witness band, youth choir and the team worked together witnessing

in shops, markets, school yards and military compounds.

During one service a local policemen burst into the tent in a half drunken state. Pointing a gun at the local minister he declared that he would not tolerate such preaching. That evening the message was on the second commandment. Despite this incident Scripture distribution and preaching continued. Praise God, 47 adults made a clear confession of Christ as their Lord during these days of evangelism. The police chief apologized to Rev. Thau and the pastor for the misconduct of his officer and the guilty policeman went to jail for 24 hours.

Rev. Thau and his two capable co-workers, Mr. Thang and Mr. Kiem, have traveled thousands of kilometers in the Pocket Testament League sound truck. Often they must drive over poor roads where the security is uncertain and the possibility of hidden mines exists. But there are hamlets who have never heard of the love of God, and the desire to share the Good News with them encourages the team to continue.

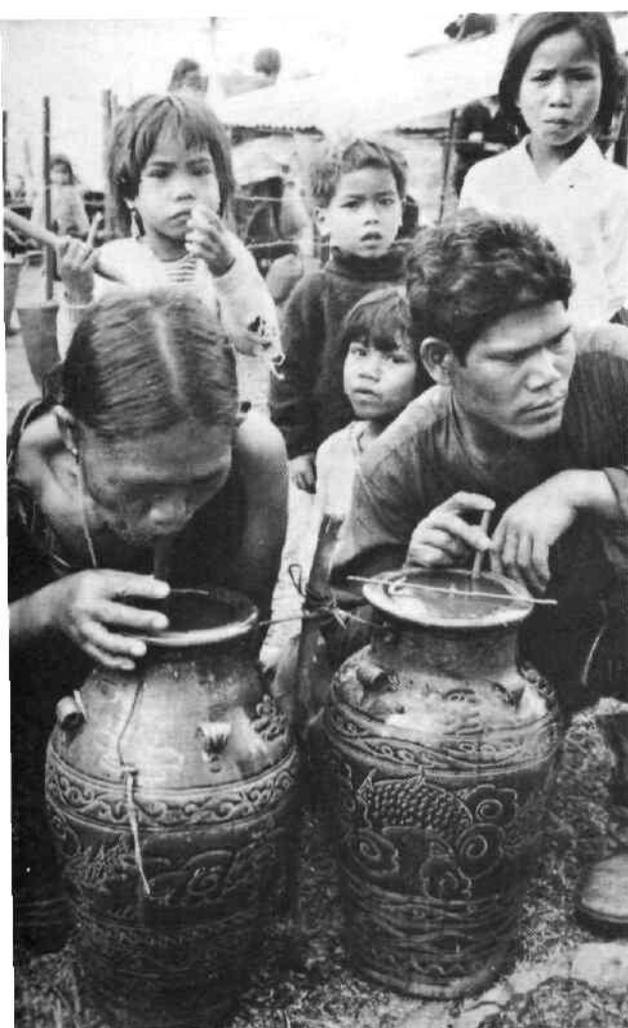
The sentiments of the Pocket Testament League team have been expressed:

"We urge you to pray for the Church and the work of the Lord in our land. The more we preach and travel the more we see that we must work all the harder. Oh, how we wish we could divide ourselves into five parts, or maybe seven parts, in order to accomplish God's task here."



by
Jean
Livingston

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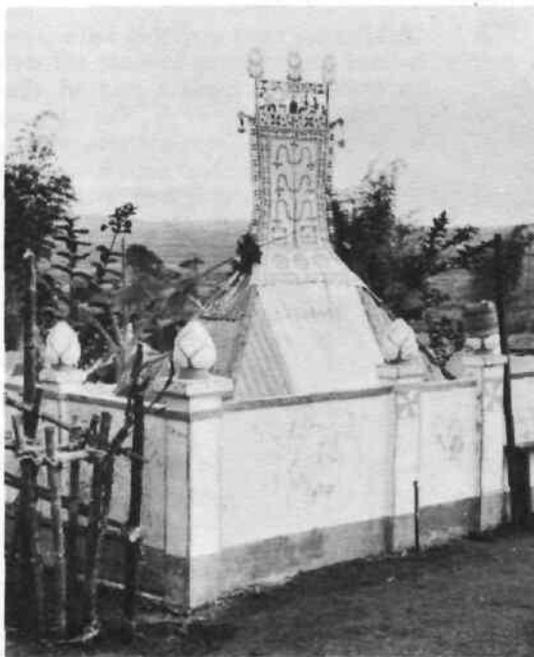


Drinking rice wine during festival



Offerings at grave-site

A
newly
decorated
grave



"If religion were a thing that money could buy, the rich would live and the poor would die," is the first line of an old folk song. But among the tribes of Viet Nam both the rich and the poor die as victims of a binding, merciless religion. Animism is a religion of fear where the rich quickly become poor if disease strikes and the sorcerer initiates a long and costly series of animal sacrifices to the spirits. It is believed that all disease is caused by a displeased spirit. There are many, many spirits. People, mountains, houses, water, trees, rocks, fields and other objects all have spirits. When sickness comes, a sorcerer is called who then decides which spirit is angry of neglect and just what sacrifice will appease it. One tribesman offered seven successive water buffalo sacrifices as one by one, seven members of his family died in an epidemic. Another man desperately sought to buy a

WORSHIP

by Charles Long



Festival around the grave honoring the spirit of the dead

monkey to offer as a propitiation for his own life threatened by malevolent spirits. Tribal people also believe that certain people have the power to "eat" another person's soul or life force. Should one suffer death by a lingering disease, it is assumed that a "black witch" has eaten away his soul. In some tribes, members of the deceased's family are duty bound to seek the advice of a sorcerer who tells them the identity of the "soul-eater." They then kill the poor unsuspecting person that has been accused. Just last February an old woman was found beaten to death by the river at Cheo Reo. Her murderers had performed a religious duty by killing her.

Most feared of all are the spirits of dead relatives. This fear makes the tombs a center of tribal life and culture. Monthly drinking festivals are held at the tombs with music, feasting and orgy, culminating in the "grave abandoning festival" when large sums of money are spent to beautify the grave. One grand feast signifies the final offerings to the spirit. After that extravagant gesture the spirit of the relative is considered appeased, the grave abandoned, and the jungle allowed to reclaim the tomb.

The economics and social consequences of spirit worship are grim. Useful tools, clothes, blankets, motorbikes and other belongings are buried with the dead or abandoned in the grave house. The fear of the spirits makes cultural change almost impossible. Serious drunkenness which accompanies spirit worship results in social disorder and family disruption — yet, even highly educated men return to the village to take part in the ritual worship of the spirits as dictated by the "laws of the ancestors."

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has liberated many from this life of fear; they can testify to His great power and peace. But animism still keeps a firm grip on the tribespeople who live in the central highlands, taking a tremendous toll in unnecessary deaths caused by fear, superstition and ignorance. Although a new Christian may suffer persecution and social pressure from those attempting to preserve the old ways, he whom the Son sets free is free indeed — free to change, to grow, to live and enjoy all of God's good gifts, for he has exchanged a servitude of fear to capricious spirits for the loving fellowship of Jesus, God's own Son.



REVIVAL AT NHATRANG BIBLE INSTITUTE

by Orrel Steinkamp

Ten years ago Viet Nam was among the many small, largely unknown countries of the world. Now, however, because of the long, bloody and well documented war, Viet Nam has become a household word around the globe. In addition, many American Christians were surprised to learn that in South Viet Nam there is an evangelical Church community of nearly 100,000 people. This Church has rich heritage reaching back almost to the turn of the century. It has been blessed of God with many choice and anointed leaders. In the early years many of the Christians were called upon to suffer persecution. Now, for over twenty years the Church has endured the depression of a long war. Thus war has not only brought destruction and mourning; to many it has brought a measure of affluence with new and dazzling consumer products — and the combination of war weariness and materialism has too often robbed the Church of dynamic life and power.

Last September, the beginning of the School year at the Nhatrang Bible Institute found a number of men returning to study after two years of ministry in student pastorates. They returned with heavy hearts, sharing a common conclusion that the Church was in desperate need of new spiritual life, without which it was presumptuous to move ahead with organizational evangelism, no matter how well planned.

This year a new course, "Revivals in Church History," was added to the curriculum. Each student was assigned to read, research and lecture on a revival. In succeeding weeks the revivals of Asbury College, the Catholic Pentecostals, The Jesus Movement, and John Sung (in Viet Nam) were presented. Each week interest grew among the student body. Early morning prayer meetings were begun.

On December 3, 1971, in Room 5, at 11 a.m. during the regular class hour, Mr. Thien reported

on the revival in Indonesia. At the end of his presentation he made a plea to pray for revival in Viet Nam, — to pray that it begin at the Bible Institute. About noon a spirit of confession came upon the students, suddenly the room became alive with spontaneous, simultaneous prayer. Students were struck with an acute awareness of sin. They began to lift their hands, calling on God. All pride was set aside as they were swept into the presence of the living Christ.

Students who had not attended the class went down to the dining room for lunch, only to find that most of the students had not come to eat. The weeping and crying out to God gained in tempo, causing other students to come up to the meeting. Many, as soon as they entered the room, were immediately overwhelmed, falling to their knees, and crying out to the Lord to forgive their sins. One student related that as he was making his way up to Room 5 he met another student running away exclaiming, "Oh, it's frightening!" He returned to his room but could not rest until he finally joined the praying group. Another student confessed that he had determined not to go up to Room 5, but instead decided to work on a report. However, try as he would to write, his hand was so out of control that he misspelled nearly every word. He too came up to the room to pray.

Students began to seek each other out, confessing hatred, cheating, stealing and other sins to one another. Some repented of jealousy. Others confessed to stealing small amounts of money. Still others reported not paying their tithes. In fact, the Child Evangelism Fund, which had been in arrears, later made a report showing a balance of about \$44 because of those who had paid up back tithes. A student went to his room to get and return a ruler that belonged to someone else. Others began to move up and down the aisles to help those who were smitten by conviction.

It was not unusual to see three or four students locked in a weeping embrace. As students were gloriously filled with the Holy Spirit they began to minister to each other. Spontaneous shouts of "hallelujah" and songs of praise burst out among them. Three students were healed and another was delivered from demonic influence. The meeting continued with testimony, praise and prayer until 2:30 a.m. At that time Mr. Thien dramatically erased one word — Indonesia — from the title of his report which had been written on the blackboard, substituting the word "Bible Institute" so that it now read, "Revival at the Bible Institute."

This was only the beginning. The next day one of the students came to see a missionary. He confessed that he had once used the money given him for the work of the church for another purpose. He handed the missionary his watch, explaining that he had no money to pay back the debt, but asked him to keep it until he had enough to redeem it.

Next the fire of revival spread to a nearby church and orphanage. Since then teams of students have visited at least twenty-five Vietnamese churches. With rare exception the flame of revival has been lit wherever they have gone to witness. During Christmas vacation God used the students to ignite revival among the Koho Tribal Church. Over 60 of the 83 Koho churches have been revived. Hundreds have found Christ as their Saviour, several thousand dollars worth of fetishes have been burned, scores of people have been healed and still the revival seems to have only started.

The long awaited awakening has begun. Won't you pray with us that this movement of God's Spirit will not only affect South Viet Nam but will reach into North Viet Nam and spread throughout all of Southeast Asia?



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YOUTH RETREAT

by Dave Hartzfeld

Strict discipline and tight organization. . . a military camp or a boarding school? No, a retreat planned and executed with typical Chinese order and thoroughness, but tempered with oriental friendliness and *esprit de corps*.

Usually, Tet (the lunar New Year) is a family celebration characterized by a week of visiting relatives and friends. But since 1960 the Chinese youth groups from Cholon have spent the week at a spiritual retreat.

On February 13, a group of 130 young people arrived at the seaside resort of Vung Tau. It did not take them long to choose their dormitory beds and settle their things. The retreat opened that evening with singing and a message, but by ten o'clock all was quiet. There was a busy week ahead.

In the morning everyone was awake at 6 a.m. and vigorously singing in the chapel by 6:30. By 8 o'clock, the breakfast hour, they had already had a singspiration, Bible study and prayer time.

"Clean-up" followed breakfast. (They had to maintain their reputation for leaving the buildings cleaner than when they arrived.) Before they divided for classes Dr. Pao, from Hong Kong, brought his second Bible study. During the week he brought 10 Bible studies on the theme of the retreat, "I must arise" - based on Joshua 1:2. Following this they divided into classes. There were 5 choices. One class was on Action Groups where discussion centered around new methods of evangelistic outreach among students. Another was on personal evangelism, using the "Four Spiritual Laws" as a tool. This class was complemented by one which explained social etiquette involved in witnessing - an important aspect in oriental culture. There was also a class for youth leaders on how to plan weekly programs. Then, because about ten per cent of those attending the retreat were non-Christians, there was a special class explaining salvation.

The young people were divided into 10 prayer-discussion groups. In addition to meeting separately for prayer immediately after the morning and evening messages, they met together every noon for an hour and a half to discuss 4 topics - marriage, youth fellowships, revival, and how to deal with sin.

After lunch and the inevitable siesta there was plenty of volleyball, ping pong and swimming. There was also time before the evening meal for socializing and making new friends.

The evening message was preceded by 30 minutes of music. Chinese youth like to sing and they sing well. Because of this there were four sessions of singing scattered throughout the day's activities.

The final evening each prayer-discussion group presented a song which they had composed giving their impressions about the retreat or what they had learned. The words were set to familiar tunes. Following this, several students in each group gave testimonies of how God had met them, and how they had learned to apply practically the things they had been taught. One young man told of becoming a Christian during the week.

As I listened to them sing that night - in the midst of war and a seemingly dark future, the words of their theme song, "Brighten the Corner Where You Are," rang out a clear challenge in the warm night air.



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NEWS IN BRIEF

NEW ARRIVALS

On November 30, at Nhatrang, Paul, Marion and Pamela Collins welcomed red haired Cheryl Marnie into their family.

WELCOME BACK

Bob and Elaine Greene with Nathan and Rebecca arrived in Viet Nam on October 14. Although this is their first term as missionaries, Dr. Greene served here for a year under the Army Medical Corps. At that time Elaine also spent a few months in Viet Nam. They will move to Banmethuot upon completion of their Vietnamese language study.

Jack and Evelyn Revelle arrived on January 11. They are living in Cantho. At the present time they are the only missionary couple we have working in populous delta.

Reg, Donna, Jay and Jill Reimer returned on March 14. They are stationed in Saigon.

VISITORS

Dr. L.L. King and Dr. R.D. Natwick joined the Saigon missionary family for a turkey dinner at Thanksgiving. They stopped here on their way to Cambodia where the C&MA has agreed to staff a hospital built by World Vision, International.

In January we welcomed Dr. L.L. King, foreign secretary for the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Mrs. King, Rev. T.G. Mangham, Jr., area secretary for Southeast Asia and Middle East and Dr. Le Roy Johnston, personnel secretary. Dr. King and Rev. Mangham met with the National Church and Mission leaders at Dalat. (See article on pages 2, 3)

NURSE MOVES

In March, Miss Lois Miller, R.N. moved from Danang, where she studied Vietnamese, to Banmethuot. Upon completion of Ralay language study she will take up duties in the leprosarium.

CONFERENCE AT TAIWAN

Jim Livingston and delegates from the Radio TV committee of the National Church attended a two week training workshop in March held at Taipei and sponsored by "Overseas Radio and Television, Inc."

GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

March 3 marked the celebration of the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Rev. and Mrs. H.A. ("Uncle and Auntie") Jackson, at Sterling, Kansas. They were married fifty years ago in the Saigon City Hall.

RETIRED

Although Rev. and Mrs. Paul Carlson officially retired in January, they are continuing with their work of checking Vietnamese-English manuscripts for the Pastors' Library.

VOLUNTEER RETURNS TO STATES

Laurel McMarlin, who remained for a year after his discharge from the Air Force to help in the Evangelism Deep and Wide program, has returned to the States to finish his Bible College and seminary training. He plans to return to Viet Nam to work among the Chinese.



Pastor Dat and prisoner Ky

TWO MEN AND

Con Son Island -

We do not know what thoughts went through the young prisoner's mind when he first arrived. Ky would be here for a long time serving out the remainder of his seven year sentence for manslaughter. Perhaps he remembered how it all began - when, in a fit of anger he had shot his wife after returning home from battle to discover her unfaithfulness. Then perhaps, his thoughts turned to the Go Vap military prison where he was first jailed. It was there that God kept him during the first seven months of his sentence, that he might be taught, nourished and established in his new faith. Then he was moved to another prison and from there transferred to Con Son.

Con Son Island -

Mr. Dat knew that living on a prison island 148 miles off the coast from Saigon would be a lonely life for a mainlander. But he also knew that God had called him to work on that island. Twelve years later the door was finally opening. Government permission had been secured and the National Church was asking for volunteers.

As a young man, he had preached in prisons throughout South Viet Nam but then he and his wife settled down in a pastorate. Leaving a city church and familiar environment was not easy after all these years, but there was never

any doubt in their minds that this was what God would have them do.

At first Mr. Dat commuted by plane, but sometimes he would be stranded for weeks on the island waiting for a plane to return to the mainland. So it was a happy day when he and his wife were able to settle there permanently. The Major in charge of the island was most friendly, giving them a large corner property on the two main roads leading into the village. Their first project was to build a parsonage which could double as a small meeting place until the church could be erected.

A few months ago I was privileged to make my fifth visit to Con Son. On a previous trip we had filled an Air Force C 123 with our team, supplies and equipment. This time we had two planes made available for our use. In our group were chaplains, army officers, university students, Christian workers and a fourth year medical student. Besides our supplies, which included medicine, vitamins, soap, toothpaste and clothing, we brought 6,000 Scripture packets containing a Gospel of Luke, the book of Proverbs, an illustrated folder with the third and fourth chapters of the Gospel of John and an attractive Christmas card.

Although we had some contact with the prisoners, our visit this time was mainly in connection with our military ministry. We gave out supplies and about



Captive audience



Church under construction

A PRISON ISLAND

by Jim Livingston

800 of the Scripture packets to the soldiers and left the remainder with the pastor to be distributed in the prison compounds. This was done during Tet.

What a joy it was to meet Ky once again. We had been unable to contact him after he left the prison at Go Vap. We had received information that he had been moved from a second prison to Con Son, but we could not know for certain if he had remained true to the Lord. Therefore it was with great thanksgiving that we heard of and saw in action his dedication to his Saviour and his willingness to help Pastor Dat in any way he could.

We found that the population of Con Son Island has now increased to about 10,000, with about 8,000 of them prisoners. There are six walled prison areas, each about the size of a city block. Prisoners leave these compounds daily to care for livestock, work on roads or in gardens. Others live in homes outside the walls. Ky was given an office job and he shares living quarters in the village with several other men. Any prisoner who wishes to attend the Sunday services held at the parsonage has permission to do so. In addition, Pastor Dat has freedom to visit and minister in all of the compounds. He has organized witness bands in each of them. During Tet he was able to preach to all the prisoners. In the one restricted compound, which houses the incorrigibles,

sixteen prayed. Of these, ten continue to meet together during the week for prayer and fellowship. Although no one else is allowed to leave this compound, they have been granted permission to attend the Sunday services.

The church congregation is a varied one. Soldiers, civilians and prisoners all worship together. Though their positions in the society of this world may be far apart, they are one in Christ. All have contributed what they can to the building of the church. The foundation has been laid and the walls are going up. Pastor Dat does not know where all the necessary funds are coming from, but his Bible tells him. "My God will supply all that you need from His glorious resources in Christ Jesus" (Phillips).

He and his wife are content. They rarely get to the mainland; often their diet is deficient in fruits and meat, but God has proved Himself sufficient. With no children of their own, they give of their love to these people, many of them young men who have never known the care and concern of loving parents.

As I sat there in the small parsonage listening to Pastor Dat and Ky talking about their latest project — mimeographing a hymnbook, I thanked God for answering prayer — for the privilege of seeing the birth of a church on this remote prison island, and for preparing and placing His men here — one, a pastor, the other, a prisoner.

A LEGEND OF THE

RADAY

The Raday tribal people, living in the Central Highlands of Viet Nam and numbering about 125,000, have many legends about the "children of the mountains" and the "son of the Grandfather of the Heavens." The Grandfather had only one child, a son. Always the only son of this Creator-Father involves himself with people and the story usually ends in his death in the sphere of the earth people. The he re-appears in another legend.

In the beginning of time there were some orphaned mountain people. With no one to care for them, they were never free from hunger. One day, while a mother and daughter were out grubbing for roots, the son of the Grandfather of the Heavens noticed their plight and asked permission to go and care for them. Though his parents refused lest he become contaminated by their earth, the son would not be dissuaded. After gathering seeds of every variety of rice grain, he left his home in the skies.

As he came upon the women he addressed the mother, commanding her to break off the root she was digging and take him to their hut. Though at first she refused, for she had not yet any roots for their food, he finally prevailed.

After they had returned home and bathed, he bade them put on, in place of their old rags, the new clothes they found in the storage basket.

Then he ordered rice to be cooked. The two women answered indignantly, "Young man, if we had rice to cook do you think we would be out grubbing roots?" His reply was, "Look in the abandoned grain bin." They obeyed and there found rice grain.

But as it was cooking they questioned one another: "What are we going to eat with it?" So they were instructed to scatter rice grain in an empty chicken coop, then catch and prepare the chicken that wandered in.

When everything was ready the young man invited them to eat with him, and as they ate he told them about the heavenly country from which he came. "I am the son of the Grandfather of the Heavens. I saw your great trouble and have come to take care of you, children of the mountains," he explained.

Suspicious, they questioned, "What is it you want from us poverty stricken eater-of-roots?" "Don't be afraid," said the man from heaven, "I have only mercy toward you. I want to make a 'people' of you." And he took the daughter to be his wife.

Next evening he took his magic wand and extended it. A new house! New fields! Servants! Soon they lacked nothing, and their prosperity continued to increase.

One day, after the passage of many years, the man bade her inspect his hair, saying, "If you see any white hair, it means that I am old and must leave you to return to my parents, for I would not die in this earth-contaminated lower world."

When she looked and saw the white hair growing she began to weep for she knew he would die. So she sought for a way to keep him from leaving.

"Wait until the hen hatches her chicks and the buffalo and elephant are delivered of their young," she said. He agreed to this, but the chicks hatched quickly and the young of the other animals were born.

So he said to his wife, "The animals have borne their young: you have a large house, men and maid servants, and life for you is now easy." Heartbroken she replied, "Count these as nothing, I want only you." But, plugging his ears so as not to hear her voice, her husband rose and departed for his home in the heavens.

The wife wept as for the dead, day and night, her eyes never free from tears. Knowing this, the son sent a pigeon to comfort her; but the bird returned and reported that she still wept continuously and would not accept solace from him.

Many other creatures were sent to her, but she would not be comforted. Finally he sent the little lizard that calls "tak-lay-lo" so very sweetly. As

the wife heard the voice of Tak-lay-lo, the little lizard, her heart was eased of its pain and she no longer thought of her husband with sorrow.

Suddenly while she was listening, there came a peal of thunder, and she knew her husband was gone forever from her.

Again she wept and mourned.

