

Marie Ziemer

Missionary to Raday Tribes People in the Central Highlands of Vietnam

Marie is the wife of Robert Ziemer who was killed by the Viet Cong
in the 1968 Tet Offensive in Banmethuot, Vietnam

(Interview also includes Tim Ziemer, Bob and Marie's son)

1947 – 1968

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Key: DF = David Fitzstevens, MZ = Marie Ziemer, TZ = Tim Ziemer, Marie's son.

Interview with Marie and Tim Ziemer

DF: Today is December 4, 2004. This is David Fitzstevens speaking. We're in the home of Marie Ziemer at Shell Point, Florida. Also with us today is Tim Ziemer, Marie's number one son. Tim and Marie are going to share with us today about their experiences in Vietnam.

Just for a voice check here, could you tell me your full name.

MZ: Actually my name is Bess Marie Ziemer, but I've always gone by Marie, except on my social security card, etc. It's Bess.

DF: Okay. And Tim.

TZ: I'm Robert Timothy Ziemer, named, I guess, after my Dad and the guy in the Bible. I go by Tim, my middle name like my Mom goes by Marie, her middle name.

MZ: When he was little, we called him Bobby Tim, and then I think it was Ken Taylor didn't understand. He began to call him Bobby Pim. So then we called him Bobby, then Bob, and it ended up being Tim.

DF: Could you tell me a little bit about your **family background** when you grew up?

MZ: I grew up in a small farming community near Toledo, Ohio. After I graduated from high school in that small town, I went to Toledo and attended Davis Business College. I lived with an aunt and uncle and began to attend their Christian and Missionary Alliance Church and that's where I found the Lord.

It's very interesting. I often wondered if something happened to Bob... Never dreamed about the Tet Offensive or anything, maybe I could get a job working at headquarters. So, way back in 1937 I went to business college. Of course, we didn't have all the modern stuff, but at least I had some idea what office work would be. And in 1971 I went to Nyack and worked at headquarters from 1971 until 1984.

DF: Put all that good knowledge to work, huh?.

MZ: You know, it's interesting how the Lord works everything out.

DF: So you **came to Christ** when you were about how old?

MZ: Ah, probably about eighteen.

DF: And you family members, your sister and brothers and Mom and Dad, did they follow Christ later?

MZ: They always went to a little Methodist Church, but I'm sure they knew the Lord. I had an older sister who died when she was 80, and I had a younger brother. I don't know what Uncle Wallace was. (Looks toward Tim) No, I've outlived all my immediate family. (Gentle chuckle)

DF: At what point in your life did you feel **God's call to ministry**?

MZ: Very interesting. When I was going to high school. I don't know. Can't even remember what class it was. I didn't really know the Lord then. But I just thought I'd like to become a missionary. Way back then, the Lord had begun to plant that seed in my mind.

DF: At what point did your life cross paths with Bob?

MZ: While I was attending the Toledo Gospel Tabernacle, which is now called First Alliance. Of course the missionary conferences were always the big event of the year. I was always touched and moved. I knew then that I wanted to be a missionary. That was before I even began to date Bob, my husband.

DF: At what point in this journey did **Vietnam come into the picture**? And how did you first hear about Vietnam?

MZ: Well, actually, Bob was appointed to... where was it? Some place. I think he and George Irwin were supposed to go to French Indo-China, but because of the war they couldn't go at that time. I forget where they wanted Bob to go. He said, "no, I want to go to French Indo-China." So that's when we had a couple pastorates instead of going out in the early 40s. It was 1947 when we first went to French Indo-China.

TZ: Dave, I remember hearing my Father say that South America was an option, but for some reason that didn't materialize. So, I think it was French Indo-China, possibly South America, or, like my Mom said...

MZ: Well, you know, Bob's oldest brother, Theo, was a missionary in Siam, Thailand. So that's probably why he had a heart for that part of the world.

TZ: What about Ruth?

MZ: Ruth? Bob's sister Ruth was a missionary in the Philippines, but she didn't go out until after we did. She was there for (shakes head)...

DF: Do you remember anything about how God had His hand on your husband's life, leading him into ministry? How that happened?

MZ: Okay, while he was in Asbury, he wanted to go to seminary. But the last semester at Asbury, Mrs. Ruth Stahl was the missionary speaker. That's when my husband's life was changed. He had conviction to be a missionary. So, he forgot about seminary, and I think he was his Dad's assistant for a year or so... His father was Dr. L. H. Ziemer, pastor of Toledo Gospel Tabernacle for almost thirty years. 7.48

He took a little church in Big Beaver, Michigan. Then we were married and went up there as a couple. Then from Big Beaver, Michigan we went all the way out to Sioux City, Iowa. (Shakes head) That was like going half way around the world. (Gentle chuckle) I was seven months pregnant with Beth, my first child. We were driving. I think we stopped some place in Iowa. I felt like Mary. No room in the inn. Here I am pregnant. There were big conventions all over the city. Finally one hotel manager had pity on us and put us up in a nice room. (Gentle chuckle) So that's how we got to Sioux City Iowa. 20° below zero.

DF: Did you first learn about Vietnam as part of this assignment process with the Alliance?

MZ: Yes.

DF: And when you **went to Vietnam**. You arrived in what year?

MZ: '47. Is that right, Tim? '47? And we went up to Dalat.

DF: But, getting there. You went by ship?

MZ: Yes.

DF: How long did it take you to get there?

MZ: Oh boy, it was a converted troop ship. The US Marine Adder. I was fortunate because I was a mother and had two small children. Tim was about ten months old. So we were up above in a nice place, but the poor men were down in the hold.

DF: So your husband wasn't with you?

MZ: No. (Gentle chuckles all around)

DF: Separate quarters? Huh? (Chuckle)

MZ: We got on the ship in New York, and went through the Panama Canal and Shanghai,

TZ: Well, San Francisco.

MZ: That's right. San Francisco... Home of Peace.

TZ: Then across the Pacific.

DF: So, you arrived in Saigon by ship and then went to Dalat?

MZ: It was so soon after the war, headquarters didn't think it was advisable for young couples with small children to go to France. So we went to Dalat, and studied a little bit of French. 10.25 We never did master it, but we had enough to get by when French Indo-China was still a French colony.

DF: So that was your first of several languages to learn along the way?

MZ: Actually, we just learned a little bit of French and then went right to Banmethuot and studied the Raday language.

DF: So, you arrived in Banmethuot within a year after you arrived?

MZ: No. Actually we were at Dalat for about a year.

DF: Okay.

MZ: And then we went to Banmethuot to work with Gordon and Laura Smith.

DF: So, they were your senior missionaries?

MZ: Right.

DF: Can you tell me a little about the Smiths? What that was like to have them as your senior missionaries?

MZ: Well, (smiles) they were a little bit different than we were, but they had a wonderful ministry. He was a visionary. I guess that's what you'd call it. Laura would go out into the villages and preach, but she was a very nice lady. In fact, she had a small baby grand piano in her living room. At the time, you know, I thought that was kind of unnecessary, but... (chuckles)

TZ: Well, being a pianist yourself, and quite an accomplished pianist...

MZ: Well, I never had a piano, but... I had a Este pump organ, you know, to take out to the villages. I also, had a little accordion to get the people excited.

DF: So, how did you **learn Raday**?

MZ: Well, we had a wonderful teacher. His name was E Ham. E means Mr., and Ham. I don't think he was married at the time, but he was a wonderful teacher. He had gone to the government school there in Banmethuot, so he knew more French than we did.

I remember one day he wanted to borrow my husband's Matthew Henry's commentary. My husband was willing to let him use it, but he said, "you know, it's just English."
He said, "that's alright. I'll use the French dictionary, and (figure out the) English. (Shakes head) He was just a wonderful teacher.

DF: So, how long did you study Raday? Were you a full-time language student then?

Translation of Scriptures into Raday

MZ: Yes. And when Bob, my husband, found out that the only Scripture portion they had was the Gospel of Mark, he being a wonderful student of the Word, couldn't stand it. So, in addition to studying the language, he and **E Ham** would work on...? Did they start on Genesis? And I think they gave that up.

TZ: No. John.

MZ: John? John.

TZ: Well, they may have started in Genesis but their first big project was the New Testament.

MZ: I think he decided that was too difficult. We hadn't gone to Wycliffe for any training like that. Just did the best we could.

TZ: David, I remember as a kid, running through our dining room and seeing E Ham and my Father working at the kitchen table with the French manuscript, English, and other reference books. They were going through phrase by phrase as they put together their original manuscripts. When the lights went off, they'd pump up the kerosene or pressure lantern and keep working long into the hours of the evening. (Smiles broadly)

DF: I'm going to pause this here for a moment. (Tim and Marie change positions. Both sit on the couch which is easier for the camera to pan between)

TZ: You want to tell him (talking to Marie) what E Ham went on to do? He started translating as a language teacher, but...

MZ: Of course, he taught in the Bible School. Well, first of all, he graduated from the Bible School. Was ordained. At the time of the Tet Offensive, he was taken captive, but if I remember correctly... Did he escape? (Turns to Tim)

TZ: I don't remember.

MZ: But after I got back I learned that he died of a stroke. He was married, so his name changed from E Ham to Ama Rachel. That was his first born, a little girl. They called her Rachel. Of course, I haven't been back, but he must have died sometime in '68 or '69.

TZ: Would you say he went on to become a key leader?

MZ: Yes.

TZ: In the Raday tribe? In terms of both 15.57 having learned and then developed? And then having gone through the Bible School process, and then ended up running or leading the church.

MZ: Yes.

TZ: That's the key point, I think that you want to articulate. 16.08

MZ: Yes, that he actually was director of the Bible School.

TZ: So he went from student assistant, language teacher, to Director of the Bible School.

DF: Sounds like somebody your husband poured a lot of himself into. Mentored him and helped him grow into that role?

MZ: Oh yes.

DF: Was E Ham also kind of your **cultural guide** to help you understand all about Raday?

MZ: Yes. (Turning to Tim) Tim, I think you have that notebook with a lot of the... Oh this would be interesting... My husband, Bob would jot down in this book, E Ham said, "before my family became Christian we had a path from our house to the path of the sorcerer. After we found the Lord, we had a path from our house to the house of God." I always thought that was beautiful.

TZ: The document she's talking about is when my father... When the U.S. Army came into Vietnam, Dad, along with a lot of other missionaries, was asked to be a cultural resource to help out as auxiliary chaplain and things like that. He came up with a primer on Raday culture and history and how to not embarrass yourself if you're a GI. This document has a lot of legends, a lot of stories, not a lot, but enough to give the folks a flavor, and E Ham was the source of much of that information. Stories of how their writing was traced back. Originally it was all written on manuscripts of leather, but the dogs ate that so they lost their language (smiles). They had stories of a great flood, and a creature very similar to the Abominable Snowman, but it was a Raday creature who had a sword-like forearm. You really had to watch out for this guy. This is all documented in this pamphlet. I'll get you a copy.

MZ: I never saw that...

TZ: Oh yeah. I have that.

DF: Sounds like some of those transformers.

TZ: Yeah. One of those transformers.

DF: Do you remember what your **first impression** was when you arrived up there in Banmethuot? When you first had contact with **the Raday people**? Or your first impression of Banmethuot?

MZ: Their language was not a tonal language (makes an undulating gesture). It was very guttural.

DF: Was that a relief?

MZ: It sounded like everybody was mad at everybody else. Thinga' Ya' uh' sa' sana'. (Speaks jerkily with a glottal stop after each syllable) Like that. You know. And the Vietnamese flows so beautifully. (Gestures undulation again) 19.40 And Chinese, but this was different. It was not a difficult language to learn. It really wasn't.

DF: So, that was a Mon-Khmer language. Is that right? Sounds like it might be.

MZ: Yeah, could be. Yeah.

DF: Now, did you **learn Vietnamese**?

MZ: A little bit, but not too much, because... No, we didn't really have a chance to learn much Vietnamese, just enough to go to the market. Now this is... (Turns to Tim), should I tell him about the time your Dad was recovering from hepatitis.

TZ: He'll enjoy it, but I'm not sure it will make...

DF: Yeah, go ahead.

TZ: Well, the thing is, the Vietnamese were really absent from the Central Highlands, until after the War. As they fled from the north into the south, they settled mainly along the coast. Then Ngo Dien Diem devised his resettlement program which facilitated the movement of the refugees into the Central Highlands. At that point, with Vietnamese being the national language, the imperative to learn the language became a high priority, so the missionaries were engaged in Vietnamese language training, but with all their other competing commitments and responsibilities, that really became a second and third priority. So, while it was a necessary requirement, it didn't necessarily hit their tongue. Because their ministry was to the Ralay tribes people.

DF: Right.

TZ: But anyway, so when Dad was going through language study, he was recovering from hepatitis and went down to the ice house.... Go ahead (turns to his mother) tell the story.

MZ: Well, we were going to have company. We thought it would be nice to have some ice to make home made ice cream. So, the poor man went to the ice house. You know, he was a very kind and patient man, but he was probably wobbly on his feet. So, he finally got brave and went to the front of the line and said...,

TZ: But the Vietnamese don't know what a line is. So he was patient with 'em. And waiting in line with people cutting in front of him. At that point this very patient white man lost his composure and...

MZ: This is what he said, (Marie says some Vietnamese words in a flat low tone). And the man who waited on him said, "Oh Mr., you speak Vietnamese very well. You must be from Hue." And I understand that the Vietnamese language in Hue is hot too high toned. (Shakes hand back and forth indicating a lower status). So, he got his ice and came home. (Chuckles all around)

DF: It actually worked to his benefit in that situation. (Chuckles)

TZ: He got confused and forgot to put the tones in when he was making a statement. He was very deliberate. Not lazy, but he didn't think the tones were something he was going to mess with.

DF: Was he tone deaf?

TZ: No. I'll put the words out and they can figure out what it means, was kind of his attitude..

DF: He just didn't bother with the tones. (Hearty chuckles all around) Did he ever try to communicate and ended up saying something terribly wrong? Or making a major faux pas?

TZ: I know what you're saying. There were many, many situations like that. Other than the fact that he had no tones in his attempt to speak—which was a bit of craziness in itself... but I don't recall any vocabulary faux pas that other people share.

MZ: Oh, this is another funny thing. You probably won't put that in, but we were at Nhatrang. I think we had to spend the night—taking the children back to Dalat School. We went to this restaurant. He wanted to order some kind of eggs. The French waiter said, "oh, Monsieur, roosters don't lay eggs." Instead of saying hen egg, he must have said something about rooster eggs. (Chuckles)

TZ: Well, do you remember the orange soda drink? The Bireley's soft drink?

DF: Yeah. Well, he walked into a Rhodesian restaurant in downtown Banmethuot. He wanted to put a little French flavor on

MZ: That was in Saigon.

TZ: Well, Saigon, anyway, so he ordered an orange drink, but he put a little French spin on it and said he wanted a Birolet. When challenged by the server, he said, yes, Birolet. So the guy brought him a beer and dumped a little milk into it. 24.52 For a C&MA missionary to be in the presence of beer was a significant thing, but that was funny. (Chuckles all around)

MZ: Tim's Dad was a very dignified man, a professional person, but there was this funny side of him.

DF: Can you think of any other **funny stories** that come to mind? 25.13

TZ: I remember a lot. I remember the time I was playing in the back yard when my sister Beth tied me up to a clothes line and an elephant wandered into the back yard. Of course, my sister ran off into the house and called my mother. I can remember both of them standing at the back door, inside the screen door, cheering me on. I was screaming at the top of my lungs.

DF: You thought he was coming to get you?

TZ: He was! He was smelling me and feeling me, and.. It was just a domesticated elephant, but still, for a little kid... (Chuckles) There are a lot of other funny stories of the insects, and reptiles, and other animals.

I remember one day gleefully teasing a little Raday girl with this big obscene insect and chasing her around the church. My mother had pity on the young girl and intercepted me and I got the whippin' of my life. (Marie chuckles heartily) I learned at that time to treat women with a little more care, and when my mother said, "don't do that," I needed to listen. But, I'll remember that encounter for quite a while.

MZ: Well, we'd better get back to more serious things.

DF: That's all right. I want the fun stuff, too. While we're there, do you have an **embarrassing moment** that you'd like to tell about?

MZ: (ponders) Oh, when we first went to Banmethuot, the mission house wasn't built for us yet, so we stayed in three rooms behind the church that were supposed to be Bible School student's rooms. I don't know where the classes were.

We had a Raday houseboy. A nice boy. He ended up going to Bible School and became ordained. Just a wonderful person. One day we were sitting around our little dining room table and I saw this huge spider on the wall. So, I said in the little bit of Raday that I knew, "what about that thing on the wall? Will it bite?"

"Oh no. No." Pretty soon he came back in the room and said, "well, if it stays on the wall there's no problem, but if it gets on you, it might bite you."

So I realized then how important it is to learn the language. The people are definite about...

TZ: In other words, if it's up there, it won't hurt you, but...

MZ: Yeah, don't worry about it. As long as he's not on you, it's okay, but if he gets on you it might bite you. (Gentle chuckle) 27.45

TZ: The whole issue of literal. (Chuckles all around) The literal interpretation in communication is the bottom line. What's really being asked? (Smiles at mother)

DF: I'd like to come back to your **senior missionaries, the Smiths**. When you arrived in Banmethuot, was the Leprosarium already started? Or, was that a little be later.

MZ: (Ponders) A little bit later.

DF: Were they the ones that opened the station? The Smiths?

MZ: Yes. See, they started out in Cambodia. And I think they learned some Cambodian language, but then they got into Vietnam or whatever they called it at that time. They saw all these tribes people, and began to investigate. They went to Banmethuot and that's how the work among the Raday started.

Later on he saw all these leprous people, and I think a doctor came out. He didn't stay too long. His wife had something wrong with her face. (Touches her own cheek) There were nurses, and later on a Mennonite doctor arrived in Saigon. It was one of those instances that they didn't really have an opening for him. When our nurses at the Leprosarium heard about this doctor, boy, they went to town. He came up and was actually the doctor for a while. Then more Mennonite people came, and we had wonderful fellowship with the Mennonites.

Then, of course, that was **raided in 1962**. That's when Archie Mitchell and Dr. Vietti were taken, and Dan Gerber.

DF: Now just to pick up on that. Were you in Banmethuot at that time?

MZ: Yes.

DF: What's your recollection of that whole time when they were taken away?

MZ: (ponders) How did they get into town? Well, you know, the Communists got these three people, so then they left. Then it was safe for our missionaries to come in. Betty Mitchell and her children.

DF: So, this happened...? Were you in town, and they were outside...?

MZ: Yeah. We were in town.

DF: They were out at the Leprosarium outside of town?

MZ: Yeah. 31.00

DF: I was there. Had my tonsils out at the Leprosarium a long time ago, but I don't really have any sense of where things are. So this happened out on the edge of town?

MZ: (to Tim) How many kilometers do you suppose that was?

TZ: I'm guessing, David, probably a good 25 kilometers.

MZ: It didn't take too long to get there.

TZ: Actually the road was notoriously bad. The Leprosarium road was always filled with pot holes. It was an old logging trail, just typical Vietnam potholes. But it was out there for a couple reasons. One it was leprosy. It was segregated, and it also allowed them a point to network and set up segregation villages that were fed by the leprosarium itself.

If I recall, the rebels came in, took over the compound, went to different facilities and buildings, took the doctor and Archie Mitchell. It was a pretty dramatic encounter. At the end of their visit they kidnaped the three missionaries. There weren't any... they ransacked, went through some stuff, but the point of drama was the taking of hostages, or the kidnaping of the missionaries. I don't think anyone was hurt or killed at that point. Of course, when they disappeared, there's a lot of speculation, but no one really knows for sure what happened.

DF: Was there a medical conference going on at the time?

MZ: Yes, there was. In fact Dr. Beucher was out there, but for some reason or other, he had come into town. So, I'm wondering if there was some kind of a traitor who just tipped the Communists.

DF: Did they think they were getting three doctors?

MZ: That's my opinion. I don't know, but instead of getting only one, they expected to get two or three. Dr. Beucher was in town and he was okay.

DF: So they weren't taking hostages as much as they...?

MZ: I think they wanted doctors to go along with them and help their wounded. (Turns to Tim) Don't you think?

TZ: I don't know. It's pretty hard to speculate, but that certainly makes sense as a possible scenario or option.

DF: What do you think happened to them?

MZ: Betty Mitchell always had hope until she herself became a prisoner. What year was that? I have to think.

DF: '75.

MZ: '75? And you know they went from camp to camp, and she became very ill. 34.23 And I think down deep in her heart, after all those years she realized there was no word or way that Archie was still alive.

DF: One of the stories was that they were taken off and killed soon after that somewhere nearby. Then that rumor seemed to be countered by other evidence that they may be alive some where...

MZ: I really don't know.

TZ: Yeah, I think there's a lot of uncertainty about what really happened, a lot of speculation. There were pieces of a Land Rover dug up that I have seen. What the chronology was and how it all fit together? Apparently there was a plan that went awry. The fact that they felt they had to bury the Land Rover rather than just abandon it begs the question of intent. Did someone want to cover their tracks? Because if you're really a rebel, the value of leaving a Land Rover abandon in the middle of nowhere really isn't... The fact that they had to bury it begs the question of intent. So, I think it's still a mystery that we'll speculate on for years to come.

DF: Sure. But one thing I would like to ask about in terms of the **impact that it had on your life**. Did that incident change...? Before the missionaries were always left alone, now all of a sudden, they're being taken away like this. That obviously was a danger to you and your family.

MZ: Yeah. I don't feel that in '62 we felt like our career was coming to an end.

But I was just thinking about something. Not too many years ago, I had a call from Bob Nicholas. I suppose our own American GIs had found the remains of Betty Olson and Hank Blood. They must have contacted Walter Olson's wife. Walter had died. They asked about Betty's remains. "Should

they be shipped back to the States for burial?” And Jean, who was Walter’s second wife, said, “no, I’m sure Betty would want to be buried in Vietnam,” whereas Vange Blood requested that the remains of her husband be sent back to the States for burial.

TZ: I hadn’t heard that. So that’s been documented?

MZ: Yeah. I remember Bob Nicholas calling me.

TZ: But getting back to your question. As a kid growing up watching the French come and go and then watching the ten years of relative calm when your folks and my folks were operating. David, It’s interesting, it’s a matter of **how do we respond appropriately in a changing environment?** As a kid going to high school, and then leaving for college, and getting communications from my Father, I know that the whole issue of security is always at the top of any ex-pat or any missionary. One of the letters I got from my Dad, and I use it and think about it a lot, is his statement about personally wrestling with where faith ends and presumption begins, because as the leader of the mission station he felt responsible and accountable to other missionaries. So, as they traveled to do their work, at what point do you just travel in the daytime? At what point do you determine nighttime travel is out? How do you coach and counsel and set the drum beat of proper behavior. Etc. Etc. So the whole idea of security... How do we respond? When do we leave? When do we evacuate? is a very fuzzy issue. It’s one that we all wrestle with and they wrestled with. I know that the Alliance missionaries were very, very aware and accountable to each other and dealt with it in a very acceptable way. They had evacuation plans. They rehearsed them, and yet, when things happen unexpectedly, the unpredictable always pops up.

So, your question is a relevant one. How did the kidnaping of Archie and Dr. Vietti influence your insight and outlook. I think it gives perspective. It gives you value, but when you tie in the ministry aspect of it—we’re here to serve and we’re here to minister... How’s it going to change our behavior? Those are very difficult, tough, tough every day decisions.

So I would say there was an awareness. It may not have been communicated, but it certainly was dovetailed in terms of how things started to change in terms of their travel and their outreach opportunities.

DF: So that was a turning point in terms of thinking, Okay, there’s a risk involved here.

TZ: As the war developed, I think the risk assessment came in a lot of different ways. You have your typical security sources. My Dad used to go to the security police routinely for updates. The local pastors would come in and give updates or cautions. So really, it’s a network of inputs, and...

DF: (Addressing Marie) Do you remember how you personally responded to the incident when Archie and Dan and Dr. Vietti were taken away?

MZ: Well, I think it was almost hard to believe. But of course, we felt very, very sorry for Betty Mitchell. She had four children, you know.

TZ: Would you say that she had an expectation that he was coming back? You know clearly there was concern...

MZ: Yes, she felt that maybe the Communists would have pity and let him come home for special days like Christmas and all that. But, dear Betty, one Christmas, she and Becki, now Mrs. David Thompson, made bubble bread. You know a yeast dough and put it in a cake pan. Christmas morning they went around to each of the mission houses and delivered us a freshly baked bubble bread. That was Betty. In other words, instead of just sitting home and wondering, wondering, she was giving of herself and what she had.

TZ: I think the expectation of a return... The notion of them disappearing forever 42.41 never was really one that Betty wanted to accept. Everybody was praying for their return. Then we just want to know what happened. Those types of situations are really difficult to deal with because of the expectation of hope. So I would say there was drama and concern about the kidnaping, or the hostage taking—it wasn't hostage taking, it was disappearance. But then there was that other expectation... I think it's the hope we all have whenever something dramatic like that happens. It's "we hope this is going to work out just right," or "okay in the end." And it was just never closed. (Nods)

DF: What were **relationships like on the field between the missionaries and the tribal people?**

MZ: Oh, they were just wonderful people. So easy to get along with. I don't know, we just loved them. I don't think we ever had any big misunderstandings or anything like that. We just loved to work with them.

The only misunderstanding was one day when we got some drums of used clothing. I asked one of our student pastors if he would like to go and pick out some clothing. He hedged, and I found out later that was against their culture. I should pick out things and give them to him. He couldn't just go and pick out stuff by himself.

DF: That would have looked like he was greedy or something?

MZ: Yeah. I don't know why, but that's the only thing I can think of.

DF: Now early on there weren't many Vietnamese up there at all.

MZ: No, not really.

DF: As the Vietnamese came in—and there's all this historical difficulty between the Vietnamese and the tribal people, where did you find yourself in that?

MZ: It was very, very difficult. Just wondering what was going to happen.

DF: How did **you feel about the way the Vietnamese discriminated against the Rada?**

MZ: It was kinda tough. You know? Naturally our first love was with the tribal people. It was really kind of hard.

TZ: David, I remember distinctly after '54 when the French left... They were very predominate. They ran the security police. The post master was a Frenchman. The second in command was a Frenchman. So when they left (the French) after the Fall of Dienbienphu and the division of the country, there was a tremendous vacuum. Within a short time Vietnamese nationals were put into these positions, not the Rada tribesmen. So, I think that early on the process excluded the indigenous folks of influence. I think that happens worldwide. It's not just something that happened in the Central Highlands. But that was the beginning of the distinction between the ethnic Vietnamese and the ethnic mountain people. It was the lack of cultural understanding. The tension began to manifest itself right then in indirect ways, and now as you see, more direct ways. It's a classic misunderstanding of how do we incorporate and integrate appropriately. 46.54

DF: What was the attitude of the Vietnamese towards the tribal people? How did they view them at that time?

MZ: (Raises hand and winks it) Just a little bit lower.

DF: Just a little bit?

MZ: Lower. Down the ladder.

TZ: I would be a little less kind. I would say that they actually looked down on 'em. Less educated...

MZ: They called 'em "moi." That means 'wild people'. And they really weren't. They really weren't wild people at all. More like American Indians, you know?

TZ: David, I think it's important to remember there were Vietnamese who were missionaries to the tribes people, the Nguyens, the Miengs... they were wonderful, kind, and they had a good attitude, and....

DF: They didn't carry that baggage with them?

TZ: Right. When you talk about that, I think it's important to understand that there are people who do understand that we are all people in God's sight as individuals. But in terms of the national Vietnamese, the animosity and clear exemption, at least in the agenda of trying to incorporate them into day-to-day activities certainly manifested itself early on.

DF: That's good. I think that's very important, because that's one of the questions my mind was... Often times we bring our cultural baggage into a situation where we're dealing with ministry, and I was wondering if the Vietnamese missionaries who were there had any of those attitudes. Or did they treat them as equals? 48.45

MZ: Well, I think it really depended on the Vietnamese who worked with the tribes people. I don't want to use a name, but he kind of had a hard time. But then there was another one down there where we'd stop on the Piste? What was his name? He was altogether different and we thought a lot of him. But it just depended. You know.

DF: Yeah. Well, I'd like to move on to something a little different there. Could you talk about your **co-workers in the ministry among the Raday**. You mentioned E Ham as one of the people that you worked very closely with. Why don't we start with the Raday? Were there any other Raday folks that you poured yourselves into? Or should I say, invested in?

MZ: Well, I think number one would be Ham who was our language teacher and helped my husband with the translation. (Ponders) We just had some wonderful tribal men who came to our Bible School. Some were ordained, and had wonderful ministries out in the villages. (Shakes head)

TZ: How about E Ta?

MZ: Oh yeah, E Ta was our houseboy. He came to us one day and said he wanted to go to Bible School. Well, that was okay. We were glad. Then he ended up being one of our outstanding Raday preachers.

DF: It sounds like there was some mentoring going on when he was working with you as a houseboy.

TZ: How about E Ngui?

MZ: E Ngui? Oh yeah, E Ngui was great, too. He ended up as district superintendent, I think? Was he? Oh yes, he was a wonderful man, and his whole family.

TZ: Umhuh.

MZ: Those were probably the happiest days of my life.

DF: Does anything come to mind about **their impact on your life**?

MZ: (Raises eyes to ponder) Ah. I remember when your Dad (points to Tim) went to the post office and he was handed the telegram about Theo's death. That was his older brother.

TZ: He was a missionary in Thailand.

MZ: But he died in the States. The telegram went to Saigon and then they sent it up to Banmethuot. Bob came home and he was really broken up. (Marie too, breaks emotionally) And about this time, E Tau came into our house. He was the one who prayed for my husband to comfort him. Because Theo was 59 years old when he died. So that was some wonderful memories. You know.

DF: Thank you for sharing that. Who were the Vietnamese pastors who worked up there? **The Vietnamese missionaries?**

MZ: Ah, Nguyens, and Minhs. Then for some reason or other Mr. Nguyen wanted to leave Banmethuot. I think he went into Laos. (Tim confirms) And what was the other man who came?

TZ: Minh: No, not Minh. Shan? Was it Shan?

MZ: Yeah, I think so.

TZ: Who took the hospital administration? 53.15

MZ: Hospital?

TZ: Who ran the station? I keep thinking of Nguyen. I forget his name.

MZ: Nam?

DF: Pastor Nam? Did he come up there? No, he was with the Koho. How about Pham Sung Tin?

MZ: He was at Pleiku.

DF: Pleiku. Okay. Sorry.

TZ: I'll have to think about that. He had a wide face. I can recall his face, I just forget his name for a minute.

DF: There was a Cung?

TZ: Pastor Cung? I think so.

DF: Or was that later?

MZ: It could have been later. See, I came home in '68. I don't know. They never went back to the Leprosarium, did they?

TZ: I don't know. It's kind of fuzzy about what happened after all that.

MZ: This is another precious thing as far as I'm concerned. Of course, I came home in '68, and I kept thinking, "I wonder how our people are going to celebrate Christmas this year with no missionaries on the station?" The church was still open. So they planned Christmas, and they must have had a little conference. They made their own banner to put at the back of the pulpit (gestures overhead) on the wall. You know. In Raday it said, (repeats Raday words) "The Lord our God is With Us." (Nods and smiles contentedly)

DF: What **Scripture passage** did you hold on to **sustain you** through the difficult times in Vietnam?

MZ: I think it was one of the preachers who wrote a letter to me and said, *“the good work which you begin will continue.”* (Phil. 1:6) In other words, they had a good foundation and in the absence of the missionaries, they would carry on.

Of course, Betty Mitchell went back. (Turning to Tim) They actually built some more houses, too, didn't they? (Tim nods) It's all coming back now. And then they were taken in '75.

Summary of Raday Work

TZ: I think as you sit back and reflect from the beginning of what Smiths did... 56.18 When my father went he had a real commitment to see the local church indigenize. He commenced translating the Scripture, then people like Ken Swain came in, and Phillips... What my father was able begin, they refined and with Dick Phillips in there, put a real professional spin on the whole translation and teaching materials. But when the Alliance left they had a Bible School, training system, Scripture, and a pretty significant indigenous network of nationals. So, if you were to go back to Banmethuot today, there's the work of a number of people who were in place back then. The church building is standing but it isn't used. It's all boarded up and all, but the Church in terms of the invisible Church has grown, I think the figures are from 90 to over 400,000 people in that area. So, I think it demonstrates that the efforts aren't just attributable to one, but the Lord used a number of missionaries and a lot of folks to put the key ingredients in place that the church could be built, be sustained, be encouraged and yet grow in ways that no one expected or predicted. (Nods)

DF: Now, how much of the actual translation, that first draft that Bob worked on was there? 'Cause it went through so many revisions...

MZ: I think the whole New Testament. Psalms

DF: He had the whole New Testament.

TZ: Yeah. He had the first original rough manuscripts. I remember, he was so proud that the first draft was sent off to London to the British Foreign Bible Society. I reflect on that, because it was a huge check-in-the-box for him personally. Then when he was killed... We don't account in terms of legacy, but I was able to look back at that and say, "at least he accomplished the translation of Scripture and the British Foreign Bible Society printed it. Then it came back and actually was distributed, the original New Testament text. That's what Ken Swain and Dick Phillips continued to refine and improve upon. I think actually Ken and Dick may have been more successful, not more successful, but were able to continue to package much more of the Scripture. I don't really have the details on what they did. But the original rough manuscript, E Ham and my Dad spent a lot of time on.

MZ: And of course the one that he started in January of '68...

TZ: I don't know if I have that one.

MZ: No. It was lost.

TZ: Oh. Okay.

MZ: I wish I had that. I think maybe it would have... maybe he kind of wondered what was going on.

TZ: Do you think he had a premonition of what was happening? 59.42

MZ: I remember... Is this on tape?

DF & TZ: Umhuh. Yeah.

MZ: I remember one night he was having a terrible nightmare. I shook him, of course, and said, "it's okay, honey." He thought the Communists were on the upstairs porch trying to get in. So that would have been in January of '68.

And I remember he had gone to Saigon for a meeting. He was on the field committee. He began to get dark circles under his eyes, and he'd never had 'em before. I thought, "well, maybe when he goes to Saigon, he'll come back and be a little more rested," but they were still there. So, I think he just wondered what was going to happen.

Of course, he was head of the station, and even if we'd gone, you know, what about the Christians? They can't leave. We don't want to go until we have to.

Dr. Louis King and Grady Mangham were visiting that part of the world. And I remember I had one cake mix left and they were going to be there on Valentine's Day, so I was going to bake this cake and cut it so it would be the shape of a heart. Of course, that never came to pass.

That's why I wish that diary could have been saved. I think he put money in his brief case and his diary and probably our passports. But that was all taken, you know, so... But I think that might have revealed a lot of things that he really felt was going on.

TZ: Do you think he felt accountable and responsible for the decisions...?

MZ: Yeah. (Tim nods) Because nobody was living at the Leprosarium but our nurses. I wonder if our nurses went back and forth because the house across the road—two of 'em had been rented. The Swains lived in one, and the Phillips in the other.

Oh, I know what I was going to mention. 1.02.15 When **Bob** was 21 or 22 he **almost drowned**. Then I thought, "well, the Lord gave him 25 years plus to serve Him." And how many years did the Lord have? Three years. (Holds up three bent and arthritic fingers) And my husband had... (smiles) He could have drowned at the age of 21 and the Lord let him live until he was 48. So that really comforted him.

TZ: He was 49 when he died. So He gave him 28 more years.

MZ: Yeah.

DF: Did you know him when he almost drowned?

MZ: I heard about it. We were going to have our first date the next day or something. We were to go to a young people's rally that we used to go to together. That's when I heard about it. He could have drowned except his older brother saw him floundering. Bob was just learning to swim. He'd gone to the local YMCA. It was a man-made pool. He wanted to entertain his young nephew, so he'd go down in the water and then come up. Then there was a big drop-off. He didn't know about it. His older brother, Uncle Paul saw him, and jumped in with all his clothes on and rescued him.

DF: When he almost drowned, did that have an impact on what he was going to do with his life, after that?

MZ: Yeah.

DF: Seems like it could. Was it a defining moment?

TZ: Yeah, he would mention it in sermons and when he told how he made decisions in getting where he was, in terms of perhaps the Lord gave him an extra couple years.

MZ: Another thing. When Bob wrote to his parents that he had been called to be a missionary... His mother and dad never told him this story until they heard from Bob that he wanted to be a missionary. When my mother-in-law was expecting—well, I guess your Dad was the youngest, wasn't he?

TZ: Yes.

MZ: His dad and mother said, "if the Lord gives us another son, save him early in life and call him to be a missionary." And they never told him that until God called him. (Marie breaks emotionally)

DF: So were they praying for him in that way all those years?

MZ: Umhuh.

DF: Wow!

MZ: So, he didn't respond to the call that night when Mrs. Stahl was speaking to please his folks. He never knew that. When he was still in his mother's womb, they said, "Lord, if you give us another son, save him early in life and call him to be a missionary."

DF: So his call in life was an answer to a faithful woman's prayer, wasn't it?

MZ: Um,

DF: Now, his brother Theo, was a missionary in Thailand as well? Is that right?

MZ: Yes, and Ruth.

DF: So, two went to the field. Three, right?

MZ: (Tim and Marie nod) Umhuh.

DF: Three out of...?

TZ: Three out of four.

MZ: And Paul was always active in the church.

DF: Wow!

TZ: Choir director. Big supporter. He was the guy who was my surrogate... You know, he was the one that we all depended on when we came home on furlough. I stayed with him during the summers. So did Beth, my sister. So, he was a very key part of the support network.

DF: Kind of base for everybody that was out on the field. Huh?

TZ: Bingo! Yeah.

MZ: This is... (stands) I don't want to trip here, but this is very interesting. You can shut that off while I look for it.

TZ: What are you looking for, Mom?

Break in the tape. Comes back speaking of **Bob's Dad, Dr. L. H. Ziemer.**

MZ: ...had a wonderful encounter with the Lord. He was thrown out of the Lutheran Church and parsonage. He had three or four young children.

TZ: Well, he started preaching the Gospel, and the congregation wasn't quite ready for that. So they challenged some of his theology. He defended himself in front of the Missouri Synod and they said, "you're good to go," but the congregation still kicked him and the family out.

So he aligned with the C&MA. Started the Mansfield (Ohio) church and then moved to Toledo.

DF: Did he start that church?

TZ: No. I think it was a much smaller group, but he's the one that got it going.

MZ: Well, I hope I find that. Maybe I already gave it to you since you've been here, Tim.

TZ: Well, we'll find it.

MZ: But anyhow, in this Beth tells about her grandfather, her own dad, and then a granddaughter of Dr. L. H. Ziemer, who was a missionary. It's just a wonderful tribute trying to tell people, "keep on giving to the Great Commission Fund." (Gently chuckles)

Tape #2 of Two.

DF: As we were talking a moment ago, you said you were willing to share your **reflection on what happened to you in the '68 Tet Offensive.**

MZ: Yeah. I had gone to Saigon to take Miriam back to go to Dalat School because I had to get my passport renewed. Ruth Thompson was with me, too. We flew back together. And then the very next night things began to happen.

DF: Now wait a minute. Before you went back. You were down in Saigon. Did you have any hesitations about going back, or...? Did everything seem normal at that point?

MZ: I forget. Seems like there was a telephone call from your Dad. (To Tim) We didn't have a telephone, but he had to go to the GI's place. I forget what he said, but we went back anyhow.

Then we heard a lot of gun fire and stuff and we knew it wasn't the good people firing out into the villages. It was coming in. It got so bad that I looked out our bathroom window and could see the soldiers were up in the belfry of the church just shootin' around. At first we tried to hide under the bed. Then we went downstairs and went into a corner. Then we heard a terrible explosion. That was the house that Carolyn Griswold was living in.

See, there were three mission houses. Carolyn's father was killed immediately. But the next day they were able to get Carolyn's body and bring her over to one of the other houses.

TZ: She was still alive.

MZ: Yeah. She was alive. That was one day, and then it was decided that the Thompsons should come into our house. So we were in our house. I remember looking out the side window in our living room. Two or three soldiers ran into and got under the porch of the Thompson house and that house went down like this (gestures straight down). Then we realized that our house would be the next, so we all went out into... Well, in the meantime, they cleaned out the garbage pit in the back yard—tried to make a bunker for us.

TZ: Who did that?

MZ: I don't know. I think maybe some tribes people, and probably Ed and your Dad. It must have had some kind of planks on top. We were in one of the rooms. We called it the servant's room, 'cause we didn't want to stay in the house. And they carried Carolyn out there, too. The nurses did. Then sure enough, our house... They put satchel charges... Is that what you call it?

TZ: Yes.

MZ: You know, it just went down. (Gestures straight down) Two story cement house! I don't think your Dad rushed to the bunker. I think he held up his hands like "we surrender." I was in the bunker with the Thompsons and a little tribes boy. I don't know how he got there. Maybe he was wounded. I heard a shout. I knew it was your Dad. I didn't see him killed, but I'm sure he died instantly.

Then they threw a grenade in the bunker and I said to this little tribes boy... I was in the corner. The reason I was spared was I hadn't gone to the bathroom for so long. So I said to this little tribes boy, "just pretend you're dead." That's when the north Vietnamese ordered me out. So I came and they took the telephone wire and bound my arms behind my back and marched me across the property. I think I glanced over and saw your Dad's body slumped on the clothesline. I don't know how long it had been on the clothesline. Maybe he was able to stagger a little bit.

So, of course, I obeyed. Oh, I know, I said to the Communist soldiers in broken Vietnamese, "please, could I go to the house of the medicine?" 6.11

He said, "there are no hospitals here." So I just marched off the property and crossed the road where Betty Olson was, and Hank Blood and other people.

And dear Betty Olson saw I was wounded, 'cause you know, I had eighteen shrapnel wounds all on this side (rubs left arm from wrist to shoulder) She had an extra half slip on, so she took that off and tore it into strips. You know, she was a good nurse, and bound up my wounds the best she could.

I was wearing a brand new dress that Miriam had made me during Christmas vacation. It still had the sizing in it. You know what sizing is? It kind of keeps the material looking pretty. So, I always said, that was like a great big bandage that soaked up some of the blood. (Nervous chuckle)

And then it seemed like the soldiers must have thrown something else in that little house. It didn't do much damage but.. Then I have a shrapnel wound on this arm. (right arm. Pushes up sleeve to demonstrate) I still have a scar. I think it's because I insisted that they take the stitches out too soon.

Then the soldiers came in—the enemy, of course... Let's see, there was Hank Blood, Betty Olson and myself. They were going to take us out on the trail, but my hair was as white then as it is now, so I think they had pity on this old woman. They sent me back in the house. Oh, it was so cold. It was January, and Betty Olson, bless her heart she had an extra sweater. She said, "you take this. You'll probably need it."

So, I lay down on the bed. And the next morning it was quiet. You know.

DF: So, you're all prisoners together at this stage. Right? You and Betty and Hank?

MZ: But they went out on the trail. They sent me back in the house. They had pity on me, I guess.

DF: Could I ask one other question? You said you had eighteen shrapnel wounds. How did that happen?

MZ: When they threw the grenade in that hastily made dug-out garbage pit that became our bunker.

DF: So sequence-wise, they threw the grenade in there after Bob had been shot?

MZ: Yeah, I think so.

DF: And then they came in and took you out? You were wounded all on that side.

MZ: So then it was quiet the next morning, so this tribes boy and I... I think we were going to go to some other bunker that he must have known about. And then I think it was one of E Ham's younger brothers... Right? (Looking to Tim who confirms) Saw me, so we went back across the mission property and over to the local provincial hospital.

They took me in. Nice Vietnamese nurses and a nice Vietnamese doctor came to my side. I had pity on him. He said, "I'm sorry, I don't have medicines or anything to take care of you. I don't even know where my family is." Suddenly my life had changed but I felt sorry for him. So they bathed me. Of course, they took off my old dress and put a pretty ao giai on me.

Then I don't know how long I'd been in this hospital when I heard a couple of booming American soldier's voices. "We understand that there are two American women in here." I don't know how Carolyn got there. Do you? (To Tim who shakes his head) So, I called out, "here I am."

They came at their own risk and took Carolyn and myself in their ambulance to Mac Vee. Is that what they call headquarters? (To Tim who confirms with a nod). That's when...

TZ: Was she alive?

MZ: Carolyn? Yeah. She made it in the helicopter. A Baptist chaplain came to my side and said, "this news has got to get to the outside world."

So, I said, "the Christian and Missionary Alliance, 260 West 44th Street, New York, NY, and I even gave them the zip code. (Gentle chuckle) So, he was able somehow to get word to the guest house there at 260—middle of the night. It was high noon when I got to Mac Vee headquarters. I just remember the sun.

Then two American government nurses came to my side, and I said, "my hair is a mess," because the dirt dripped down through the boards on top of that bunker. So they washed my hair. Then Carolyn and I were rushed by... I don't know, some kind of a vehicle to the helicopter port, and flew to **Nhatrang**, where we were admitted to the **government hospital**.

TZ: Government hospital. That's where Beth found you.

MZ: Yeah. I remember thinking, "it sure would be nice if Beth could come" and before long she was by my side. You know that was another miracle. Our GIs risked their lives to go to Dalat and rescue all those young missionary couples.

So she was there, and I don't know how many days we were at this government hospital. Not too long. All of a sudden they said, "we're expecting an attack, so Beth and I got on this big helicopter. I don't remember if we took off at night or not, but a voice came booming over the cockpit and said, "all lights out." I didn't know what it meant. I thought, "oh my land, I've gotten this far, now we're being attacked." Beth said, "it's okay, Mom. The pilot just wanted to be sure the soldiers snuffed out their cigarettes." So we got to Bien Hoa.

And from there I was on a great big evacuation plane with all these wounded soldiers. My ear drums were completely blown out. When I was still in that bunker, I was soaring... I still have ringing in my ears, but that's nothing. I heard this soaring and thought, "oh, I must be sailing up to heaven. I wonder who I'll see first." (Nervous chuckle with tears) Then I realized I was still alive. That was before the soldiers came and demanded I leave the bunker and go with them across the street to the village.

But I remember Beth had to sit in the back seat of the plane. The pressure didn't bother me at all because my ear drums were out, but I guess she really suffered the whole time that we flew to Japan. And from there we went to Andrews Air Force Base.

DF: In Japan, were you entered into the hospital and treated? Or was that just a stop on the way to the States?

TZ: No, she got treated in Nhatrang, in Bien Hoa. That's where she got inducted into the US medical system.

MZ: Oh yeah, they had removed all the shrapnel wounds.

TZ: So Japan was just quick stop. (To mother) Did you get any treatment in Japan, or did you stay on the plane?

MZ: No, they put me in an ambulance waiting for the next flight to **Andrews AFB**. I was curious, you know. Tried to sit up and was dizzy than a drunken sailor because the ear drums were ruptured. Beth was hoping against hope that we'd get on the same plane to go to Andrews AFB, and the Lord took care of that.

DF: Well, with eighteen shrapnel wounds, you must have been in a lot of pain during that whole time.

MZ: I don't remember. I think I was in shock. I don't remember. I don't remember pain. Then at Andrews AFB—that back door of that big plane opened and here comes **Tim**. (Gentle chuckle) Who made arrangements for you to get there?

TZ: That was Drew Sawin. Drew had a couple connections.

DF: Where were you at that time?

TZ: I was a senior at Wheaton. So I flew to DC. Stayed with Drew, and then met the plane when it landed. That's a scene that's being replicated daily now with the Iraq War.

DF: So were there just wounded coming off the plane?

TZ: Actually, I went on the plane and was able to go with her over to the transient station at Andrews. Then she was released to a private health system and then flown to Toledo, Ohio.

MZ: In a small plane.

DF: So, this plane that you landed in, was it a military aircraft? Full of wounded people?

TZ: Umhuh.

DF: Full of wounded people?

TZ: Yeah, it was all sailors and soldiers and Marines.

MZ: They were seriously wounded.

DF: So, **how did you find out about what had happened, Tim?**

TZ: I was at Wheaton. In fact, I was helping to pack a missionary couple who were going back to South America. I volunteered to help 'em pack up their stuff. Then the college chaplain, 17.54 Evan Welsh stopped by and told me. It was about ten at night. At that time he knew my father was killed,

but didn't know what had happened to her. So the uncertainty of what her disposition was, was troubling.

It wasn't until the next day, I got a call, and I don't remember who called me from headquarters. It was either Bill Kerr or L. L. King. No, L. L. was gone. So I think it must have been Bill Kerr, to let me know that my mom was alive. At that time they knew Carolyn had died. I think. (Looks to mom) Where did she die?

MZ: She... I remember...

DF: Did that happen before you left.

MZ: (nods) Before I left Nhatrang. I remember somebody saying... Oh, they tried to give her something, but she was too far gone.

TZ: Yeah. So I knew Carolyn was dead. We knew about the Thompsons and Ruth Wilting. We knew she was recovered. Didn't know anything about Hank Blood or Betty Olson at that time, so that was still a question mark.

MZ: When Tim got the news, he walked the streets of Wheaton all night. Right? (Turns to Tim)

TZ: (nods) Yeah. Anytime you are confronted with that kind of news it immediately forces you to reconcile some pretty significant things. (Nods and ponders, then points to his Mom) Actually I learned a lot from her. For a person who lost everything, yet she was able to continue to accept... she never tried to figure out the circumstances, because there was no answer.

MZ: When I was still in Nhatrang Hospital. Beth was still there with me, of course. I asked her for a paper and pencil. Did you ever hear this story?

DF: No.

MZ: (gestures writing in the air) Titled. **Counting My Blessings**. The first one was I'm a child of the Lord, or something like that. I lost that paper. Do you have that? (To Tim)

TZ: No. I don't have that.

MZ: I kept it for the longest time.

TZ: Two stories. (Pats Mom's knee. Wants to talk) At that hospital, a Vietnamese lady came in and saw Beth. When she heard their story, she said, "you must hate my people. You must hate my country."

Beth said, "no, we love your people, and we love your country. We came to tell your people about the love that came through a man named Jesus." So even in those circumstances both of them were able to rise above the circumstances and embrace through their faith the principles they'd been taught.

Then this note that she wrote to herself was (gestures writing on his hand), count your blessings. She wrote out the first stanza of the old Gospel hymn

*When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged thinking all is lost.
Count your many blessings
Name them one by one
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.*

Then she listed five blessings. Do you remember what they were? (To Mom)

MZ: Ah... (ponders)

TZ: I do.

MZ: Thank the Lord for my salvation, and my dear husband, and my children...

TZ: And for the privilege of serving in Vietnam. And the fifth one is the good medical care that you had received.

MZ: Hmm?

TZ: The fifth one was for the wonderful medical care that you received.

MZ: (Shakes head) I didn't remember. I kept that paper for the longest time, and I don't know. It just disappeared.

TZ: I don't have it. But anyway she shared that with me when I went onboard the airplane. It was a pretty emotional encounter.

MZ: But last time I saw Tim...

TZ: (Pats Mom's knee—wants to continue his story) So, after I kissed her and loved her, she shared that with me. That crystalized immediately for me, how to deal with a situation, 'cause I was really struggling.

Walking the streets of Wheaton at night. It was winter. It was snowing. You know, I was asking all the "why" questions and trying to figure out what was going on. Up until then I was pretty much my own moral authority, and all of a sudden the inadequacy of that comes crashing down. So, as I was still trying to accept it all, her example and her personal testimony really helped crystalize my life—how to deal with some pretty significant events. 23.20 That's been an encouragement to me through my entire life.

DF: (To Marie) Did you every have any point where you wondered if it was **worth going over there and the sacrifice...** the price that was paid?

MZ: (Looks above as if communing with her Father) Well, yeah, it was worth it all. You know? Just all the wonderful memories. We were just one big happy family.

DF: To have that assurance you must have had a very clear understanding that you were where God wanted you to be.

MZ: (Nods) No doubt about it. Yeah. I'm sure I can find other things to share. I'm just trying to think.

DF: Thank you for sharing that.

MZ: That's the way I remember it. But **Bob's** body was brought home. We had to pay a little bit of money, but not much. I was in the Methodist Hospital in Toledo for a few days. Not that I was dying or anything like that, but the family doctor just wanted to keep all the reporters and everybody like that away.

But the day of the **funeral**, I was calm as anything. You know. I looked over at your Uncle Paul and here the tears were running down his face. I think the doctor had ordered a calming pill for me.

TZ: (Nods) I think you were taken care of.

MZ: I wish he hadn't done that. They had a special vehicle. Beth and I were in it. I came in the back door of the church and there was Dr. Nathan Bailey. I was overwhelmed. You know, he was the president of the C&MA. He came for the service. Actually, he was in Florida visiting the R. W. Battles.

TZ: Yeah, there were a couple thousand people. How many people did the Tab hold? It was full. That was one of the longest...

MZ: And I remember... (gentle chuckle) I don't know who... I was still in the hospital. It was my suggestion. Somebody said, "how they going to get all those cars out to the cemetery?" I said, "well, why don't you just see about getting a couple of police escorts." So that's what they did. (Gentle chuckle) I think it was my suggestion that kind of took care of that problem.

TZ: That was a wonderful tribute to the church and the Alliance, and to my Father. 26.35

MZ: You know, after my father-in-law died, Bob was interim pastor of the church. Actually the board members of the church, that's what they called 'em in those days, asked him to stay on and become senior pastor. (Shakes head) But we just didn't feel like our work was done in Vietnam. So we went back. That would have been '54. Is that right? '54?

TZ: Umhuh.

MZ: So, then we had fourteen more years.

TZ: One of the last **sermons** my Father gave in Louisville for Dr. Epperson, was a sermon entitled, **Total Commitment**. (Tim's phone rings. He tries to ignore it. Cannot. Tape is interrupted.)

MZ: Was it before you went back to Wheaton, we went to the Social Security office? In downtown Toledo?

TZ: What's the story?

MZ: I don't know. We took care of things. I remember we were headed back to the car. I guess I was ahead of all the gang, and you said, "Mom, you're getting better." (Chuckles)

TZ: When was that?

MZ: I don't know. That was soon after...

TZ: After you came in? (Nods)

MZ: Yeah.

TZ: She's always been an inspiration to all of us.

MZ: I remember Tim... You said, "Mom, I think you're gettin' better. You're gonna handle this, because here you are." It was cold. I guess that's why I was rushing, but I'll never forget that compliment.

TZ: Yeah. I think when you think in terms of her upbringing on the farm, in an all-American setting, and the way the Lord called and united my Father and my Mom, and then gave them an opportunity to serve in a situation that still makes her glow and smile, you realize that, that was the highlight of their life together and then in the service of the Lord. In spite of some pretty difficult situations, she's demonstrated that her faith is her commitment to the Lord, not just activity. You can measure the success of that in different ways. I think just this time this morning has again affirmed her commitment in terms of where her life priorities are.

When my Father spoke in Louisville for Epperson, his sermon was Total Commitment. I have a tape of that sermon and it talks about how committed the Communists are—that they're willing to give their life for the cause. And the challenge was as a minister of the Gospel and as a missionary, and as believers we should also be so committed in our faith that we would be willing to take such a drastic step. Now little did he know at that time that he would be called to make some pretty difficult decisions and put himself in harm's way. So, as I have listened to that tape a number of times, it still echos clearly in my mind his commitment to his faith and his calling. It's a pretty wonderful legacy to be a part of.

DF: Yeah. Thank you both for sharing. (David too, breaks down) That whole... I can't talk.

TZ: It's drawing together a great big tapestry of how God has used normal people in ordinary circumstances to do significant stuff. 31.14 The significance of that is really lost on most of us on any given day. But just take a few minutes every now and then to reflect. You and your family. Think in terms of your Mom and your Father... what their history was, and what they've been part of and what you're a part of now, and your family in Thailand. It's just astounding. When you look at our day-to-day questions about what are we doing? Where's it all headed? What's really important. It takes, perhaps moments like this of reflection to realize, that yeah, there are some pretty significant things going on.

DF: Yeah.

MZ: I was telling... I don't want this on the tape. (Tape paused)

You know, here at the Shell Pointe Village Church, people say, "what about Beth and Rick? Are they back from Cambodia? What's the Mayo Clinic say?" And you know the same people have asked me that question I don't know how many times. I said to Tim, "it really bothers me."

And he said, "they're not really listening. They don't understand. They don't really understand that like you and Tim and myself sitting here, that being missionaries..."

But it really bothers me. Because they don't get... Why would they keep asking me, and I'm sure that I've told them what I can.

TZ: I think they're being nice just to communicate, and a lot of times you communicate just by asking questions, but their mind is somewhere else. Just consider the question as a matter of personal interest and then let them deal with it.

DF: I'd like to ask you a few more questions here, in terms of family life on the field. As a missionary serving the Lord in Vietnam, what were the biggest stressors on your marriage? Do you remember that?

MZ: Biggest stresses on our marriage? (Ponders) As far as our marriage was concerned... I don't know.

I remember **the first time we left Beth at Dalat School**. Let's see, when did she start school? She was born in '44. It must have been... Well, anyhow she was six years old. Up until that year at conference time Armenia Hekkinen had said that a child should be at least seven before they started school. But for some reason, she was willing to take them at six. Well, we went to Dalat for field conference and a little vacation. We had no idea that we were going to leave Beth there. So, I'll tell you. That was something else.

DF: Do you remember that day?

MZ: Tim's Dad was busy driving (gestures hands on steering wheel) the open Jeep crossing the three mountain ranges. Tim was on my lap, and here I was crying, crying, crying. That was terrible. We got home and went to the little dresser where Beth's things were and I felt like I'd come back from

the cemetery. You know? That was really hard until the letters began to flow. His Dad understood, but I kind of felt like I was lost in the wilderness. He didn't dare take his eye off the road. It was plowed, you know? He had no idea what I was going through. But anyhow we got over that, because... I think she had a happy time.

Then we came home in 1960 and told her that she could go back with us until she finished high school. At that time headquarters wouldn't have paid for her to go back. But we said to Beth, "now if you feel that you want to go back with us for your last two years, we'll just trust the Lord to send you the money so you can come back and start college.

"Well," she said, "no, I'll just stay in the States" because you know the enrollment wasn't very high and it wouldn't have been too much challenge. She finished high school at Toccoa Falls Academy.

DF: So you had to leave her once again.

MZ: Yeah, and we never saw her for five years. We left her at sixteen. Never heard her voice. Never saw her for five years. We just got home in time to help her with her last minute wedding preparations. So she knew all the lonely days and hardships of being separated. Still she was willing to be a missionary and bear four children and knew what she would be going through. That's a miracle.

DF: What **kind of ministries were you involved in?**

MZ: I taught in the Bible School, and then I was missionary hostess. We had lots of people coming through. Everybody wanted to come to Banmethuot including Dr. H. L. Turner. He was president... Oh, there were busy days.

TZ: Well, you're a musician so you played...

MZ: Oh, I played the pump organ.

TZ: Organ. You did accordion. Choir. Pageants.

DF: Did you teach any kind of music to the Bible School students?

MZ: No. I didn't teach music. No.

DF: Now, there was a Bible School in Banmethuot. Right?

MZ: Yeah. It was a small school.

DF: All in Raday?

MZ: Yeah.

DF: But you were training the future leaders of the church.

MZ: Right.

DF: How did you **entertain yourselves there in Banmethuot?** What'd you do for fun?

MZ: Some nights I remember your Dad and I would get up and (looks to Tim) it wasn't Scrabble, was it? Or that other game?

TZ: Yahtze? I don't know.

MZ: I forget. I would be tired. I'd put my head on the dining room table. Your Dad would say, "no, let's play. Let's see if we can get a higher score than last time." (Chuckles)

TZ: Well, didn't you socialize with the other missionaries?

MZ: Oh yeah. But I think at that time we were the only missionaries on the station. But later we had quite a group there. So we'd get together.

DF: So you did things as a team there? Once the team grew and you had other staff up there?

TZ: Christmas. Thanksgiving Dinners together. We'd have socials. I can remember game night before we had the tennis courts.

MZ: Who was your best friend? Ed Mangham?

TZ: Manghams were there. We used to run around with Ken Swain and Bob McNeal and play tennis with them.

MZ: Miriam and Tom Mangham grew up together. (Chuckles)

DF: What were some of the **pranks or practical jokes** you pulled on one another? Up there among the missionary community?

MZ: Hmm. Trying to think. (Ponders) Maybe not so much on our station, but when we'd go over for field conference we'd have a fun night. Things like that. But I had a hard time getting your Dad out of his office. He didn't want to waste any time. You know?

DF: Was he pretty serious?

MZ: Yeah. But he had a sense of humor, too. He and Grady Mangham used to put on this skit. It was funny. They were at a ball game. Do you remember this? They'd be at a ball game in this big stadium. The skit lasted only about one minute. They acted like goofy guys. You know. "What's your number?"

"Gave it." "Okay, what's your number?"

"Think. "No wonder this place is crowded." (Hearty chuckles all around) Both Grady and my husband were very serious, you know. They enjoyed being with one another.

DF: As you look back over your experiences in Vietnam, what are the things that you remember that gave you a **strong sense that God had His hand on your life**?

MZ: Well, I just thank the Lord that we had a ministry with these people. 41.42 And even though they were just kind of quiet people, they were eager to learn. It was our privilege to see them grow and become real spiritual giants for the Lord.

I remember on one occasion (Looks to Tim). This was NaoMi. Do you remember him?

TZ: Umhuh.

MZ: He came to our home. We were sitting in the living room. He was discouraged. I don't know what the problem was. He was about ready to quit. This had to be of the Lord. I remembered that we had some extra picture rolls, you know, the old-fashioned kind? So, I went upstairs and brought one down and gave it to him. Later on he testified that, "the act of Grandmother Ziemer was what made me realize that I shouldn't leave the ministry." You know, just little things like that. (Shakes head) Never thought anything of it, but... I could see that he was discouraged and we didn't really want to lose him

because he'd been to Bible School. We thought he was having a good ministry, but he was discouraged about something and came to the house...

DF: When you were involved in the ministry, what gave you the **greatest joy**? 43.13

MZ: Just... ah... You know, like that song we sing now, *We're Part of the Family of God*, and you know, we were just being brothers and sisters when we were so far away from our own family.

You know, I don't ever remember, like you hear so much from missionaries with e-mail, "oh, I miss you so much" and "I wish I could see you." I don't know, I loved my parents and my husband loved his, but we were just so happy in what we were doing. We never had e-mail to say all this. (Shrugs) I don't know. We just counted it a privilege to be over there serving Him and doing the little bit we could.

DF: Finish this sentence for me, Looking back, if I could do anything over again, I would... (Marie looks to Tim)

TZ: Hmm. That's tough. (Looks at Mom) If you could do anything over again what would you do? (Marie looks up. Ponders) It hasn't all been cherries and apples.

MZ: What would I do again?

DF: Or **what would you do differently**? Sorry. If there's one thing that you could do differently, what would you do? Sorry, that's a better way of asking the question.

MZ: I don't know. Maybe spend more time with you kids (looking at Tim) when you were home on your short vacations. Do you suppose? Did you ever feel cheated? (Asking Tim)

TZ: I didn't, but we didn't know any better. That was just normal. But I think as I reflect back on it, I think the parental sacrifice like you described coming back from Dalat, that's probably the most difficult part.

MZ: Now that I'm older; a grandmother and a great-grandmother, and other retired missionary ladies right here on the compound, or base, as Tim calls it. (Chuckles) We say, "how could I do that? How could I subject my children to that?" But everybody else was doing it. But that's what I think now. "How could I have done that?" You know? I'm sure the children... (turns to Tim) Well, I think you were probably the happiest because you were you were in love with Jody way back then. (Tim nods. Dave chuckles) And I think Miriam had a hard time. Of course, she was only fourteen when her Daddy was taken. That was tough, coming back to the States, trying to be Mom and Dad.

TZ: So the whole issue of schooling and kids, while you don't know what the alternative was, that was the hard part, but could you have done anything different? Would you have come home from the field in order to be with the kids?

MZ: No.

TZ: Okay.

DF: There just weren't any other options at the time, were there?

TZ: Nope.

DF: Do you have any **regrets**?

MZ Any regrets? Just probably wish I could have done more. This is something that I heard somebody quote Mother Teresa. Somebody asked her what she wanted on her tombstone. I'm sure you've heard this.

DF: Go ahead.

TZ: In other words what would she want to be known for?

MZ: What would she want to be known for. She said, “not for anything that I’ve accomplished but, my faith. Is that it? (looks to Tim)

TZ: I was not called to be successful but to be faithful.

MZ: “I was not called to be successful but to be faithful.”

Tim refers to Beth as Mother Teresa in our family. You’ve seen Beth recently?

DF: Yeah.

MZ: Well, you know they were missionaries-in-residence, but they sent them off on these big long tours. Two main ladies here, one is the chaplain for the Pavilion and the other is head nurse or somebody over at the Pavilion. They were with Beth long enough, so both of them have said to me, and I’ve passed this on to Beth. “If they’re ever back in this area there’ll be a job for Beth because she’s a nurse. They’ve picked up on her compassion and her love for people. So, I’ve sent that on to Beth to be of encouragement to her. Of course, they won’t settle here. They’ll be in the Orlando area.

TZ: You’re kind of a Mother Teresa, too. So we’ve got two of ‘em. (Smiles)

MZ: Oh, I don’t think so. I don’t think I’d recognize any of the people if they’re alive now. It’s been so many years. They’ve grown old like I’ve grown old. You know the tribes people can’t worship in a building or a church any more. They’re really having a hard time.

DF: How does that make you feel when you hear news about what’s happening with the Rada people? How the church is growing?

MZ: Well, it’s just a miracle. It’s the working of the Holy Spirit, you know.

DF: It must do your heart good to hear that the work goes on.

MZ: Yes. Umhuh. 49.59 You know, nobody’s indispensable.

DF: Given all that you went through and the high price that you paid, what are your **feelings about the Vietnamese people today?**

MZ: Well, we like to blame everything on the Devil, Satan, but their eyes are blinded. They’re just out to conquer that country and down play all these other people. I can’t say I hate the people, because we had some good Vietnamese friends even though we didn’t work primarily among them. (Looks to Tim) I don’t know what I would do if I went over there.

TZ: I think you’d probably enjoy it to go back and see ‘em.

MZ: I think I’d have nightmares. (Tim chuckles)

Oh, this is funny. Remember when we were in the Gulf War? I don’t know where it was, but I was holed up some place, practically a prisoner, and I thought. This is a dream, of course. I thought, “oh, how stupid can I be. I escaped all that turmoil in Vietnam, now I get in this mess.” Then, of course, I woke up. (Chuckles)

TZ: I suspect that will be with you in your mind for as long as you’re alive. It was an important part of your life. A very vivid and dramatic experience. I don’t think you’ll ever be able to escape or put the

hard parts away, but I think you've done a wonderful job of looking at the positive sides, and balancing it that way. But more importantly you've been able to see it in light of eternal perspectives and values. I think that's what's been a real model and encouragement to me, Mom, is to see that you have modeled what knowing the Savior is all about.

MZ: Yeah, we intended to stay until we were 65. Knowing Tim's Dad, we probably would have stayed until they told us to pack your trunks and go home.

TZ: Yeah, there are a lot of people who tell you how to live and how to preach, and how to live your Christian life, but as I've watched you and other missionaries like David's Mom and Dad, modeling what knowing the Savior is all about, to be whole and sufficient in Him, I think that's probably what you show me and other members of the family and other people you are with. And your colleagues from Vietnam also model that in your day-to-day lives and interactions.

Tim Reflects on Life and Motivation

David, I've been asked a lot when I joined the Navy and then volunteered to go back to Vietnam and fly helicopter gun-ships if there was a issue of vengeance. No, actually I went back to fly, and volunteered to go back to Vietnam because I really thought it intriguing and wanted to go back home. It was never an act of vengeance. To me, I understand that vengeance belongs to the Lord not to us.

I went back to serve my country because I firmly believe that we had it right in terms of the big commitment and goal, and that was to give the South Vietnamese a choice in which direction they should go. Now, there are a lot of debates and interpretations about how we as a nation got it wrong, but in principle to give the South Vietnamese a choice in their governance. I was able to embrace that concept and I'm proud to have served. I never felt vengeance, or the need for vengeance. In terms of giving forgiveness, I think that's between the Lord and myself. There isn't one person that you can go to. That question, while valid, is tough to translate to reality. So, I think, in my case, the notion of forgiveness is a notion that I have turned over to the Lord. I have no vengeance towards the people at all. I never have. There's sadness, there's sorrow because of what we went through, there was bewilderment, and there were questions, but I can truthfully say I have never had to deal with any anger.

DF: Did you ever meet a situation where Vietnamese came up and offered an apology on behalf of all Vietnamese.

TZ: No. Never have, because most of the Vietnamese that I've associated with are here in the States. They're the beneficiaries of what the United States did, in terms of accommodating 'em. The work that your folks did, the Manghams in resettling 'em, they are grateful for the openness. The Christians that came are grateful for the service of your grandparents, and of your parents and the other missionaries. So when I tell the story of Banmethuot to Vietnamese Christians, they're moved and very, very grateful.

But I've never had an opportunity to get into a situation where there's a possible reconciliation or an expression of tit for tat. (Shrugs) It would be kind of fun some day.

MZ: Is this turned off? (Points to video camera and pats Tim's arm) Because I want David to hear about the time you were asked to speak at Vietnamese Conference in Houston.

TZ: Well, it was just the Vietnamese Christians.

MZ: The place was full.

TZ: They asked me to speak.

MZ: Well, the Livingstons were there. I remember she sent me a note saying that when you got done there wasn't a dry eye in the place. (Begins to break emotionally) These were all Vietnamese. Few missionaries.

TZ: I think that reflects their gratitude for what the church accomplished, and that they were the beneficiaries of that. I think that's what that meant. (Nods)

DF: Given what could have happened shortly after '54, and then the entrance of the US into Vietnam. There's a sense in which the country could have fallen then and been reunited, but there was a time, a time given for ministry to go forward, like the ministry that you folks were involved in Banmethuot with the Raday people. Do you ever feel like the American part of the **war gave time for the Gospel to go forward?**

MZ: That's what your Dad always felt. You know?

TZ: It's tough to sit back and second guess things, but I think 58.36 it's been proven historically, through Scripture, and through times, that God uses the wrath, ignorance, and sinfulness of man in unexpected ways to further His Kingdom. And it's clear to me as I look back. If you just look at the translations of Scripture, and if you look at the building of the Bible Schools. If you look at the indigenization of the church, and now after virtually thirty years of oppression, the Church is strong and vibrant. I think it speaks for itself that our timing is not the Lord's timing. Some people call that rationalization, but I think it demands our scrutiny. If you look at every situation... I mean, you look at Corrie Ten Boom and her family. Just one family—as the Jews were being persecuted in the Netherlands. The one family helped and were then thrown into jail. Millions of Jews were killed, but that entire family went through persecution. Corrie survived and through her ministry many came to Christ through the actions of her family and the encouragement that she was.

So, I think as we look through history, we need to be careful that we don't judge in terms of the success or failure, in terms of our human and material and capitalistic terms. You've got to sit back and in a very humbling and sober way look at it in terms of God's eternal plan and the Kingdom itself.

DF: I've heard a number of stories where GIs have said, or statements were made that the war was a total waste. Then when a missionary will say, "now wait a minute. That could have all changed in '56, but it didn't. We had until '75 and look what happened for the furtherance of the Gospel during that time. Especially among the ethnic minorities because that's where all the seed was cast, and the foundations laid..."

When they hear that and think a step further how the Church has grown since then, it's like... All of a sudden they think, "oh, I guess the price that I and others paid personally was, in God's economy, worth it somehow.

TZ: Yeah, I think that's a significant point, David, and it's certainly worth bringing up as often as we can in the context of people assessing and reassessing, and trying to sort things out in a very confusing situation.

DF: I think there are a lot of Vets that need to hear that, too.

TZ: I usually do that when I talk to Veteran's groups. Men's Groups. I always pay tribute to everyone who served their country. Then I ask who served in Vietnam and spend a few second planting that seed, reminding them that God was at work and is still at work in Vietnam. I thought the ten to twelve years of US presence helped facilitate the roots growing a little bit deeper. As you said, particularly in the Central Highlands.

But it's true too, when you look at Rev. Mieng and what he endured and what he accomplished. The story of him and Tom Stebbins departing is pretty moving. You know, in '75. That's a different story, but part of the same scenario.

DF: So, **Tim**, just for the record here. We've been in the story-telling mode for the last couple hours, but one of the things we haven't done is, **what happened to you after Wheaton?** You went on into the Navy?

TZ: I was drafted.

DF: Were you in ROTC at that time?

TZ: No, I was drafted and...

MZ: I thought you joined ROTC.

TZ: Everybody at Wheaton has to do that. That's just to get the numbers up, but then I got out when I could.

I was drafted. Joined the Navy. Went on to flight school, and after a year and a half got my wings and volunteered to go back to Vietnam. I flew helicopter gun-ships and supported the SEALs in the river patrol boats down in the delta. We supported the Swift boats and Seals. We lost twelve pilots and air crewmen that year. So it was a pretty dramatic year. The realities of priorities in life—my roommate is still in a Veteran's Hospital. He was shot down. All messed up. I was very busy. The Seal Team that we supported had 100% casualties. So, it was a very tense, tough year. We all hear about the fact that there are no atheists in foxholes. I spent a lot of time in a bunker while our base was being mortared. I didn't meet any atheists, but I met a lot of people who were searching.

The Lord provides in different ways. There was a Southern Baptist Chaplain who came to our little outpost. I spent time with him. He encouraged me. He prayed with me. He held me accountable. So that was the way the Lord helped keep me pure. I knew as a guy in 1.04.42 the military, I was called to fish, but things were pretty confusing. In the fish bowl, there are a lot of fish and it was pretty messy and dirty. Temptations were bigger than I'd even imagined they would be. I knew that even though I wasn't necessarily doing a whole lot of fishing, it was important to stay pure so that I could some day fish. The chaplains and other Christian men in the service helped me along in that way.

I stayed in the Navy. Was promoted and blessed with squadron command and wing command at a number of naval stations in the region. They made me an admiral. It became clear to me that it wasn't rank or position that mattered. At the end of the day it was really your posture before the Lord. That was significant—to be faithful (nods) in all things, in every way. So to be in a secular organization like the navy, you could still be true, faithful, and promotible, if you did a good job and lived out your principles. (Nods)

DF: Hmm. And you retired from the Navy when?

TZ: Left the Navy in 2000 and worked in a think tank in Washington D.C. Left that after realizing that I wasn't a thinker or a writer. It was a fun job. It was fun and a lot of ego to run with some pretty important people, but writing and reading was a lot harder, and I hadn't done much of that since I left college. So, I knew I needed to move on.

Then I got a call from the board of World Relief to come and help them and I've found it a privilege to work with World Relief the last four years. I tell people that I went from serving my country to serving the suffering and poor in Christ's name. That's been a wonderful bit of work for the last four years. Probably the most significant work I've done in my 30 years. (Smiles contentedly)

DF: I'd like to ask another question in terms of... You have a unique mixture of experiences as a missionary kid and then as a serviceman back in Vietnam... Hindsight. I'm not sure how to ask this, but the issue I'm trying to touch on is the issue of **missionary association with the US presence in Vietnam during a war**. What impact that may have had on the life of the church and especially on the tribal people after. There's a subject there and I haven't asked the question, but...

TZ: Yeah, I'm grateful for my MK experience. When I went back and flew with the Navy, my primary job was flying for the Navy. And I think I was culturally attuned and maybe even more committed to what I was doing in the Navy, but I had no conflict going back and challenging—fighting on behalf of the country with the South Vietnamese, never any conflict. But I think in the military when you're in a combat situation, you learn to compartmentalize those things. I compartmentalized really well. I was flying. I had to stay focused on our mission and saving lives. Doing our missions was really the top priority in terms of work. Living our daily lives is another issue. Now how to translate that... Again I was just an ensign and a JG in the Navy, so, strategic thinking and how it interacts with the kingdom—that wasn't even on the plate. I just showed up. I wanted to stay alive, help people stay alive and get the mission done. So, I wouldn't give myself a whole lot of credit for being too theoretical. It wasn't until later when I had a chance to reflect back. Let your heart go back to normal. Then you think, "oh, how does this all fit together?" And I think one of the advantages of growing old is that you have a perspective of time and you see things differently.

In the context of what you've heard today and what you're hearing in all these interviews, there is significance in age and wisdom and listening and then trying to see where it all comes together. It's not as crazy as it seems to some people. So, as a military guy, I had no problem serving in Vietnam. I was grateful for that. I'm still proud of my service. I think as it relates to the Kingdom and the Church, I think we've already discussed that.

DF: Yeah, and that's pretty distinct apart from one another there, but I guess what I'm thinking of is in some cases where missionaries associated with, closely identified with what the tribal people were going through. Of course, there's a FULRO dimension in there, but there's also a sense of patriotic duty. In terms of what they got the military involved in, or how they associated with the military, some people felt it could have jeopardized their friendship after they'd gone—between the North Vietnamese and the tribal Christians. I guess that's the other area...

TZ: Yes. 1.11.19 I think that's still unfolding. I think anytime you're in a situation where relationships can be interpreted and perceived differently by different groups you have to be very cautious. Missionaries associating with the GIs are like humanitarian groups in Afghanistan and Iraq right now. Are we pro-US? or are we just humanitarian and neutral? I think any time we have interactions with political groups or perceived political groups or nationals we have to be so cautious, because each person, each group looks at it differently. Those are complicated situations and take a lot of wisdom.

DF: Well, on the other hand, the GIs there needed ministry. They're in your home. It's the natural thing, so I've always tried to help explain that to people. It's not always that clear. It's not black and white on a lot of those things, and the lives of many GIs were touched by many of the lives and ministry of missionaries and chaplains throughout Vietnam.

TZ: My father was approached a couple of times by the political constituency of FULRO. He was pretty aware. Usually the people on the scene are pretty smart. They know what's going on. So, he was very careful, very sensitive to make sure he was apolitical. Even when some of the church leaders were engaged in or trying to influence him to be influential on their behalf, he recognized that and was very cautious to stay apolitical. I think it takes the people on the ground with a little judgment to really be the best judge of the situation.

Now there are some people who aren't as wise as they need to be. They jump into a situation because they either want to help or they think it's jazzy or sexy. They think it's cool to be... but I'll tell you those of us who have served in government or on the mission field, need an extra dose of caution and wisdom in dealing with those situations.

DF: Not everybody did stay apolitical.

TZ: Right. And then things get a little bit messy. Then, I think, the real burden lies on the leadership, not those guys. I think the leadership of a country or wherever needs to be aware of who is engaged

and where the situations are. Sometimes the people close to it are too close to it. They become emotionally or relationally attached. Then it becomes a leadership responsibility to either pull the people apart, or pull them out so that it doesn't compromise the overall mission in the case of the church, or military strategy in the case of the military.

DF: It seems like... well, hindsight. Do you think the Alliance should have had a policy about that?

TZ: Ah, yeah. I think that's something that we probably have learned. Going through the Second World War in China, there was some of that. I don't know whether that was understood and was a policy, or... Perhaps it kind of gets faded or lost in between situations. But yeah, now that you mention it... If you have a multiple choice item, I'd pick yes. 1.15.04

DF: I don't know if you're comfortable with this. Maybe we don't have to mention names, but Ken Swain was one who was famous for being heavily involved. I mean that was a scuttlebutt. It seems to be quite common. Unfortunately, he's not around to be able to talk to about it. As somebody who wasn't involved... My folks weren't involved necessarily with the tribal ministry, but being in Dalat and being exposed to the discrimination that people felt, I can so clearly understand why somebody could get so tied in and... It would be hard not to. I think it would be really difficult not to. But I sometimes wonder if that close involvement with those folks ended up jeopardizing the lives of some of those people after '75.

TZ: I think it's a critical issue. I can't speak for Ken, nor would I, but it's a critical issue. I think it's a relevant one. I think there needs to be policy. There needs to be good leadership awareness. At the end of the day when civil rights and human rights are being violated, we cannot stand by casually. So there are vehicles to deal with that. I think the biggest challenge is that we mobilize the right vehicles to address that, so if, in fact, it's going to compromise you or your mission, you have to be extra careful so that you can continue to achieve your mission and not get entangled with some of these other very delicate and sensitive issues. So, I think it's something that all mission agencies, all overseas.... In fact I think it's going to become more of an issue as we look to the future.

Disengagement is wrong. I think in this world we have to see more engagement by the Church and Christians. However, we have to be clearer and more prescriptive in how we're going to do that properly. And if you do it properly, then you can mobilize more resources and more attention to get quicker light on the target and then demand and expect quicker dealing with the situation for some sort of reconciliation. If you've got a whole bunch of people going a whole bunch of different ways, you've got noise. Where if you can focus an issue and get light on it, and put it in neon lights, then you get all kinds of groups and media on it, then I think you can start having a positive, truthful way of dealing with this.

DF: Yeah. And especially in this day and age when international relations and aid and all those things are influential. Back in the 50s that would have been... I mean, who knew about people living out in the highlands of central Vietnam. I mean that was more of a challenge then than it is even today. Hmm. Thank you.

Any other stories come to mind? Or anything that you can think of that later you'll say, "oh, I wish I'd said that?"

MZ: No, I don't think so.

TZ: I think we're close to being unproductive.

DF: Thank you very much.

MZ: It may have been a whole bunch of wasted time on your behalf.

DF: Oh, not at all.