

Tourane, May 14th 1956.

Answering those additional serious  
accusations.

The following additional serious accusations have been made by Dr. Snead in recent letters to me, involving the national Raday Church at Bannethuot:

1. "Representatives of the Tribes workers and also of the Vietnamese missionaries among the tribes, came on different occasions to talk with Messrs. Mangham and L.L. King in Bannethuot. They told of a number of occasions where the tribes people at Bannethuot, and also some Vietnamese, and the tribes people in the villages reported immoral acts by you in the villages and also your relation ship with and attitude toward missionary women as well as tribes women!"
2. In a letter to Clay Cooper, Dr. Snead says, "On two occasions, they reported, letters concerning these acts were presented to Mr. Smith, but he shrugged them off and gave them no reply. However, after his dismissal when a national worker spoke to him about these letters he admitted he was guilty of the things mentioned."
3. Dr. Snead wrote on Jan. 3/56: "That the Vietnamese workers, and perhaps others related to the Church in the Bannethuot district, on a number of occasions brought to your attention the indiscretions in your attitude and action, and it is reported that at least on one occasion you explained it by saying that we hold the French standards and you excused yourself accordingly." (Later Dr. Snead corrected this to say that he did not mean to say I said, "we hold to French standards", but that the native brethren said that "because of your attitude they wondered if you held to the French standards.")
4. Dr. Snead writes, "Nationals told in their recent conversations last November how surprised they were that the Mission would allow missionaries to so openly declare their disregard before the nationals of some of the directives of the Mission of the Foreign Department."

In my last and final letter to Dr. Snead on Feb. 22nd, I said, "As in many instances before, your letter clearly shows that you have been misinformed in some things. In several paragraphs I simply do not know what you are referring to. As far as we are concerned, the controversy with the C. and M.A. is over."

We find that Mr. King repeated the allegation to the nationals, even as he spread it widely at home, that I had been repeatedly warned over the years to change my ways, but that I refused to obey. As long as they persist in repeating this lie, which I challenged them last year to try and prove, it is utterly futile for us to continue the argument with them.

When, under pressure from friends, we asked the National Church for a hearing at Bannethuot, they replied they would hold it provided we agreed to have a representative of the C. and M.A. from New York and missionaries present. Because we have closed the matter with the C. and M.A. we saw no reason to be subjected to more indignity from them by having a representative from New York present. They already had plenty of opportunity to hear our case in committee, but refused. Because the Executive Committee of the Tribes Mission sent us a minute stating we would not be received by the missionaries or have fellowship, it was not possible for us to have them present either. So we said we would drop the idea of a hearing. On further strong pressure from friends, however, we decided to go to Bannethuot at once, so wired asking to meet the Committee of the Raday Church. The missionaries were away at Conference, but our main idea was to straighten out the above accusations with the Church.

We met with Rev. Ham, ordained president of the Raday Church, Y Ngue, Vice-president, Y No, Treasurer, (Preacher Y Be was an onlooker), and Mr. Nhdong, Vietnamese missionaries to the Tribes. The other two members could not come as the roads were too bad for their bicycles.

We asked them to kindly give us answers to the following questions:

1. Do you know of any immoral acts on my part in the villages?

2. Have you ever heard of me saying anything disparaging about the New York Board or Foreign Department or of any of their directives? Anything disrespectful?

3. Have you ever heard of any national, tribes or Vietnamese, ever coming to me to call my attention to indiscretions on my part, asking me to change my ways? Do you know of anyone handing me letters to this effect?

4. Is there any issue between anyone in the Raday Church and me? Anything I should make right? Do you know of anything more I should confess?

We brought back the following signed statements, translated from the Raday:

Bannethuot, May 11th 1956.

TO VISION INC., AND DR. SNEAD,

Y Ham, Y Ngue, representing all the Raday preachers. About the affair concerning Mr. Smith, we want to clearly state that we know this: 1. We Radays still love Mr. Smith, and have never said we did not love him, for that would be lying. 2. We have never heard that he went about preaching in the villages and did immoral acts. 3. Truly we have never heard him speak disrespectfully of the Directors at New York or of their directives.

We Radays want Mr. and Mrs. Smith to return and work at Bannethuot again with the missionaries, and open up many new centers. We Radays never threw Mr. and Mrs. Smith out at all. We Radays have nothing against Mr. Smith. Everything concerning him has been cleared up. He has come and asked forgiveness already. From now on there is nothing against him at all. People say we Radays wrote letters to Mr. Smith trying to make him change his ways, and that he would not receive them. About this matter we have never even heard.

Signed. Y Ham, President. Y Ngue, Vice-President.

Mr. Nhuong, Vietnamese missionary, who must have done most of the talking to Mr. King, asked our pardon several times for having said things to Mr. King which were not true and for making it hard for us. He said he tried to help us, but everything he said was turned against us. He said, "My sin in telling these things about Mr. Smith is greater than his". He signed the following:

"1. I have never heard Mr. Smith speak disrespectfully of the directives from New York. He only said that the money which came to help us did not come from the C. and M.A. but from many friends in America. (Mr. Nhuong added that this was not said in a disrespectful way). 2. Mr. Smith has never committed immoral acts in the village but only people have gossipped untruths. 3. I have never heard of any letter anybody wrote to him trying to make him change his ways.

Signed. N.H. Nhuong."

Besides Mr. Nhuong, Y No was also questioned by Mr. King at Pleiku. The "immoral acts in the villages" charge seems to be based upon the items he told.

1. Wife of Y Ua. Eight years ago I put my arm around his wife in our truck while he was watching me out of the window behind the driver's seat. There were several other people in the front seat as well. This was cleared up immediately when I went and asked their forgiveness, but it has since been told about the country so much that it has been regarded as adultery, and that I had to pay Y Ua a buffalo. Y No admitted he thought it was adultery, also Mr. Nhuong. They never asked me or Y Ua about it. We met with Y Ua on May 11th, and in front of Mr. Ham, president, and Y Be, one of the preachers, he signed the following:

"I, Y Ua, state this: the affair of Mr. Smith's indiscretion many years ago with my wife was not adultery, he only put his arm around her a few minutes in front of me. He asked forgiveness at once and since that time there has been nothing at all. The affair was closed then. Signed Y Ua."

4. Nurse at Buon Dray. When the villagers at Buon Dray near the Leprosarium told me wild elephants were destroying their cornfields every evening, Miss Ade and I went over to one of the field shacks with Y Gieng, a Christian. While waiting an hour or so for sounds of the elephants, it was cold and rainy and we shared a blanket over us. We expected to fire and scare the elephants away. I say on my honor that we never touched each other but acted quite correctly. The native, I now learn, told people that we "went to bed together". We thought nothing of it at the time, nor have I since. The Committee accepted my word regarding this incident, which had to do with natives.

5. Woman from Buon Krong Pac. Y No mentioned some incident said to have happened years ago, about which he didn't know much, and which was quite vague to us. It appears some soldier wrote a letter to our house boy (even this may not be right, no one seems to know) that he was jealous of his wife, and he mentioned my name. Since I knew nothing about it, I must have rejected it, and I have never thought of it since. From this bit of gossip the charge is made that I shrugged at letters written to me to get me to change my ways. That is straining the point beyond reason.

Y No admitted he had no proof of these things, but had only passed on what he had heard. He knew of nothing more, and said he would not talk of these things any more. He would like to see a full trial with both sides giving their arguments, but we showed him how futile such a thing would be under the circumstances. We had asked the Board for a Committee to discuss our case with us last October, but they refused. We obtained the following signed by Y No,

"I have never heard Mr. and Mrs. Smith speak against the directors at New York. According to what Mr. King called and asked of me at Ploaka, truly I told that Mr. Smith had fooled with Y Ja's wife, with Miss Ade at Buon Dray and with the woman of Buon Krong Pac, according to Y Bhit the one who told me. That is all I know."

Signed Y No.

Y No asked pardon for passing on things he had heard without knowing whether they were true or not. We found out the real reason he told these to Mr. King. In fact we had suspected it when we heard it was he who had done so much talking to Mr. King. He has had bitterness in his heart for a couple of years because of the matter of his house and land. When we pulled down his old shack to build the house for the single ladies at Bannethuot, we paid him 10,000 piastres to help build another one. This was three times as much as we had paid others to move off, when the Government ordered them. The missionaries at the time thought it was ample, and we never thought Y No would take it so hard. It now appears he wanted the Mission to buy him land and build him a new house altogether, which would have been preposterous.

The Committee told me they were cross at Y No for letting his personal revenge enter and that he did not represent them at all when he spoke to Mr. King.

Our visit with the dear Christians at Bannethuot was most encouraging. The deep insight into spiritual things, the Christian love and fellowship and understanding, all moved us greatly. We were most anxious to clear up anything that might have been a hindrance to them, and we praise God that everything is settled. We made it quite plain to them that God has called us to another field of labor now and that we could not return to Bannethuot again to work. The case therefore is closed, and we refuse to look back again. Our only desire is that we might be worthy in the days to come to be used of God to win souls in new untouched areas among the Tribes.

Gordon A. Smith