

Evangelizing the Unreached Mountain Peoples  
of Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos.

Circular #45,  
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Box 101,  
Da Nang (Tourane),  
VIET NAM.

Our Dear Co-Workers,

This week our intensive survey of the tribes of four of the provinces of Central Viet Nam is terminated. Surveys in other provinces will be made later. What have we found? An OVERWHELMING TASK and a MAGNIFICENT OPPORTUNITY! What are we doing about it? With God's help and by faith in Him we are now opening tribal evangelistic centers in a number of strategic areas and planning for their occupation by at least thirty new foreign missionaries.

Some of these centers, jumping-off places for reaching back into the interior, are situated only 30-40 miles in from the main coastal road of Viet Nam, on fairly good roads, but until we visited them NO MISSIONARY, foreign or native, HAD EVER SET FOOT IN THEM to our knowledge.

I have just written an article for a well-known Christian magazine entitled, "A Call for 150 Missionaries for Viet Nam". The whole of free Viet Nam, with twelve million people, has only 12,000 Christians. This is the finding of a recent survey by the World Council of Churches. Some provinces in Central Viet Nam have less than a hundred. These are facts, and it is high time an adequate program of evangelization is undertaken.

We have now found out who the tribes of Central Viet Nam are, and how best to reach them with the Gospel. We are negotiating with the various Government officials for sites on which to establish tribal centers, and have now received the necessary papers authorizing us to occupy several places already. Everywhere the officials are eager for us to begin work among these tribes of Central Viet Nam, and are offering every co-operation, and free grants of land.

We have a number of Vietnamese workers for these areas, some former pastors who have had no church for some time. Several are now occupying or are about to occupy tribal centers, living temporarily in small rented huts until we can build for them on mission sites. After New Years we expect to start a two-year training course for young Vietnamese workers among the tribes. We'll need \$12.00 a month to feed each of these while in school.

GOVERNMENT APPROVAL.

"OPERATION SERVICE" is approved and authorized as a missionary society by the Government of Viet Nam. A few weeks ago I was granted a special audience with the President of Viet Nam, Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem. I had written him fully about our desire to evangelize the tribes. He received me cordially, and assured me of his interest, hoping we could go ahead quickly with our program. He said we had perfect liberty of action. He hoped soon to build roads back into the interior so that the wilder tribes might be civilized.

The President is a devout Roman Catholic, but he is favorable to Protestant Missions, especially to those which will do some social and medical work. I assured him I would ask our friends in the homeland to remember him in prayer that this country may be kept in peace and prosper under the blessing of God.

OUR PLAN OF ACTION.

We first rent or buy a small Vietnamese house of mud walls, dirt floor and thatched roof in a market place where the tribespeople gather. Since many of them in Central Viet Nam speak the Vietnamese language, the worker can start preaching to them at once, and begin training some promising converts for the Lord's service. He begins building himself a house on the mission site, and also a longhouse reception hall where the tribespeople can spend the night. They come down from their high

to stay with the Vietnamese merchants.

With a reception center the worker can make friends, distribute medical aid and hold services. Long bamboo platforms on each side are built for them to sleep on, and they make their fires down the middle of the building. These centers are the key to establishing the work.

When the foreign missionary arrives (a house will have to be built for him later, of course) with his car and equipment, his scientific translation work, his medical assistance, and his contacts with the praying people in the homeland, he will establish his Bible School and oversee the workers that have already been trained. The Vietnamese missionary has a very vital part in the work, and is often able to do many things the foreign missionary cannot do.

#### WHERE WILL THE MISSIONARIES COME FROM?

We firmly believe that as God is opening to us these great doors of opportunity, pushing us into them, as it were, He also will raise up the right missionary society to enter and take over after we have laid these foundations. We are praying much that God will be calling even now the sturdy pioneer missionaries and prepare them for this arduous but glorious task. "Operation Service" will gladly merge into such a Society when the time comes.

We firmly believe that God has sent us to undertake this preliminary work, for He has filled us with His peace and joy, and shown us by many, many answers to prayer that it is His will now to reach these people. And your letters and gifts during the past months have greatly encouraged us to press on to "fulfill our ministry".

We were deeply touched this week by a letter from a dear friend who wrote - "I asked the Lord to help me with this letter to give the promises that would help you. They are not from me: Deut. 1:36 "To him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon because he hath wholly followed the Lord." John 11:32 "Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." Isa. 44:21 "Thou shalt not be forgotten of me" Exod. 3:12 "Certainly I will be with thee".

Truly we praise God for these words. We have realized the fulfillment of them as we travel into new areas where the Gospel has never been known. Thank God for many such friends who are making it possible for us to be here by their prayers.

#### HOW MUCH WILL IT COST TO OPEN A CENTER?

\$500.00. This will build a house (mud walls, floor, thatch roof) for the Vietnamese missionary, and a reception longhouse for the tribespeople. We may have to dig wells in some places, adding a little to the cost. So now that we have the sites and the workers, all we need is the money to properly undertake the evangelizing of the tribal areas. Don't you think this is a good investment for eternity?

#### CENTERS OPENED OR ABOUT TO BE OPENED.

Son Ha - Among the HRE people (pronounced HRAY). 45,000 in the immediate vicinity, and 1000 Vietnamese. We have chosen the site of the former French fort, completely destroyed ten years ago, on a low hill in a great valley surrounded by mountains. A river flows nearby. This will be the headquarters for the four stations among the HRE people, where a Bible School, hospital, etc., should be established. One or two foreign missionary couples, two nurses and a doctor are needed. We are now training two HRE men in our Bible School at Da Nang. The KAYONG tribe lives a day's walk west, and the SERANGS live still farther west. A Vietnamese worker has been preaching at Son Ha for two months and several have prayed.

BA To - Among the HRE people. 35,000 in the vicinity, 2000 Vietnamese. A splendid site has been chosen with plenty of room for all facilities of a strong mission station. Situated in a fertile valley filled with villages, this center is on a strategic road leading into the interior and other tribes. One missionary couple and two nurses needed. A Vietnamese worker will be occupying this place by the time you read this.

Gi Llang - Among the HRE, 20 miles from Son Ha. A very important center for a foreign missionary couple. A fine site on a knoll has been selected. Several HRE have prayed here.

minh Long - Among the HRE and CHOM people. A smaller area, but important enough to have a foreign missionary.

Tra Bong - Among the CUA people (pronounced Koo-a). A most important center for a missionary couple and two nurses. We have a fine site right next to the market where the tribes come in daily with their products to sell, a free grant from the Government. These CUA are wild-looking people, living in filthy huts far back in the mountains. Four fine CUA, relatives of the District Chiefs, are now studying in our Bible School. They are about the only ones who can read and write Vietnamese, having been taught by the rebel Viet Minh during the war. Fifteen or more have prayed here.

Thanh My - Among the KATU tribe. Jumping-off place for a vast interior of difficult mountain ranges and unsubdued tribes, a most primitive and isolated spot, but strategic. We cannot properly oversee this area without a small boat and outboard motor. A missionary couple and two nurses are needed here.

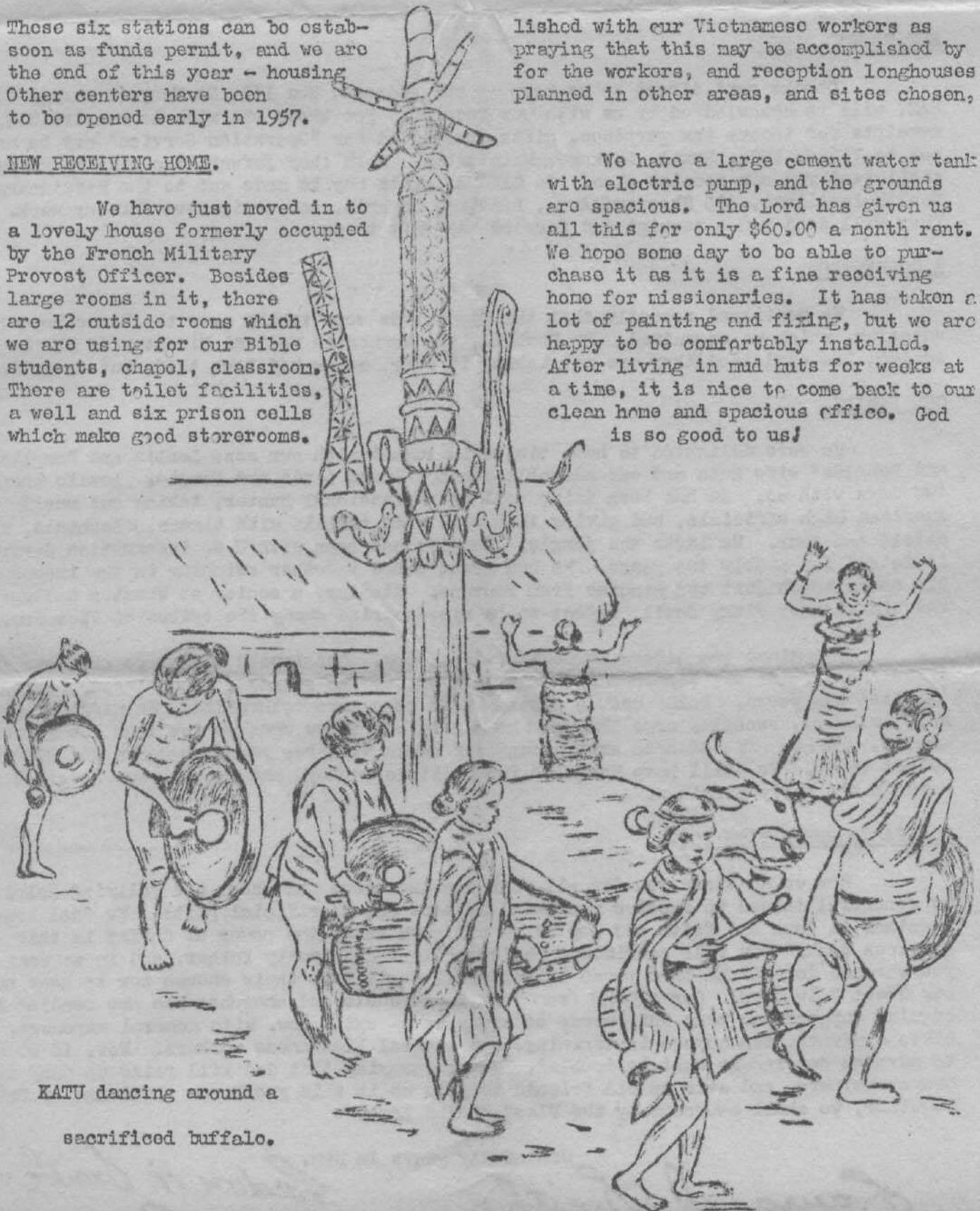
These six stations can be established as funds permit, and we are the end of this year - housing Other centers have been to be opened early in 1957.

#### NEW RECEIVING HOME.

We have just moved in to a lovely house formerly occupied by the French Military Provost Officer. Besides large rooms in it, there are 12 outside rooms which we are using for our Bible students, chapel, classroom. There are toilet facilities, a well and six prison cells which make good storerooms.

lished with our Vietnamese workers as praying that this may be accomplished by for the workers, and reception longhouses planned in other areas, and sites chosen,

We have a large cement water tank with electric pump, and the grounds are spacious. The Lord has given us all this for only \$60.00 a month rent. We hope some day to be able to purchase it as it is a fine receiving home for missionaries. It has taken a lot of painting and fixing, but we are happy to be comfortably installed. After living in mud huts for weeks at a time, it is nice to come back to our clean home and spacious office. God is so good to us!



KATU dancing around a sacrificed buffalo.

We have sent two Vietnamese ladies to the Government hospital at Hue to train for nursing among the tribespeople. It costs us \$15.00 a month each to do this. We purchased uniforms and bought bikes for them as they live a distance from the hospital. We expect to send more girls to train as funds permit, and later on will send tribesmen and women. The latter will be given priority by the hospital as they are needed badly, and the government wants to do everything possible to help the mountaineers.

#### CLOTHING NEEDED NOW.

Cold weather is coming on in the mountains and with our new centers we can use any amount of good used clothing - men's jackets, sweaters, shirts, trousers, overcoats; women's dresses, sweaters, coats; blankets, all kinds of children's clothing. No shoes unless small men's sizes, No jewellery trinkets. We can also use notebooks, pens, old towels, flour-sack towels, wash cloths, needles, thread, old sheeting, bandages. We shall be indeed grateful for this help. Packages marked "Operation Service" enter duty free, two months after mailing.

#### HOW TO SEND GIFTS.

Checks sent direct to us here at our address, Box 101, Da Nang (Tourane) VIETNAM, will be acknowledged by us with our receipt. For those who wish to receive U.S. receipts for income tax purposes, gifts designated for "Operation Service" may be made out to VISION INC., Box 1, Spokane, Washington. When they forward the gift to us we shall send you our receipt also. In CANADA, gifts may be made out to the Missionary Health Institute, 325 Sheppard Ave., Lansing, Ontario, and designated for our work. They will send you a receipt and forward the gift to us.

#### A CORRECTION.

We mentioned recently that the Mennonites were taking over the Banmethuot Leprosarium, which we organized. Dr. Krabill, the Mennonite Medical Director of the Leprosarium, has explained they are not taking it over, as we had been told, but assisting.

#### OUR FAMILY.

We were delighted to have visits in August with our sons Leslie and Douglas, and Douglas' wife Ruth and our adorable grandchildren Linda and Dougie. Leslie spent two days with us. He has been doing well as professional hunter, taking out mostly American high officials, and giving them plenty of thrills with tigers, elephants, wild cattle and gaur. He loves the jungle. Douglas has been with U.S. Information Service in Saigon for nearly two years. We had great times together swimming in the incomparable ocean beach just ten minutes from Tourane. Stanley, a senior at Wheaton College, and his fiancée Jinny Scull, expect to be missionaries among the tribes of Viet Nam.

Hoppalong the Gibbon is dead of dysentery. Our lovely black ape with the grey sideburns brought us, together with her mate Chesty the Bushman, much pleasure during the last six years. Daily crowds around their cage were enthralled. We miss her graceful, swinging, sweeping arcs through the air in our trees when we let them out for exercise, and her affectionate grip around our necks with her yard-long arms and black velvet hands. We still have Ha-Ho, a funny little monkey, and Chesty, but he sings no more in the early mornings.

#### OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH YOU.

How we do thank you for all your encouragement and cheer and rallying help! It is wonderful indeed to receive your kind letters and sacrificial gifts. We feel bound together in love and faith and joy as we all push on in the power of Christ in this glorious task. Our full confidence is in our loving Heavenly Father, and in so many of you who are determined that these tribes shall have their chance now to hear of our Great Salvation. Our INCOME from many individuals and churches who are sending in regular support has been sufficient to carry on up until now, with general expenses, 6 Bible students, two nurses in training, and several Vietnamese workers. Now, if we are to advance our income must be doubled. We are praying that God will raise up many new prayer-helpers, and stir up old friends to join us in this great new challenge of faith. Together, we shall overcome by the Blood of the Lamb.

Gratefully yours in Hin,

Laura J. Smith

Gordon H. Smith