

R.W. Reed  
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Cheo Reo, Phu Bon, Viet Nam

The Lord privileged us to return for eight wonderful months to the place we have called home for the last eighteen years. Cheo Reo, Phu Bon is an area that is 90% Jarai tribes people. This is not a report for the past year, but a report of church growth as of February, 1975.

In the province there are six churches and three unorganized groups of Christians. All of these are Jarai tribes people except for three. Of these three, one is made up of Hroi tribes people; another is Hre tribes people. These two groups have been resettled in the area. The third is that of Vietnamese.

The Vietnamese work has been a struggling work for a number of years and was pastored by a young student pastor. This group numbers about 30 people. The pastor of this group is now in Danang and all the Christians that were able have fled toward the coast of Viet Nam. The Hroi tribes church is only a year old, as the people newly arrived in our area. There is an estimated 500 Christians in this group, most of them new in their faith. The Vietnamese student pastor to this group is also in Danang at a church conference. The Hre church group arrived with their tribal pastor just one month ago, fleeing the VC from Quang Ngai province. The number of Christians is unknown. They and their pastor are now under VC control.

The remaining six works are Jarai and are pastored by two Jarai pastors and five lay leaders. The largest church group is in the town of Cheo Reo; the pastor, Ama H'Ri, is an excellent leader. This church numbers 200 active Christians, and completely conducts its own program without leadership from the missionaries. We work with and were a part of this church. Each week four or five witnessing teams go out from this church to surrounding villages to hold gospel meetings. Each week two to three hundred people hear the gospel from these groups. This work will continue to function openly unless the new government now in the area forbids it.

This church conducts weekly home Bible studies; each study group being led by one of the elders of the church. The pastor and elders of the church regularly minister to the sick by anointing and prayer. These Christians give faithfully to the support of their pastor.

The pastor of this main church also has the oversight of another church and two other Christian groups. The other church is in the leprosy village of Plei Tomak. The pastor visits weekly, and the church of about 60 leprosy patients give to the support of this pastor and his travel costs.

Of the two Christian groups the pastor oversees, one is in the district town of Phu Thien. The Christians have their own church building and number about 100. They are led by two lay leaders, who conduct the mid week services of prayer and young peoples. These men have a ministry of

prayer for the sick and conduct Sunday services when the pastor or missionary is absent. This group also conducts its own witnessing program in the villages.

The other of the Christian groups has been the fastest growing, and now numbers over 130. This group is only six months old and the leaders of this group, too, are new Christians and are to be baptized on Easter Sunday. This group thrills our hearts. Ama Blot is the natural leader and he is assisted by Ama Nuen, a faithful Barnabas. These two young men regularly go to nearby villages and with their beat-up accordion sing and witness to the glory of God. They faithfully go and visit and encourage the new believers, they pray for the sick and help the Christians and the "yet-to-be-Christians" in any way they can. What a blessing it has been to fellowship with these choice people of God.

This fast growing group has started building their church, that was to be the shape of a cross; but the group has already outgrown the initial structure. They meet in the village of Plei Rongol, and in the month of February increased by 56 new believers. Extensive witnessing has been carried on in villages around Plei Rongol and we fully expect this group will increase to more than 200 in a short time.

One other church group has been in the area of Bon Whing and led by a retired pastor, Ama Tet. This man has been a faithful witness for the Lord during imprisonment and privations. I don't know the number of this group as it is a regathering of resettled Christians and some new believers; I would estimate their number at 30. Ama Tet went to organize this group in January of this year.

The last work is a church in the district of town Phu Tuc that is pastored by a Jarai student pastor, Ama Rona. The church numbers about 150. It once numbered nearer 400 but many of these were soldiers who have been moved away. The church was started by a layman. This church, like the others, is self-supporting and self-propagating with a pastor and a group of elders who know what to do. Because this church is 30 miles away from us over very insecure roads, they have functioned much of the time without our oversight.

Perhaps the greatest blessing in the Jarai church is the fact that we now have the New Testament and Psalms in the hands of the people. The New Testament was dedicated on February 16, 1975 and was then available to the people. This work of translation is the result of faithful service by Mr. Sang, a Vietnamese missionary to the Jarai, and several of the missionaries. The push that got it done was of the Lord and came through Charlie Long. We had nothing to do with the translation, but had the thrill of using it with the people.

In February a lay leaders school was held in Pleiku. We taught with other of the missionaries. What a wonderful week! We used the New Testaments for the first time, and the 38 men that attended the school

immersed themselves in the scriptures. Beside the regular class sessions, we had open sessions of question and answer periods. Church problems were discussed and scriptural solutions found. Lay leaders' responsibilities were clearly set out. The men began to ask about end-time events in the world as the New Testament spoke of them. It was amazing what these men could grasp and anticipate was coming on the world. Seven of these men were from Cheo Reo, four of them are now leading churches.

In eight wonderful months we have found the Jarai church very different than when we left it in 1967 to go to the Dalat School. The church had matured and increased in number. Praise the Lord! The missionary was not indispensable now, but he was still wanted. We were not superseded but were supplemented. We leave the Jarai church with lumps in our throats but no ache in our hearts. We enjoyed an excellent relationship. There are no differences to regret, no remembrance of bitter words to stab our conscience. We have only the longing in our hearts for these, our children and our brothers in the Lord. We pray that God will keep them strong in His love, filling their hearts with His Spirit and supplying their daily needs.

Respectfully submitted,

(signature)

Robert W. Reed  
A Jarai missionary