

AMAZING GRACE

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF MY LIFE IN CHINA AND VIETNAM

RUTH GOFORTH JEFFREY

EARLY YEARS IN CHINA

I was born in Changtefu, Honan, China, on January 1st 1898. Mrs. Cheng my Chinese nurse saved my life when we were attacked by Boxers in the summer of 1900. Mother tells of how Mrs. Cheng proved herself an untold blessing to us all throughout that terrible experience. There were fifteen missionaries and children in our party. "Twice she was tested as few have ever been, but how nobly she stood the tests". On the eleventh day, when it seemed all were to be massacred, this wonderful woman, when separated with little Ruth from the rest of us and attacked by men demanding the child, lay down, covering the little one and taking blow after blow upon herself. By the mercy of God, they were both saved, as their assailants turned to get their share of the loot.

"That night, about 2:00 A.M., our whole party was again facing seemingly certain death. Several Chinese came to Mrs. Cheng, begging her to leave us and save herself. They even promised to have her taken back safely to her home at Changte, but she refused. It was a very dark night. We had no lamp nor candles. Suddenly, I heard a sound of weeping outside. Following the sound, I found Mrs. Cheng sitting alone on a narrow verandah, weeping bitterly and moaning aloud: "I must go. I must go. Even if they kill me, I must go!" As I sat down beside her, we clung to each other in our distress.

"During the awful days that followed, when we almost starved, when sickness came first to one, then to another, when all were exhausted and tried to the last point of endurance, Mrs. Cheng, through it all, thought not one moment of herself but only of those she served". (1) She never left us until we were safe on the C.P.R. ship bound for Canada.

CHRISTMAS IN CHINA AND CANADA

Mrs. R. J. Fleming, the wife of a former mayor of Toronto, was a close friend of my mother. Through all the year of our sojourn in China and since, I have never ceased to thank God for giving my mother such a wonderful friend. She was like a fairy god-mother to the Goforth children.

Every Christmas, without fail, several large packages arrived in Changte from Toronto, in plenty of time for Christmas. The packages were placed at once on the top of a high cupboard where we children couldn't touch them but where we were allowed to feast our eyes on them, anticipating the marvelous toys they were sure to contain, because our dear friend Mrs. Fleming had chosen them for us. And, of course, she knew just what we wanted!

(1) Climbing. chapter VI

I don't remember our ever having a Christmas tree or a special family gathering in China because my father always celebrated Christmas at the street chapel, preaching to crowds of eager listeners, just as he celebrated every other day of the year.

But the most precious memory of Christmas in China was being wakened before dawn by the singing of carols outside my window. The carolers were a group of Chinese boys from our Christian school. It sounded to me like a heavenly choir.

Then after our escape from the Boxers in 1900 we stayed in the Flemings beautiful home in Toronto until we could find a house for the year, my parents were on furlough. Christmas Day that year was spent with the Flemings. For the first time I saw a beautifully decorated and lighted Christmas tree and a real live Santa Claus. I was so frightened at the sight of Santa Claus, whom I failed to recognize as our genial host, Mr. R. J. Fleming, that I wanted to rush back to our way of celebrating Christmas in the interior of China.

#### COUNTRY EVANGELISM

Before we were old enough to attend school, we children travelled with our parents from village to village on their evangelistic tours, for weeks at a time. We stayed in Chinese inns and slept on brick beds. The only heat in winter came from the open fireplace under our brick bed. Sometimes we found a pigsty outside our window. We children thought that was fun, but of course mother didn't. Mother gives a vivid description of one of our trips and the lesson she learned from it:

"When we were about a quarter of an hour from Tzuchou, the sky became suddenly darkened by dense clouds from the north. Just as the train reached the station, the storm in all its fury broke upon us with blinding clouds of dust and sand. We could scarcely see inches away and with great difficulty reached the shelter of the station, which would soon be closed. No evangelist or coolies were in sight. Our letter had evidently miscarried. There was nothing for us to do but face the long walk over rough plowed fields leaving our "boy" (servant) to watch the baggage. Dr. Goforth led the way, carrying the heavier child, while the amah and I followed as best we could with the younger one. Darkness had set in. The wind, with rain, seemed unabated. Stumbling, sometimes falling over the hard clods of earth, trying to keep my husband in sight, shivering with cold from the sudden drop in temperature of over thirty degrees, the amah and I, while sharing the burden of the child, groaned and wept all the way. Again and again I vowed that nothing, no nothing could, or would make me go out with the children again.

"At last we reached the mission, or rented Chinese compound. No time was lost in getting the coolies off for our baggage. In the meantime, Chinese bread and a tin of sweetened condensed milk were secured. (How often have I been thankful that these could usually be had from native stores!) With some boiling water soon all were warming up with bowls of hot bread and milk. On the arrival of our baggage, bedding was spread on the brick, platform beds, and the children were soon asleep. But still I kept vowing to myself that this touring life must cease.

"The following morning women began to pour in. One fine Christian woman, with a bright, shining face came in saying, "Mrs. Goforth, you don't know what a help it is to us all, your coming out as you do with your children. Everyone knows what a home and comforts you give up just for the sake of bringing the good news to us women".

"Oh, how my heart thrilled as she spoke! Little did she know what her works meant to me. The vowing of the night before vanished. Joy filled my heart, and I knew the Lord understood". (2)

Five of my little brothers and sisters died in China. It was hard on my mother having her precious children exposed to infectious diseases like smallpox and diphtheria, but she continued to live this kind of life year after year, in order to reach the thousands of women in our district, with the wonderful message of redemption through Christ.

#### LLANDRINDED WELLS CONVENTION IN WALES

After our parents furlough in 1910 we returned to China via Britain. My father who had been holding revival meetings in Manchuria, was one of the speakers at the Llandrinded Wells convention that year. After his message one afternoon the entire audience of Welsh Christians were on their knees, confessing their sins and crying to God for forgiveness. It seemed as though hell opened up in front of me and I too fell on my knees, calling on God for mercy and forgiveness. My father had pled with me before this, to get right with God, but I had stubbornly refused. A great joy and peace filled my heart as I rose from my knees and told my father what had happened. But I am sorry to confess that I didn't read my bible and pray every day as I should have. One of the earliest memories of my childhood in China, was seeing my father reading his Chinese bible beside a kerosene lamp long before day break. This was his daily habit.

#### GET OFF AT THE NEXT STATION

Those were the words our Chinese conductor said to my brother Wallace and myself as we told him that we had had no time to purchase tickets; but that our father would pay when we reached out station at Changte.

We were returning home for Christmas holidays from the China Inland Mission School (O.M.F.) at Chefoo. Since Chinese trains had no sleepers in those days we could only travel by day. At one place our father had arranged for a local missionary to meet our train and after entertaining us in his home over night he was to put us on the morning train the next day, the last day of our trip.

But as we hurried into the station that morning our train had already started. There was only time to dump us and our baggage on the last car of the train as it pulled out of the station.

My brother at once went up to a kindly looking Chinese gentleman and asked him the name of the next station. Then quickly tearing the fly leaf out of his New Testament, he scribbled a hasty note to father, telling him the name of the station where we were being forced to leave the train. Then he gave the note to our sympathetic Chinese friend who delivered it to father when the train reached Changte.

Father immediately phoned the station master where we had been put off the train, asking him to please allow us to stay in his room and then put us on the next train for Changte, which he did. I remember that we only had a few cash which we spent on peanuts. So we were shivering in the cold and eating peanuts when the station master welcomed us into his nice warm room and gave us each a bowl of hot Chinese noodle soup.

My husband still can't understand why I would rather wait an hour at the bus or station depot, than rush into the terminal just at the scheduled hour of departure.

#### RETURN TO CANADA

When I was eighteen, I returned to Canada with my parents. They had hoped I would be a missionary but I told them I had had enough hardships as the daughter of missionaries. One day before returning to China my father urged me to attend a Christian and Missionary Alliance missionary convention in the city of Toronto. He said he wanted me to hear a great preacher, but I wasn't interested. Although my parents were missionaries of the Canadian Presbyterian Church, they realized that Dr. A. B. Simpson was an outstanding man of God, and they wanted God to speak to me through him. Just to please my father, I went with him to the Alliance Missionary convention that day and God did speak to my heart in no uncertain terms. He showed me how selfish I was not to be willing to take the Gospel to the women of China as my mother had. Just before returning to Canada I had accompanied my parents on one of their evangelistic

tours and had seen how much their preaching and Bible teaching had meant to the Chinese people. The Lord reminded me in the meeting that day of the groups of weeping women I had seen clinging to my mother, begging her not to leave them. The message of salvation through Christ alone had transformed their lives. And yet, knowing all this, I refused to go back to China as a missionary. I kept wiping the tears from my eyes as God melted my hard heart. The speaker that afternoon was Dr. Walter Turnbull, not Dr. Simpson. How my father must have rejoiced as he realized his prayers were being answered and that his daughter sitting beside him had heard God's call to service in the Regions Beyond.

### BIBLE COLLEGE

For the next two years I was a student at the Toronto Bible College. It was at this time that I earnestly sought the infilling of the Holy Spirit. While reading 'The Two-fold Secret of the Holy Spirit' by James McConkey, I realized I must make a number of things right with those I had wronged; and I did. Finally, after quite a struggle, I wrote a letter to a former teacher in the Chefoo School I had attended in China, confessing to her that I had cheated in an exam. As I returned to my room after mailing the letter, the Holy Spirit truly flooded my being and for days and weeks I was deeply conscious of His indwelling Presence. But, tragically, by not obeying the voice of the Spirit, I failed Him many, many times and caused others to stumble.

The secret of victory, I have found, is to continually, moment by moment, cast myself upon the Lord, in every circumstance, no matter how trying, and ask Him to live His life of love, patience and humility, through me. Nothing matters but love—Christ's love. He will speak through us and love others through us if only we are willing to stand back, so to speak, and yield Him the right of way. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Psalm 127:1).

### BOUND FOR INDO-CHINA

Mr. Jeffrey and I met for the first time at a Youth meeting in Toronto in 1917. We were both on the program that evening. He was the speaker and I sang a duet with a friend. It was this friend who introduced me to my future husband at the close of the meeting.

Mr. Jeffrey was under appointment as an Alliance missionary to French Indo-China at the time. Not long after this first meeting I agreed to go to Indo-China instead of China. But before leaving for Indo-China I must spend a year at the Alliance Missionary Training Institute at Nyack, New York, in order to become better acquainted with Alliance Truth and Testimony. Dr. Walter Turnbull, the one through whom I had heard God's call to missionary service, was the dean at Nyack that year. His chapel messages were always a great blessing and inspiration to me.

Mr. Jeffrey reached Haiphong early in February 1919. A year and a half later I arrived in Tourane (Danang). We were married in Yunnanfu, China, on June 28, 1921. Today, fifty-two years later, this story is being written because of a request from a student in the Bible and Theological Seminary in Nhatrang, Vietnam. Each student is expected to write a paper on the life story of a missionary from Vietnam.

#### THE SAIGON GOSPEL TABERNACLE

After spending ten years in Tourane and Hue, we found ourselves, with our three children, in charge of the Alliance Receiving Home in Saigon, this was in June 1933. The Receiving Home was the last place I would have chosen in which to serve, but God placed us there, we now know, in order to build a Gospel Lighthouse for the Vietnamese people in that city of over two million souls.

Even though we had no funds and no promise of funds, we started looking for an ideal location for the large Gospel Tabernacle we knew God wanted in the heart of Saigon. It had to be large in order to accommodate the annual Church conferences. And it must be near the central market for the sake of travellers coming in by bus from the interior.

It wasn't very long before we knew the Lord had led us to the right place. The well known Christian General, Sir William Dobbie, who was in Saigon at the time, prayed with us as we stood together on the newly purchased church property. He poured out his heart in earnest supplication for the salvation of souls in that vast metropolis, and for God's blessing upon His Church throughout Vietnam.

As I look back to those days before we started building, my heart is once again deeply stirred as I think of the dear crippled woman, who hobbled several miles on her crutches each Sunday, to the Chinese Church in Cholon and back, so that she could save her bus fare for the building fund. She and all the Saigon christians who sacrificed and prayed were really the ones who built that Gospel Lighthouse. When I told what the Saigon christians had done, a lady from Wheeling, West Virginia, was so touched that she gave the entire amount we still needed.

#### JOHN SUNG

Before the Saigon Tabernacle actually got under way, John Sung arrived in Vietnam. This truly was the Lord's doing. From the time I had read about his meetings in Singapore, I kept praying that God would send him to us. I also kept urging my husband, who was the Mission chairman at the time, to write Dr. Sung. But Mr. Jeffrey didn't think such an outstanding evangelist could possibly find time to fit Vietnam into his busy schedule. However, in spite of his doubts, he wrote inviting him to come. And he came.

What a tremendous spiritual impact that man of God had on all of us. It was indeed an honour to be able to entertain him at the Receiving Home. The other missionaries who were there on their way to Vinhlong for the Conference, felt the same way. At the hotel in Vinhlong our room adjoined his. I couldn't help but hear him agonizing in prayer practically all night. Between meetings he dealt faithfully with all who came to him for counsel and prayer. Those who yielded to God and were filled with the Holy Spirit were greatly blessed in their ministry in the days that followed.

Some months before Dr. Sung arrived, a christian woman came to Saigon to see a doctor. She was a farmer's wife from a distant village. I took her to the hospital where she was told she had tuberculosis of the bone and must have her right arm amputated at once. The woman said she would return home and trust the Lord as she couldn't get along without both her arms. When she heard Dr. Sung was in Saigon she returned and was instantly healed when he prayed for her.

#### DAVID

After John Sung had come and gone and a year after the Saigon Tabernacle was completed, we said goodbye to our precious David. About a month before this I had a new and deeper revelation of what it meant to be seated with Christ in the heavenlies, than I had ever had before. It came to me while I was correcting Bible Correspondence exam papers sent in by pastors and young people from churches in Cochin China. It actually was a sentence in pastor Hien's paper that brought such blessing to my heart. Almost immediately I was filled with a great longing that this same Truth might be revealed to all the Christians in Vietnam. And that they in turn would lead multitudes to the feet of Jesus.

As I was praying and weeping before the Lord, it seemed as though Christ Himself spoke to me. He asked me if I really wanted what I was praying for more than anything else in the world. Without a moment's hesitation I answered, "Yes Lord". And then came the second question, "More than even David"? Not more than our beloved 12 year old David, surely! How could I ever give him up? But David was saved, I knew. And yet millions of precious Vietnamese children and their parents were without Christ and without hope. From a breaking heart I cried, "Yes Lord, I want the peoples of Vietnam to know You and be saved, even more than I want David".

The Japanese Army had already occupied Vietnam. An epidemic of Japanese encephalitis was spreading through the military camps in Saigon and hundreds were dying. David died of encephalitis on November 8, 1941. His last words were, "Mother, do children grow up in heaven?"

Just about a month before David left Saigon for his heavenly home, he had his picture taken by a downtown photographer for his passport to Canada. The Lord led in this for even though David didn't need that picture, his family did. We were greatly comforted also by the remembrance of his dream.

In March 1941, while playing at the Dalat school, David fell and broke his arm. It was a compound fracture, so he was sent to the Grall Hospital in Saigon to have it set. One night after leaving the hospital and before returning to Dalat, David dreamt that he was on his way to Heaven but when he reached the gate where he had seen others passing through, the gate didn't open for him. He woke up and came into my room weeping. When I asked him the reason he told me his dream, saying he was afraid he wasn't saved. In reply to my question: "What do you have to do to know that when you reach the gate of Heaven, it will open for you?" David said, "I know I don't have to do anything except believe in Jesus, because He has done it all, but I feel so wicked, mother".

Then he told me about a lie he had told one of his teachers at Dalat, that he had never confessed. Kneeling down by the side of my bed he confessed his sin to God and promised to confess to his teacher as soon as he reached Dalat, which he did.

I gave him John 5:24 to memorize. Before returning to Dalat he repeated this verse to me several times, rejoicing in the fact that he had already passed from death to life.

When the Dalat school closed in July 1941, David returned to Saigon with a large group of students and teachers bound for the States. We had forty or more during one or two nights, so there wasn't an opportunity for me to talk to David until most of our guests had left. Then he said with a radiant smile, "Mother, I've never forgotten my dream." I had forgotten it, but remembering, I said, "Are you afraid the gate won't open when you get to heaven, David?" "No, I'm not afraid anymore mother, because Jesus promised that if I hear His work and believe on Him that sent Him, I have everlasting life and will not come into judgment, because I have already passed from death to life".

The Lord did a wonderful thing for me just before I knew I must say goodbye to David. He took my burden and left me with a song. To my amazement I found myself singing, "Keep on praising God". The Lord gave me the words and the tune. I couldn't stop singing in my heart all through the difficult hours that followed. No wonder those who came to sympathize at the funeral were surprised to find me radiant. All I wanted to do after the funeral was to sit down at the organ and play and sing, "Amazing Grace". I tell this for

God's honor and glory alone. "For thou, O God hast proved us: thou hast tried us as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou hast laid affliction upon our loins ..... but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." (Ps. 66:10-12)

#### PEARL HARBOUR

A month later, on December 7, 1941, when we heard on the radio that Japan had attacked Pearl Harbour, we immediately took our new Chevrolet car down to a garage where it was sold and the money used to finish the parsonage at the back of the Saigon Tabernacle.

Sometime before this, a friend in the States had written advising us not to waste any money building a church when the Japanese were about to take over South East Asia. And then he warned, our church would be used to stable their horses. Actually, services were held as usual in the Tabernacle all through the Japanese occupation. More than once groups of christian Japanese soldiers were seen to file up to the front on Sundays, after the Vietnamese service was over, and sing hymns and pray. They must have had their hymnbooks and bibles with them. How true that, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap". (Ecc. 11:4)

#### KURAMOCHI

The first Japanese to call on us was a business man by the name of Kuramochi. He spoke English fluently. This was a day or so after the attack on Pearl Harbour. At first I thought Mr. Kuramochi had been sent to spy on us. Instead he asked if we were christians and then proceeded to show us his Japanese New Testament, with pictures of King George V, the Queen of England and the two princesses. Kuramochi was a member of the Anglican Church. Ever since he had arrived to work in a Saigon bank, he had been looking for some English-speaking christians, and now how happy he was to have found some. Every Sunday evening after that we invited Mr. Kuramochi to have supper with us. He was a real born-again christian. We read a portion of Scripture and then prayed and sang hymns together each time he visited us.

#### HOMERA HOMER-DIXON

I was very grateful to Mrs. Homer-Dixon for helping me entertain the groups of Japanese soldiers who dropped in almost daily. We served them lemonade and cookies and tried to explain the Gospel to them. They didn't know much English and we didn't know any Japanese. Mrs. Homer-Dixon, however, knew some Chinese characters. She was very patient and enthusiastic as she tried to win those soldiers to Christ. When they heard she was very ill at the Grall Hospital, they came to see her. The Frenchman at the entrance to the hospital wouldn't let them in at first, but they insisted on seeing their Canadian friend who had been so kind to them.

Finally, the exasperated Frenchman came to ask me to send the Japanese away. But I told him that Mrs. Homer-Dixon would like to see them and to please allow them to come in. So in they came. They offered her some of their rations, tins of Japanese fruit, they hoped she would relish. But she was dying and could no longer speak. All she could do was smile and point upwards. I think they understood that she would be looking for them in Heaven. The men wept as they stood around her bed for they understood the language of love. Homera Homer-Dixon left us for her Home above on December 7, 1942.

As I write I am reminded of an incident that took place a few months before this, while Homera and I were teaching a Short Term Bible School class at Cantho. She received a scrap of paper one day from a Meo tribesman in the mountains north of Hanoi. On it was scrawled a few words that started Homera weeping and praying for the next few hours. He said something to this effect, "O Mother, when are you coming back? We are scattered over these mountains like sheep without a shepherd, with no one to teach us, no one to love us. Won't you come soon?" I wonder if someone else has gone to take Homera's place, or are those tribespeople in North Vietnam still waiting for a Messenger from God?

#### PUBLICATION WORK 1947-74

I know now that the Lord definitely led in my returning to Canada and the States on the second trip of the 'Gripsholm' in 1943. If I had waited for Mr. Jeffrey to be released from internment at Mytho, I would not have been one of the speakers at the Okoboji Jowa Conference in the Summer of 1944.

I had come to that conference with a great burden on my heart for Vietnam. Realizing the importance of the printed page, I had been praying for quantities of paper, ink and the support of a translator. I knew I couldn't count on my Mission funds. I must look to the Lord alone to supply the finances for the literature program I had in mind.

Dr. Don Falkenberg of the Bible Meditation League, now Bible Literature International, was also one of the speakers at the Okoboji Conference that year. To my great joy God led him to take on the support of a translator, the cost of a mimeograph machine and all the paper and ink I would need. For the past 25 years B.L.I. has continued to support our literature program each month. For the past five years they have published 44,000 copies of the magazine Rang-Dong each month, for distribution among men in the Vietnamese Armed Forces, prisoners of war, refugees and others. We are deeply grateful also for other friends who have continued to make it possible for us to print or purchase all the Gospel portions, booklets and other literature needed for work in Military Induction Centres, Military hospitals, refugee camps and prisons. Our two outstanding translators, Messrs. Do-duc-Tri and Nguyen-van-Van, are truly God's gift to the Church. I am deeply grateful to them and to Mr. Huynh-van-Lac for his valuable printing ministry.

### DALAT

During our fifth term of service, from February 1947 to June 1951, our headquarters was at Dalat. Our 1947 missionary conference appointed me to prepare and publish literature for the Church, under the general heading of "Preacher's Helps".

Since the one and only commercial press at Dalat failed to meet our standards, we mimeographed, as clearly as possible, the literature we sent out. We were most grateful to the pastors and Christians who appreciated Dr. Simpson's messages and the other literature, even though it wasn't printed. I will always remember with deep gratitude those who so faithfully worked with me on this literature program.

### NHATRANG

While Mr. Jeffrey was occupied with chairmanship duties at Dalat, I assisted in Short Term Bible School sessions at Nhatrang. I also made trips to some of the isolated churches and groups of Christians in virtually no man's land. Although this involved personal risk, it was an encouragement to the sorely tried believers.

On one of my trips to Nhatrang by train, I was told that the week before, a bridge on the steep mountain railway had been tampered with and the train had fallen over the embankment. After we passed over this same bridge, it collapsed completely. For an hour and a half before reaching Nhatrang our armored escort train kept firing cannon salvos to ward off guerilla attacks. I was in the coach filled with French soldiers so would have been in the thick of the fight had it broken out.

On another occasion while travelling by train back to Dalat, I noticed some fires here and there along the way. When I questioned a fellow passenger about the fires, he said it was a sign that the guerillas had an encampment nearby and those were the fires where they had done their cooking. Just then the train came to a sudden, jolting stop. We were in desolate, uninhabited country. Being the only foreigner on the train I wondered for a moment, what would happen to me if we were attacked. Then, picking up my Bible I went to the car where most of the passengers were and preached to them as though it would be my last sermon on this earth. Later, I was told that the engineer had seen a spiral of smoke rising from the tiny bridge we were about to cross. He realized at once that that meant guerillas had burned the wooden ties on the bridge. If he had not stopped, the bridge would have collapsed under the weight of the train and the guerillas would have attacked. The bridge was repaired in time and before dark we were continuing on our way in safety to Dalat.

Early one morning before the opening of Bible School in Nhatrang, a christian came running in to tell of the tragic death of a fellow believer. Two brothers from the little fishing village among the coconut palms, had been out fishing all night. They were on their way home when they ran into a French patrol. The older brother was killed instantly and only a miracle saved the younger one, by the name of Kinh, from a similar fate.

Since Kinh was under arrest, I was asked to go at once to seek his release. Both Mr. Houck and the local Vietnamese pastor were away at the time, so that afternoon I performed my first funeral service. I had spent the entire morning at the French fort trying to save Kinh from torture and imprisonment. He finally was turned over to me on condition that he attend our Bible School, which he did.

While our Bible School was in session, I was told very early one morning that 18 year old Em had been killed the night before. Em was the brightest and most spiritual of the young men in the Nhatrang church. At once I rushed over to their home where his body lay and where his mother was weeping inconsolably. The night before as Em opened his bible to study and pray, as he did every evening, a shot rang out from the nearby government fort. It pierced the mud and thatch wall of their home and entered Em's heart. He died almost instantly. The Vietnamese soldiers in the fort only intended to intimidate Em's mother, who had refused to give them the chickens they demanded. She wanted to sell them at a very low price, as raising chickens was her only means of livelihood.

As I cried to the Lord to comfort this dear broken-hearted mother in her hour of desperate grief, I felt constrained to urge her to forgive her son's murderers. She stopped weeping and bowed her head for a moment in silence. She knew she didn't have the kind of love that could forgive the man who had killed her only child, but she asked the Lord Jesus to give it to her, and He did. He filled her heart with His love. At the little cemetery over at Hon Chong, by the present Bible Seminary property, that dear wonderful christian lad, the Leader of the Nhatrang Young People, was buried. As I looked across the grave at his mother, and saw her radiant face, I thanked God for another miracle of Grace. From that day she has been concerned, as never before, for the salvation of souls in her community. Through her great loss the Lord has enlarged her heart and now she is running the way of His Commandments. (Ps. 119:32)

#### PHANTHIEP-PHANRI DISTRICT

While I was in Phanthiet, Hai, a young christian lad in a Phanthiet prison, was surprised one night to find himself singing:

"When peace like a river, attendeth my way  
When sorrow like sea billows roll,  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say:  
It is well, it is well with my soul"

It was the third night that forty men had sat crowded together on the floor of a stifling hot cell, with no light and no window or other means of ventilation. Those who had been tortured during the day were either sobbing or groaning aloud in their misery. Some grenades had been thrown in the section of town where these men lived, so indiscriminate arrests had been made.

Word had been passed around among the prisoners earlier that evening, that four of their number were to be shot at dawn. Hai knew he was ready to go to be with Christ but what of his companions? The Lord had given him "A song in the night", but what of these who were on the brink of hell? Hai pled with his fellow prisoners to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and to repent of their sins e're it was too late.

Early the next morning on my fourth visit to the military Secret Service headquarters, I was told that Hai and his cousin had been sentenced to a year in prison, but because of my interest in the case the sentence would be reduced to six months. It seemed to be all I could do. My request to visit the boys and give them each a Gospel of John was then granted. In the few moments we spent together, Hai assured me of his innocence. He said he was holding no bitterness in his heart against his captors. While we were talking a messenger came from the French chief of the Secret Service asking me to return to his office. Standing at his desk with the boys' records in his hands, he said simply, "The boys are free, I have decided to pardon them!" With that he proceeded to tear up their papers. The boys and I walked out of the prison together that morning. Hai was one of our Bible School students at Nhatrang but hadn't been holding children's meetings or witnessing as he had promised to do. The Lord spoke very definitely to him through this experience.

It had been four years since the last missionary, Rev. Wm. C. Cadman, had visited this district. I travelled from place to place either by plane, horsecart, jeep, bus or armored train. There were four armored trains in one of our convoys. It took us six hours from Phanthiet to Phanri and then after a five day stop-over in Phanri I rejoined the convoy to Tourcham, another six hours ride. That was unusually fast time, I was told, as we had no breaks in the railway and no blown-up bridges to repair.

Shortly after an all-out attack on the village of Phu-lam, I visited the christians there. Ngo-Phuoc's house stood out like a beacon on a hill in the midst of utter ruin and desolation. More than half the brick houses had been destroyed, a cement bridge dynamited and five brick forts demolished. The church and all the christians' homes were intact and no christian had even been wounded in the fighting. I was the one who came very near being shot that day. As I walked through the ruins of that village with a group of christians, a trigger happy soldier fired his rifle in my direction. The bullet passed very close to my ears from the sound of it.

When the guerillas came to Ngo-Phuoc's door armed with grenades and machine guns, he opened it promptly while the rest of the family lay huddled in the trench under the thick wooden plank bed. When asked who he was and which side he was on, he replied calmly, "I'm a christian and a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, I know you can't harm me because I'm in His care". No grenade was thrown in that house and no shot fired because Ngo-Phuoc had taken the Lord for his refuge and fortress. He was dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. Four of the young people from this area attended our Short Term sessions at Nhatrang.

Wherever I stayed on my trips, whether in the local parsonage or in the home of a christian, I was always under the shadow of a fort. It was impossible on account of the shooting to get enough sleep at night. I now know something of what it means to "walk through the valley of the shadow of death". It has given me a deeper understanding and sympathy for our dear Vietnamese pastors and their flocks who have been walking through this valley for many long years. Thank God they have not had to walk alone -- "For Thou art with me". No matter how long or how hard the way, they are singing from over-flowing hearts, "It is well, it is well with my soul".

"DON'T LET ME DENY THEE!"

April 3rd 1947 was a day of terrible distress and trouble for the Thanhloi christians, for it was on that day that an armed bank of over 300 men attacked their village. These men belonged to a fanatical religious sect that had done away with thousands of innocent victims, including many of our christians. They condemn and kill on any one of three charges -- wealth, refusal to join their organisation, and speaking against their leader.

A dear friend of mine, one of our former Bible School students, was alone in her home with her brother's children at the time of the attack. We will let her tell the story of her miraculous deliverance in her own words:

"Awakened suddenly in the middle of the night by terrifying shouts and screams, the entire village of Thanh Loi was thrown into utter panic and confusion. The people knew that their most dreaded enemy had finally come to their village and that humanly speaking there was no possible way of escape.

"Around 8 o'clock the next morning a neighbor rushed in to tell me that all who had been caught during the night had already been killed and that the men were coming back for more victims. Fifteen minutes later they were at my door, swarming into the house from every direction, and turning things upside down in search of men and loot. I thought of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane and how the mob had come to arrest him with swords and knives. Looking into their cruel, inhuman faces, I realized that these men were under the control of Satanic forces, they were devils not men. Not finding my brothers in the house the gang dashed outside in search of them.

"Turning to my bible for a word of comfort and guidance. I cried to God for faith and strength that I might not deny my Lord in the hour of testing". "In the day of my trouble I will call upon Thee, for Thou wilt answer me".

"A few minutes later the men were back. I was forced at the point of their knives, to leave the children and follow them. All the way to their hideout I kept praying that if it was in God's will that I should live to serve him, he would deliver me, but if he wanted to take me home to Himself, I was happy to go. "But don't let me deny Thee", I cried.

"That night two of the men were sent to see to it that I renounced my faith and join them. They told me that it was useless remaining a follower of Jesus Christ as that religion was being exterminated by them, and if I refused to join them I would soon see what would happen. They became very angry and menacing when I kept silent. Just then the woman in whose charge I had been placed came to my rescue. She told the men to leave me with her and that I would soon come around, all I needed was a little time to consider. After they had gone this woman, who was probably a secret believer, begged me to pretend that I would give up my faith and follow this sect. She said: "God sees your heart and He knows you are a real christian, but to save your life, you can act as though you had yielded to the wishes of these men". My reply to these words was that no matter what happened to me I would never deny my Saviour who had said that "If we deny him before men, he will deny us before His Father in heaven". The woman then burst into tears and I wept with her, there wasn't anything else to do.

"Later on that night a dispute arose among the men, and while they argued back and forth among themselves, my guard stealthily released me, helping me to escape across the river to Cantho and safety".

#### "GET UP AND GO"

When the bus on which Mr. Tra, one of our christian printers, was travelling, was shot up and burned, he was blindfolded and taken to his captors' hideout. When he insisted that it was impossible for him to pay the ransom they demanded, he was told that he would be shot. Mr. Tra started praying audibly, calling on the Lord Jesus to save him. When he was commanded to keep still he said it was impossible as he knew of no other on whom to call.

Then instead of shooting him they decided to send a messenger to Longxuyen to contact his family. A few days later his wife arrived with all she could collect but it was only 300 piasters, a mere drop in the bucket. Only a miracle saved this dear couple at that moment. Instead of killing them then and there, Mrs. Tra was permitted to try once more to raise the required sum.

In the meantime her husband was kept in strict confinement between several guards for the next seven days and nights. He had had no food to speak of during this time and was very weak, but at 5 o'clock in the morning of the eighth day God told him to get up and go. He was overwhelmingly conscious of the Lord's Presence and guidance each step of the way. After running for about 2 miles he heard men calling and knew he was being pursued. At that moment the Lord reminded him of the children of Israel at the Red Sea with every way closed but the way up, and deliverance came to him in the same way, for at that moment as he looked up he saw the main French "poste" in that area just ahead. Then a burst of machine-gun fire from the "poste" came between himself and his pursuers and he was saved.

The French soldiers at the "poste" were amazed to find that Mr. Tra was a Vietnamese as they had intervened on his behalf thinking he was a Frenchman. As he told his story the wary soldiers stood around, their rifles pointing in his direction. It wasn't long, however, before they too were thanking God for the deliverance He had wrought. After cleaning and binding up his bleeding feet and outfitting him in some of their clothes (he had arrived in the briefest of underwear), the soldiers put him on a military truck just starting out for Longxuyen. When Mr. Tra walked into the parsonage, his wife had just risen from the breakfast table and was on the point of leaving once more for the hide-out but without the required ransom money.

SAIGON - DECEMBER 1953-MARCH 1958

There were seven large military hospitals in Saigon when we returned there from Furlough early in 1954. Since no one else was visiting the thousands of wounded soldiers, I applied for the job and was granted permission from high government officials. It meant doing visitation work seven days a week among many terribly mutilated but desperately needy soldier boys. Hundreds prayed the penitent's prayer. One lad who seemed to be dying from spreading infection in his amputated leg, was saved and healed as I explained the way of salvation and prayed with him. For many years now Mr. Phuong has been operating a successful printing shop in Saigon. He is publishing quantities of our christian literature each month including the popular periodical Rang-Dong.

I remember with deep gratitude the outstanding service Mr. Truong-phet-Dat and his wife rendered in military hospitals at this time, and later among the troops at the Quang Trung military camp. For the past few years pastor Dat has been in charge of the work among prisoners at Con Son penal colony. He has built a meeting place for the large number who attend weekly services.

When the Cease-fire was signed in the summer of 1954, Colonel Remy, the Frenchman on charge of political prisoners gave me written authorisation to visit all the encampments where political prisoners were being held. I had to hurry for in just three months thousands of men and women in these encampments would be sent up to North Vietnam. Since Mr. Jeffrey was busy in Saigon with chairmanship duties, I was most grateful for friends who helped me reach some of these encampments with gospels and tracts. In most cases though, I travelled alone by bus or hired taxis. The Lord was most definitely my Helper and Strength as I dashed from place to place. Only eternity will reveal how many were truly reached for Christ during those hectic days and nights before the 'prisoner exchange' took place.

#### PRISON WORK

In the Fall of 1954 I was granted authorisation by Mr. Tran-van-Lam, the Governor of South Vietnam, to hold a Gospel service each week in the large Chi Hoa prison in Saigon. It wasn't long before all the prisons in South Vietnam were wide open to the Gospel. I have greatly appreciated the co-operation of Pastors Phien, Phai and other Pastors and laymen in their dedicated prison ministries. Mr. Huynh-minh-Y is now holding regular services in the Chi Hoa prison with scores scold each week.

One of the most outstanding of the prison converts was Nguyen-thanh-Nhon of Rachgia. Mr. Tran-van-Quan who was working in the Treasury Department of the Government when Mr. Nhon was arrested and imprisoned, led him to the Lord. When we visited the Rachgia prison some months later, we met Mr. Nhon in the death cell. He had read the New Testament through several times already, and every man who was placed in the cell with him, he led to Christ. One after another the other men were executed, but not Mr. Nhon.

Later he was sent to the death cell at the Chi Hoa prison in Saigon where he was able to witness to many more men under sentence of death. There were between fifty and a hundred men in the same large cell with Mr. Nhon all the time. He was their unofficial chaplain. Even though none of those men could come to our services, and we couldn't visit them, many of them were led to Christ by Mr. Nhon. Copies of Rang-Dong and other gospel literature were sent to him regularly.

Then one day we heard he had been sent to Con Son. From time to time we received letters from him. The last letter arrived after his death at the Saigon market in October 1964. Word had reached Con Son the day before that five of the worst criminals were to be flown to Saigon at once for execution. Five stakes and sand bags were ready at the market when the men arrived. Catholic and Buddhist priests and one Protestant pastor (Pastor Phai), were there also. Everyone was amazed to find Mr. Nhon bubbling over with joy — the joy of the Lord. In the letter we received after his death he told us of

how Christ Himself had in a new and wonderful way flooded his heart with His love and joy. For seven years since he had become a christian, Nhon was truly a new creature in Christ Jesus, and he was so grateful for all God had done for him and in and through him. But suddenly, just before he was told he was to be executed, he had received this fresh and glorious manifestation of the indwelling Presence of Christ.

Instead of needing Pastor Phai to comfort and sustain him in that trying hour, Nhon was a comfort and blessing to Pastor Phai and a source of wonder to the lawyer and government officials who stood by. God promoted Nguyen-thanh-Nhon from a martyr's stake in Saigon to a pillar in His temple in Heaven. "Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out". (Rev. 3:12)

#### QUANG-TRUNG

Quang-Trung, the largest military induction center in South Vietnam, is just seven miles from Saigon. There are 40,000 recruits in training at this Camp all the time. As fast as a thousand or more are sent off to battle, they are replaced by the same number of raw recruits. Hundreds are dying each week, sometimes as many as 600 a week.

These men have come from every nook and corner of South Vietnam. Many have come from isolated villages where no one has ever yet gone with the Gospel message. They have come to us for three short months only and yet no one is giving full-time to reaching them for Christ.

We should be dealing with each man personally everywhere we can meet them -- in the park on Sunday mornings and in their individual camps and barracks in their free time each week day. Tens of thousands of these soldier boys have already died without Christ because no one took the time to lead them to Him while they were available.

#### THE PARK AT QUANG-TRUNG

It was one day in February 1964 that I received a letter postmarked 'Quang-Trung'. A former Danang English student of mine, by the name of Pham-Huong, had heard that I was now living in Saigon, so wrote me. He said that he was now in the army and so far from his home and loved ones in Danang that he was terribly sad and lonely. Would I come and meet him in the Park the following Sunday morning?

Mr. Jeffrey took me to the Park that first time only as he felt he should visit other churches on Sunday. We found not only one lonely soldier but thousands of them milling around in the Park that morning. When I saw

how eager they were to read our literature and hear what we had to say, I knew I would have to return every week and I did. The Lord wonderfully provided not only transportation week after week, but all the Gospel literature I needed as well.

The first thing I had to do, of course, was to see the Colonel in charge and get written authorisation to visit the Park, distribute Gospel literature, open a bookroom and hold evangelistic services. When permission was granted, Messrs. Garth Hunt and Jim Livingston volunteered to do the preaching. I was very grateful to them and to the former chaplain, Rev. Nguyen van Thai, for their help.

Each Vietnamese military chaplain deals only with the men who belong to his particular church or religion. A protestant chaplain isn't free to urge a Buddhist soldier to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation. But we missionaries are free to give the Gospel either by the spoken work or through the printed page, to every soldier who wants to hear or read the message we are longing to give them. Many thousands have prayed the penitent's prayer while at Quang-Trung but there were many who didn't understand what it was all about and who needed counselling. They hoped someone would come to their barracks, or to some quiet spot by the side of the road, to counsel them, but no one came. There was no missionary available.

#### CONG-HOA MILITARY HOSPITAL

Everytime I drove to Quang-Trung and back, I had to pass the large Cong-Hoa Military Hospital with its hundreds of wounded and dying soldier boys. I saw helicopters bringing the men in direct from the battlefield and funeral processions taking the dead out to the cemetery. My heart was deeply stirred.

One day I asked Chaplain Thai, in whose jeep I was riding, if he or any of the other protestant chaplains ever visited the wounded in that hospital. His reply was "No, we are all too busy. But we do have an arrangement with the hospital chaplain, a Catholic, that whenever a protestant soldier dies, he will take care of the funeral and burial arrangements".

After that I couldn't stop talking to other Saigon missionaries about the hundreds of wounded and dying soldiers in the Cong-Hoa hospital who were in desperate need of the Gospel. But, alas, no one could add Cong-Hoa to their busy schedules.

The next time I passed the hospital with Chaplain Thai, he said casually, "Two of our boys died in there a week or so ago. I was just notified today." I didn't need to hear anymore. I knew that now I must take on that hospital even if it meant cancelling other important commitments, and,

incidentally, being accused of spreading myself too thin. I at once turned to Chaplain Thai and said, "Please make an appointment for me with the Colonel in charge of the hospital, as soon as possible".

A few days later Chaplain Thai's jeep was at our door filled to overflowing with Gospel literature. The Chaplain was sick so sent his chauffeur to drive me to Cong-Hoa to meet the Administrator, Colonel Vy. I, too, had had a severe pain all night and couldn't walk. But someone had to go as we might never again have a chance to get into that hospital. And it had to be a foreign lady, I was told. After phoning one of our lady missionaries and hearing she was unable to take my place, I knew I simply had to trust the Lord, and I did. Step by step, in His strength I reached the jeep and got in. When we arrived at the hospital, every sign of pain had gone and I was able to walk with perfect ease through those crowded wards, handing out literature and talking to the men. Truly, it was one of the most wonderful experiences of my life.

But I hadn't yet met the Administrator, so the nurse who had led me through the hospital wards ushered me into his office. To my consternation, Colonel Vy said he had allowed me this one visit only so I could distribute my literature, but that was all. I couldn't come again. As the good Catholic Administrator he was, he just couldn't bring himself to turning this Protestant missionary loose in his hospital. But the Lord opened that fast-barred hospital gate for me. When I gave up trying to open it, the Lord took over. To my surprise I suddenly found myself saying, "Colonel Vy, since the Protestant Chaplains haven't time to visit your hospital, won't you allow me to come under their auspices?" At that the Colonel rose to his feet, terminating our interview. As we shook hands he said, "All right Mrs. Chaplain, tell Chaplain Thai to come back and see me, I have something to say to him".

A few days later the written authorisation signed by Colonel Vy, was in my hands. I and my friends, both Vietnamese and missionaries, could now visit Cong-Hoa patients any time, day or night.

Mr. Doan-trung-Tin, a son of Pastor and Mrs. Doan-van-Mieng, was a wonderful help and blessing in the hospital visitation work that we launched without delay. About two months later, after a number of patients had confessed faith in Christ, I started looking for a room where we could hold Sunday services.

The Catholic priest who was in charge of all religious matters, said we could meet in the 500 seat auditorium right next to his church. When I said something about it being a bit large he suggested that we hold our meetings Sunday evenings rather than Sunday mornings as far more of the men would be likely to attend.

We announced over the hospital intercom that a film would be shown in the auditorium the following Sunday evening at 6:30 and a special speaker would bring the message. By six o'clock the men started streaming from their wards towards the auditorium. Paraplegics were being carried on the backs of their armless buddies. Other hobbled along on crutches as best they could. By 6:30 the auditorium was filled with at least seven hundred patients. There wasn't even standing room left in the aisles.

The special speaker, Garth Hunt, with his PA equipment hadn't arrived, so I asked Mr. Tin to hurry over to my good friend the Catholic priest and borrow his loudspeaker. Of course he let me have it and Mr. Tin and I started the most memorable service I have ever attended. The date was November 8, 1964, the anniversary of our beloved David's homegoing. I was thrilled to be able to tell that vast audience of suffering humanity, some of the wonderful things God had done for me and our David. My text was John 5:24.

Garth Hunt and the Jim Livingstons walked in as I was speaking. Since this was the first time they had been inside the hospital gates, they were amazed to see what God wrought. That night both the Hunts and Livingstons added the Cong-Hoa Hospital to their busy schedules. We are grateful also for the Vietnamese pastors and laymen who have so faithfully ministered there since November 1964. Today, eight years later, after over 10,000 wounded soldiers have confessed faith in Christ in that hospital, I thank God for putting the desire and the determination in my heart to reach these precious souls for Christ at any cost.

When Dr. Bob Pierce first visited Cong-Hoa and asked Mr. Jeffrey what he could do to help, his answer was "wheel chairs". The 2,500 wheel chairs provided by World Vision since then have been of inestimable value to paraplegics throughout South Vietnam. A grateful "Thank you" to Dr. Pierce and World Vision friends from us all.

#### I HAVE PAID HER DEBT IN FULL

Last night I heard someone say over the radio that so much talk of Christ's death and resurrection turned people off! It was because of that astounding statement that I add the following:

It was early in 1944. I had just returned to Toronto, from internment in Vietnam, on the second trip of the 'Gripsholm'. Wishing to visit our daughter who was studying at the C & M A Missionary Training College at Nyack N.Y., I made plans to travel by train to New York where our daughter would meet me.

I was told by immigration authorities in Toronto that all I should take with me was five dollars and a Form H. If I had any other funds in my possession they would be confiscated by the Custom's officer after I boarded the train.

Shortly after the train started a Custom's officer came into our car and asked for my passport. When he saw that I had been born in China he said, "You must pay \$20.00 headtax". I tried to explain that I had been told that I should only take \$5.00 with me and that was all I had. But it was to no avail. The officer kept insisting that I had broken the law and that I must pay or get off the train. Finally he called the conductor and told him to put me and my baggage off at Hamilton, the next stop. It was late at night and I didn't know anyone in Hamilton. Besides my daughter would be waiting at the station in New York for me. I was desperate. Just then one of the passengers rose from his seat and came to me saying, "Madam, I would like to pay your debt. How much is it?" And he paid it in full. When I turned the money over to the Custom's officer he returned my passport and told the conductor I could continue on to New York.

The gentleman who paid my debt was a Jew from Yonkers, N.Y. I asked him for his address and later sent him a cheque for the amount he had given me. I have no words to express my gratefulness to my kind Jewish benefactor for making it possible for me to continue on my journey to New York.

But this experience keeps reminding me of something far more important and far more wonderful. I had broken God's holy law and deserved to die for my sins. My debt of sin was carrying me straight to hell, but the Son of God, was willing to become a man, the God-Man, in order to take my sins and the sins of the world in his own sinless body on the Cross and pay the penalty for our sins by dying in our stead. By receiving Him as my personal Savior and Lord, I could leave the road to hell and start out on the road to Heaven. How my heart thrills as I hear Him say those wonderful words, "She may go straight through to heaven because I have paid her debt in full". "The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Ro 6:23). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). Jesus said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgement, but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

#### AMAZING GRACE

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear The hour I first believed!

Thro' many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come;  
'Tis grace hath bro't me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years, Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we first begun.

John Newton

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