

Apr. 4

Chaudoc, le 10th. March. 23 19  
COCHIN-CHINE

Dear Brother Jeffrey:

Your good letter of Mar. 3, was appreciated and quite interesting. If you can take time to write to me all those detail, you must love me and so I will try to love right back.

First of all let me say that there is no bitterness over any decisions made by Committee altho I must still think that some things were illogical. Anything I may write is to be understood as friendly exchange of opinion. I feel that if I could have been at Saigon, I would have understood some things better and could have made my proposition better understood.

I want to say a few things about the language question. I have felt ever since I knew anything about it, that there is wide latitude for plain old fashioned bluffing. If I line up with the gicai party, second all they do and keep my mouth shut, then everyone will suspect me of being gicai also. But I dont want to bluff. I confess that I am not gicai. I am painfully slow in languagges. But let me give you my point of view and tell you about what I have been able to do. You were shocked at someones report concerning my language. As far as I know, no one knows anything about how much I know or dont know. I took an exam a year ago and got good marks. I have not had the best of opportunities in the past year, but I have made some progress. You were surprised that I used a MSS. I am surprised that you were surprised. I guess you just did not think. I have only been on the field a little over two years and I have opened a new station. Most of my time last year was used in telling hundreds of inquirers the gospel and explaining to others that we did not give fifty dollar presents to our converts. Brother Olsen is about as clever in the language as any and the first sermons I ever heard in Annamese were preached from MSS. by him and he was three years along. I use the MSS. method as a matter of good policy in addition to needing it. I faithfully prepared my sermons at home in English altho I did not read them in the pulpit. If I remember your sermons at Hanoi when I arrived, you had quite a handful of notes. HAWA.

To my mind, the question of our attitude toward the French and their language is very serious and if you will bear with me I want to suggest that there is a vast difference between Annam and Cochinchine. You may be able to get by without the French Language in Annam, but I insist that it is absolutely essential here. This is a French colony and it is the ambition and the right of the French to train these people into Frenchmen.

I have had many precious hours explaining the gospel in French to Frenchmen and Annamites and I will always frown just as much on any of the missionaries here who are deficient in this tongue as they now frown on those who cannot speak Annamese. Several times I have had missionaries tell me that they refuse to talk to an Annamite in French. Personally, I think that is because many of the Annamites speak the better French the missionary thus tries to cover his own ignorance. I make lots of mistakes, but I am learning and I hope some day to have both of the languages. Yesterday I took a trip into the mountain section to reach some Cambodians. I talked thru an Annamite who understood both tongues and altho he had never heard me talk before, I explained the fundamentals thru him without any help from anyone. Certainly, I made mistakes, but if they had been very bad I know that Thay Long would have corrected me. We spent about five hours there and as a result seven Cambodians and three Annamites prayed. This is the first fruits from Cambodia. Pray that God will get hold of the young fellow who translated. He was among those who prayed.

Speaking about exams reminds me that Mrs. Grupe has requested the next set of questions three weeks ago. We can't see much improvement. I will wire you when they arrive. But mark you, we are only supposed to take the second year exams and thus far there has been no attempt at their preparation. To my mind, all the rest of you folks ought to take these exams too. Please explain to me why not. I will take them and then kid you fellows about your language the rest of your lives. If Alexander took his exams after twenty seven years on the field, how do you youngsters get by. Up off me brother. I expect to ask several questions at our next conference.

Now about the student preachers. I am satisfied as far as I know with Thay Hai. I don't know anything about him except that he is saved a year and failed terribly in his preparatory course. But I will gladly take him and trust the Lord. Other things are in his favor. He has a good wife and he speaks Cochinchinese. I confess to finding a great difference in the Annamites and the Cochinchinese. Your folks are terribly custom bound and do not seem to have the ability to break thru. Down here the natives are much ~~freer~~ more free. I hope you dear brethren did not think I wanted Thay Lieu. No indeed! I wanted to keep the man I had another year. Any change would be just as hard for me. But I do see the point you make about your cycle of study. Please don't send Thay Lieu.

"Accurate information is the first principle of efficiency." This is all I have to say regarding the house action.

We did not go to Saigon because we could not afford it. We waited for a summons from the committee, but received no invitation.

Yours in Him,

Allen