

Mr Paasonen
Telephone conversation with Dr. Bailey and Dr. L. L. King from Bangkok - T. G. Mangham

October 30, 1975

Dr. Bailey: Everybody got in safely.

Mr. Mangham: We received the news from the State Department early this morning. There have been no TV pictures yet.

Dr. Bailey: The folks arrived right on the dot - 4:00 o'clock. Everyone they expected was there. Our people are all well. In better condition than we thought they might be. Betty has absolutely no word of Archie, or anyone else. She made all kinds of inquiries everywhere, but no results.

There was a mob of people at the airport - all the news services were there. The TV crews, and all the wire services were represented. They intended to have a 10-minute interview, but it must have lasted 45 minutes. We were taken to a VIP area, which was good - it gave us an opportunity to meet with the folks - in fact, with all of the returnees.

The 2 Filipino men were met by representatives of the Philippine government - the Canadian ambassador was there - the American ambassador was there - Mr. Twining is going to interview the group tomorrow - making arrangements for medical checkout. We think everyone is in remarkably good shape.

We were a bit concerned about Dr. Phillips, but he's doing fine - is good

What has the news said?

Mr. Mangham: It said 14 people were released - 9 Americans among them. CBS called our office here early this morning and told us that all of our people were included in the group. I had already received a call from Mr. Sieverts about 6:30 a.m. The news has given only bare details so far. I understood that Henry Paasonen is deluged with calls. The news services are trying to get through to Bangkok to call you folk and to set up phone patches between the people out there and their children here in the States - that sort of thing.

Dr. Bailey: The Phillips just talked to their children. Betty was trying to get through to hers. We will try to do it tonight.

It would be good if you could get through to California to their children and tell them to be standing by for the call.

Mr. Mangham: I just talked to Loretta and I'm sure they will be standing by.

Dr. King: 14 persons, including the five C&MA missionaries who have been held in prison camps in North Viet Nam since March arrived in Bangkok Thursday October 30, at 4:p.m. - Dr. and Mrs. Richard Phillips, Rev. and Mrs. Norman Johnson and Mrs. Betty Mitchell of the C&MA and Mr. and Mrs. John Miller and daughter Luanne - Wycliffe Bible Translators - all appeared in good physical health, as did all the others.

Dr. Nathan Bailey, President of the C&MA, Dr. L. L. King, Vice-President for the Division of Overseas Ministries, the Ambassadors of

the United States, Canada, Australia, and the Philippines - a large group of newsmen, TV cameramen and missionary friends, Mrs. Mitchell's daughter Geraldine, were present when their United Nations chartered DC3 arrived from Hanoi. It was a very moving occasion as the repatriates moved from the aircraft amid tears and embraces of friends, the questions of the ever-persistent press corps and flashing cameras to the VIP room -- Here the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees, who had negotiated their release with the Hanoi government also had thoughtfully arranged a brief period for selected persons to visit with them. Immediately following this, the TV corps were able to photograph and query the parties about their 8-month detention.

For 6 months they had existed under utterly primitive conditions - inadequate diet - hard work, malaria and physical illnesses that had depleted their health. The last 9 weeks of their detention was spent in Hanoi under a kind of house arrest - they said they were well-treated and well-fed. It was not until 2 days ago that they were informed that they would be repatriated on October 30. There had been intimations - like injections, and vaccinations which tipped them off that something was afoot. It encouraged them that it might be for their release.

Dr. Bailey: The last time spent in Hanoi - they did get extra fine treatment and were given several sight-seeing tours. The museum, the zoo, and other places.

Mr. Mangham: Did they have any contact with church people in North Viet Nam?

Dr. King: None whatsoever.

Dr. Bailey: They requested permission to visit Tin Lanh, but this was denied them. What churches they did see was somewhat surreptitiously, because when they were transported they were not supposed to be looking out. They passed a number of churches that appeared to be Roman Catholic and evidently deserted. In the interrogations, they told them that they had absolute religious liberty in North Viet Nam, but the interrogators were well-schooled in the propaganda line and took the humanist stance - religion not really necessary - the sufficiency of man, etc., though they had religious liberty.

Our missionaries did not miss an opportunity to witness, both to their interrogators and to everybody else. They were so insistent in what they were doing, it was almost like a counter-indoctrination.

A line for an article - Mrs. Phillips: "Not somehow - but triumphantly. A book title by Oswald Smith.

When they were sent off from Hanoi it was with a great deal of fanfare. Newsmen, pictures, etc. When they arrived in Bangkok they had a large delegation - a triumphal entry. "Not somehow, but Triumphantly."

Dr. King: I remember she said when they were captured and were being marched out of Banmethuot, was when Dick told her "Not somehow, but triumphantly." Then, when they were coming out of Hanoi today, she (Lillian Phillips) reminded him of it.

Mr. Aikman of TIME (an evangelical person, warm-hearted Christian) is here and covered the whole thing. He spent time with our people. He wanted to interview them to see if there was a story. To see whether there was anything different for the normal.

Dr. Bailey said he didn't know if he got anything or not. Dr. King said he had when he left - he didn't give further explanation.

All kinds of pictures were taken by a very good photographer - tell Bob Cowles we will have the pictures to him on Monday. I will bring them when I come (Dr. L. L. King)

Dr. King: Mrs. Mitchell thinks she would like to go to Penang rather than come home right now. I told her whatever she wanted to do would be OK.

Mr. Mangham: Would she want to come by Europe?

Dr. King: She would like to. To touch down with her children in France.

Mr. Mangham: I talked with John Amstutz - the Phillips children are there - he said they are prepared to receive the Phillips there if they want to come out and visit their children, or whatever arrangements they will work out.

Dr. King. We will tell them.

We are flooded out here - really in bad shape - water over the floor of the dining room. 1-1/2 feet of water over the courtyard - we need boats to get around. We are staying at the guest house, however.

Tomorrow the U.S. Embassy will de-brief, is preparing visas - passports and taking care of all these things.

Mr. Mangham: Do you have a projected time for departure from Bangkok for the people?

Dr. Bailey: Not yet - it looks as though they will be there through Saturday. What happens then we don't know. They are well enough to travel and I assume when things are ready, they will get on their way.

Mr. Mangham: Did Johnson's get through to their children in Ontario?

Dr. King - I don't know - the Canadian Ambassador requested that they stay with him at his home. I have their phone number and they can get it.

I also have the phone numbers of all the others.