



6 rue de Lille
Haiphong
Nord Viet Nam
Indo China
March 5, 1950

Dear Prayer Partners:

Since so many of you have written recently, expressing anxiety concerning our safety and assuring us of your prayers, we feel you deserve to hear from us more often than once a year.

When Esther chose the picture on Handel's beautiful hymn for our Christmas circular, she did not know that Pastor Luyen had asked us to sing that very hymn as a duet in Vietnamese for their Christmas service. Because you prayed, every Christian reached home safely that night in spite of shots heard near by as we were dispersing.

The radio and newspapers keep you informed regarding the seriousness of the situation in this northern part of Indo China. There are at least thirty thousand Chinese soldiers of the National army interned near Haiphong. These have been disarmed but those to be feared are the Communist troops all along the frontier and the ones who are continually infiltrating into Viet Minh territory. We are told that there is a fifth column right here in Haiphong. People are frightfully jittery and many are leaving. Thank God for the peace He gives to our hearts and for the privilege of representing Him in adverse circumstances.

When the French troops liberate villages, the Christians usually suffer great losses - most of their homes are burned during the conflicts. Many of them come to Haiphong stranded with only rags on their backs. The mat shed where we held services before the church was partly reconstructed, serves now as a refugee center. There are as many as forty at one time living there. Our hearts just ache for them and we long to be able to help them in a more tangible way. When they come, they are considered as traitors by the Viet Minh and very often they are under suspicion here because they came from newly conquered territory. All they did was to live there because their homes and rice fields happened to be there but they took no part in political struggles. Our Mission never does. Mr. Van Hine spends a great deal of his time getting them out of prison when they are falsely accused. He is as much a lawyer these days as he is a missionary.

Recently, we discovered that a pastor had been in prison a month before we knew it where they used cruel means to try and make him admit things a Viet Minh chief had done, for whom he was taken because of having the same name. When my husband got him out, he bore the marks of his sufferings but showed a real Christian spirit of forgiveness. Pray that God will definitely lead in placing him where he is most needed in spite of danger as well as other pastors who come from "scorched earth" territory.

Souls are being saved every week. This morning, after the communion service, six men came forward to pray the prayer of repentance. Christians had been busy witnessing and brought them to the service. Lately, Pastor Luyen asked Mr. Van Hine to baptize nine more Vietnamese. We do not have nearly enough benches for all these new converts.

A twenty three year old Christian in the French army was bitten recently by a mad dog and after a few days of agony in the Haiphong hospital, died of hydrophobia. He was a very fine young man who spoke perfectly several languages, including English and had even learned Vietnamese. Every time he came to Haiphong from the front, he would have tea with us. He chose beautiful pine trees, cut them and brought them in a truck to us for Christmas from the danger zone as none can be had here. His father used to be in the U.N.O. A friend of his here cabled them that their son was in a critical condition. The mother came immediately by plane, hoping to nurse him but he was already in a sealed coffin when she arrived. We did all we could for her but it seemed so little. The Lord wonderfully sustained her. He asked the night before he died that the Way of salvation be made clear to his friends and officers at his funeral. While the service was being held outside of the hospital morgue, the cannons were firing at the enemy. This war is certainly costing many lives.

Mr. and Mrs. Poole arrived January 18th to take over the Chinese work. We helped them settle in a place which is only temporary. Pray they will obtain a more satisfactory house.

Thank you for interceding so faithfully for my health. I am very glad to have good news for you this time. God has definitely answered your prayers as I have had no pains the past four weeks in spite of extra work and responsibilities. Pray that I will continue to improve even when the extreme heat comes along in two months.

As the time for Esther's wedding approaches, we receive letters from friends in the States and Switzerland, asking how we can possibly think of not attending the wedding of our only child. Their attitude caused us some concern as we sounded like unnatural parents. Then Esther wrote that she has always realized that we could not be present, that it is one of the sacrifices missionaries and future missionaries must make. We thank God for her understanding spirit. She and John Fitzstevens of Miami, Florida, are going to be married the day she graduates at Nyack. How we would love to be there! A lawyer friend of ours from Hanoi, who knew Esther since she was two years old, is going to New York just then with his wife and will have that pleasure.

Since this letter will reach you some time before Easter, we wish to send you warmest greetings. Our future is so totally left in the hands of the Living Christ that we can be "anxious in nothing". Phil. 4:6-7

Yours in His loving care,

J. & N. Van Hine

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