

the CALL

Fall 1958



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Elderly Vietnamese Christian

THE CALL OF VIET-NAM

This booklet is issued by the Viet-Nam missionaries of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. We shall be glad to send it free to any who request it.

FALL 1958

Co - editors : Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Stebbins

Visiting our May 1958 Viet-Nam Field Conference are Rev. Robert Chrisman, Far East Area Secretary, and Rev. Theo Zeimer, guest speaker from Thailand.



IT was a hot, muggy night, and no moon or stars pierced the cloudy black sky. Inside a simple peasant's home, by the flickering of a crude oil lamp, we gathered to preach the message of life. The dancing light of the lamp revealed a tightly packed crowd of curious brown faces. Some were young with sharp, questioning eyes. Others were aged, having soft eyes long familiar with the brown earth, the wooden plow, and having shoulders bent by years of stooping to plant and harvest their life-sustaining rice. All had one thing in common this still, humid night. All were intrigued by these foreigners who sat before them, absorbed in this strange new message of hope.

Carefully the Vietnamese worker explained the gospel, telling of the true God, of sin, of life through Jesus Christ; intently these farmer folk listened. An hour passed, and the worker asked if there was anyone who wanted to receive the Son of God into his heart. There was a moment of waiting, and we prayed silently that the Spirit of God would bring understanding and conviction. The stillness was broken with the shuffling of feet as one man at the rear of the crowd stood and moved forward—then another, and yet another. Until at last that night the Light of Life had pierced and dispelled darkness from the hearts of nine men and women.

There have been other nights like this, where far out in the country villages, close by the 17th parallel, forgotten people have at last had a

Light Pierces Darkness

by Dale Herendeen

chance to hear and believe. Is this the beginning of a great work of God in this hitherto unreached area? This is our hope and prayer. But the task remains numerically tremendous. Were the missionary able to preach to 100 every night for the next 25 years in this area alone, he could reach each soul only once; and, in the meantime, there would have risen another generation of young adults.

The only hope for the lost of Viet-Nam is a mighty work of God. The opportunity is now—not yesterday or tomorrow. The part of you who read: to pray much, to send many, to give abundantly. Are you willing to pay the price?

by Spencer Sutherland

A Glorious Report of
God's Working Through



SELF - PROPAGATION

LAST year in the Quang-Nam province 975 people were baptized, reported Rev. E.F. Irwin at last May's missionary conference. All 31 churches and outstations in the province were having capacity congregations on Sunday mornings, 3 churches — and possibly 4 — having more than 500 members each. This is a glorious report of God's working, a radiant testimony of self-propagation by the indigenous church of Viet-Nam.

That this Vietnamese national church is largely self-supporting—and completely self-governing is not enough. Unless it is also self-propagating — in other words, unless the national church itself by active witness gives birth to new churches and imparts to them directly everything essential to their spiritual growth and life — the indigenous church will die. In the Quang Nam province of Viet-Nam the missionary has been thrilled to see this indigenous principle in action. It has been his joy to see the gospel



Phước-sanh Church

spread, not by mission or clergy as such, but by zealous lay Christians.

Perhaps the best example of self-propagation in this province is the church at Thang Binh. In the summer of 1957 a student preacher from the Tourane Bible School went to this church to minister and found that a thatch parsonage had been built to serve both as his family's home and as a temporary chapel for the growing congregation. However, upon his arrival the response was so immediate

and the growth of the congregation so great that it was necessary to enlarge the parsonage. Then work was begun on the foundation of a permanent chapel, and cement blocks were poured for the walls. But when in the Fall a typhoon hit the area, many of the Christians homes and rice crops were destroyed, work on the new chapel stopped; and to provide for the numbers still turning to Christ, the church was forced to use the cement blocks to enlarge the parsonage a second time. At present the foundation of the new building is too small, and the building plan must be revamped. For in one year approximately 500 people have prayed, and each Sunday the 2 or 3 times expanded parsonage has been crowded to capacity.

About 18 kilometers over rough mountain roads is the Binh Que church, where this indigenous principle is also at work. In that locality a group heard the gospel and expressed desire to accept Christ, so the student pastor at Thang Binh went there to hold special evangelistic meetings and later weekly Bible-studies. There too the response was immediate. And before the student pastor could solve his own church building problem back at Thang Binh, a new church, for which he was also spiritually responsible, was born at Binh Que.

When the missionary visited this new church, he found over 100 Christians gathered to worship and learned that they earnestly desired a chapel. As these things take time, he returned home and resolved to pray. On his return visit 3 months later he was

happy to see that without the presence of a pastor and without mission help these Christians had built their own chapel and parsonage. On his third visit he was over-joyed to find a resident student pastor, an increased congregation, and — greatly significant in self-propagation — news of 3 new areas of response to the gospel, each one eager to have a church born in his community. It was last reported that 12 new families have prayed in the past 3 weeks — the total number of those having prayed well over 300.

Over the mountain from the mother Cam Long church some 20 kilometers is another offspring, the Phuróc Sanh church. From Cam Long the student pastor has gone to this new church to conduct Bible classes. At last count approximately 70 have prayed there, and the Christians without mission aid have built their own chapel..

The story of the mother church and her offspring is being repeated in many other villages, for of the 31 churches in Quang Nam province 7 are newborn outstations.

How can the 12 million souls of Viet-Nam possibly be reached with the gospel? By missionaries? By preachers alone? Never. Unquestionably our only hope is the national church. When pastors and individual Christians catch this vision of self-propagation, when they go to the new areas of response around them and as Zion, travail in prayer and labour by witness, then shall a host of spiritual sons and a multitude of offspring churches be born in this great land of Viet-Nam

TENT EVANGELISM *by I. R. Stebbins*

For the first time in the history of Viet-Nam a gospel tent has been used in a sustained effort to evangelize the unreached masses. Sixteen campaigns have been conducted up and down the coast during the past year with an estimated 150,000 Vietnamese hearing the good news of salvation — many for the first time in their lives.

All this has been the result of 1) the generous gift of a large tent by two Christian laymen in America, 2) the sacrificial giving and faithful prayer-backing of Christians around the world, and 3) the whole-hearted cooperation of the tent team, evangelist, local pastors, Christians, and missionaries here in Central Viet-Nam. But most of all, it must be stated that all the equipment, planning, personnel, all the tract distribution, visitation, preaching, and follow-up would have added up to nothing without the presence and power of God's Spirit. To God be all the glory for each one of the 700 souls who confessed Christ as Saviour; to Him be the praise for the new-born church groups.

NEVER TOO OLD *by Mrs. E. F. Irwin*

Being retired and elderly does not mean that one can not witness for the Lord. "What is age but life's full bloom, and riper, more transcendent youth."

One day three Christian gentlemen — two nearly 75 years old and the other 81, all members of the Tourane Church — came to get some literature to distribute while witnessing for Christ in villages near Tourane. Before they left they went to the home of an elderly lady who had been a Christian for nearly 40 years and asked

her to pray for them. Although 92 years of age and paralyzed in her left arm and leg, this old saint has been noted for her life of intercession.

After prayer together these three men started out to witness, returning a few days later to rejoice and praise God for 15 souls who had come to Christ.



PRESSING ON WITH THE PRINTED PAGE

by Royce Rexilius

Now strategically located at one of Saigon's busy intersections and announcing the addition of a new book store and reading room, the Viet-Nam Gospel Press is making an all-out effort to meet the growing demands of a nation eager to read and in earnest search after God.

From all quarters — missionaries, evangelists, pastors, and laymen—come orders for more and more tracts; so many, in fact, that despite the press's monthly output of 100,000 plus 1000's more sent from America, it is difficult

to keep ahead. Gratifying has been the response throughout Viet-Nam. Letters daily come to our office: many testifying of recent faith in Christ, others requesting additional literature, and one in particular from a young soldier reporting joyfully that a good number of his buddies also are anxious to believe. Only eternity will reveal the real impression that these gospel tracts are making.

If the Communists in their world-wide propaganda program regard the printed page important enough to invest millions, dare we neglect this effective means of spreading the gospel? We must press on with the printed page. If we, the only evangelical press in Viet-Nam, don't — who will?

READY FOR HEAVEN *by Mrs. C. E. Travis*

His coffin waiting in the back room, his burial lot all finished, and an inexpensive vault completed even to a red cross marker to testify of his salvation through Jesus' blood, eighty-year-old Mr. Huy sent word asking us to come to Canh Van and preach to his friends and neighbors. It was a debt of love he wished to pay them before going on to be with the Lord.

For three days we held special meetings, the crowds increasing daily. On the last evening Mr. Travis, interrupted occasionally by a crying baby or a noisy fight, preached to a great throng on the subject, "The Blood of Jesus Cleanseth from All Sin." Perched on nearby fences and in surrounding trees, crowded up to the preaching table and organ, just a sea of faces, they listened eagerly. At the close two young girls, in the face of opposition from their families, asked Jesus to come into their hearts and wash away their sins.

Now Mr. Huy says he is ready to go. What a joyful entrance into heaven he will have.

Mrs. Olsen

Farewells

by Mrs. Garth Hunt

"BLESS her Lord and make her a blessing..." rang out the voices of our missionaries gathered for this year's conference farewell party. After thirty-nine years of faithful, fruitful ministry in Viet-Nam, Mrs. John D. Olsen was returning to the States for retiral.

It was in 1919, when Viet-Nam missionary advance was still in its pioneer stages, that Mrs. Olsen — then Miss Edith Frost — first arrived in Tourane. Shortly she began working among the women and children there, opening in 1923 the Women's Bible School to train women for God's service.

Bachelor missionary John D. Olsen moved to Tourane in 1925 to take charge of the Men's Bible School, and friendship between the two deans began to blossom. Until in 1932, while on furlough at St. Paul Bible Institute, they were happily married.

Together the newly-weds returned to Tourane to team up training national workers. There was no one better fitted for the task. Possessing warm and understanding hearts, gifted in teaching and music, equipped with a mastery of the language, and

anointed by the Spirit of God, John and Edith Olsen gave abundantly of themselves to the many students who came under their loving ministry.

War came to Viet-Nam, and for two and a half years the Olsens were interned at Mytho, Mr. Olsen becoming seriously ill. After repatriation to America, he recovered his health; and in the Fall of 1947 was able to return again with Mrs. Olsen to Viet-Nam.

Things were different this time. The Bible School lay in shambles, and it was their task to rebuild. Diligently this undaunted couple worked, opening school again in the Fall of 1948 — just one year later.

On their return from furlough in August 1953, Mr. Olsen became chairman of the field. Five months of vigorous service followed, Mr. Olsen enjoying the best health of his entire missionary career, and anticipating even greater exploits for God. In February 1954, under the marked anointing of God, Mr. Olsen spoke to a Saigon Youth Conference, closing his last message with the challenge, "If Christ were to return within the next twenty-four hours, would you be ready to meet Him? I would." Who would ever believe that within just that short a time, as a result of a motor accident, this valiant soldier of the Cross would be called home to meet his Captain. Great was the sorrow of his fellow missionaries and many friends; yet greater was the comfort to know that he had entered into the presence of the Lord to receive his "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

In her remaining years on the field Mrs. Olsen continued to be very ac-

PASTORS, Christians, and missionaries had been pouring out their hearts in prayer on behalf of a youth rally held July 14th and 15th at Soctrang. Yet because the rally was sandwiched between the National Conference and a Short Term Bible School session, the reception committee anticipated a small attendance.

Monday afternoon over eighty young people and about twenty others gathered to hear the Word of the Lord. Following a simple message on the Holy Spirit, there was deep conviction in many hearts, a number of young people praying for nearly an hour confessing sins with "strong crying and tears unto Him" Who alone is able to save from sin.

The Vietnamese, like all humans, do not like to "lose face," yet that day under deep conviction by God's Spirit they were not concerned about "losing face," but about getting right with God. Without hesitation they called their sins by name and promised to make restitution where restitution was necessary. After two more messages on consecration that

Showers of Blessing

by Otis G. Fisher



evening and the next morning, it was thrilling to hear the "popcorn" style testimonies and to see seventeen people dedicate their lives to prepare for full-time Christian service.

Mrs. Olsen (cont.)

tive, publishing Mr. Olsen's many excellent Vietnamese Bible commentaries and doctrinal books, ministering to the Vietnamese church at Dalat, teaching piano to the missionary children at Dalat School; in fact, seeking every available opportunity to labor for the Lord.

As we sang the prayer of blessing

to Mrs. Olsen, we knew her heart was flooded with memories; we knew too that the memory of John and Edith Olsen would long remain in our hearts and in the hearts of all the Church of Viet-Nam. "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

Short Term Bible Schools

TAM-KY

by Harold Dutton

DISCOVERING that the best way to spread the gospel is by personal evangelism, missionaries and Viet-Nam church leaders have recently conducted several Short Term Bible Schools in order to establish Christians in the Word and train them in methods of personal witness. In August, 83 students from 16 churches in Quang-Nam and Quang-Ngai gathered at Tam-Ky for two weeks of study. At the close the students testified of great blessing and spiritual help. They anxiously anticipate the next session of Short Term Bible School.

VINH-LONG

by a Student

After the first session of Short Term Bible School at Vinh-Long in March



Vinh-long S. T. B. S.

and April, 36 young men and women went home greatly enthused over their training. This was all the advertising the school needed, for when the second session opened in July, a record attendance of 111 young men and women from 25 church centers flooded into the new compound. I thank the Lord for permitting me to be among that number who gathered to study His precious Word. I am grateful also to all who made this school possible.

Six subjects were taught: Bible Introduction, Personal Evangelism, Genesis, Elementary Doctrine, Music, and Child Evangelism — all of which contributed much to our spiritual growth and shed new light on the Word of God.

But our studies were not limited to theory alone. The men students and some of the women split up into teams of four and spent Saturday mornings practicing personal evangelism in the Vinh-Long area. The 67 women students went in the Gospel Boat to hold a service in a distant church. In three days we visited 210 homes, witnessed to 418 people, distributed hundreds of tracts, and led 19 souls to Christ.

Climaxed with an impressive graduation service including messages, special music, and the distribution of diplomas, this session of Short Term Bible School was dismissed — some of us going home with a call to full-time service, many of us with a desire and hope to return for classes next year, all of us with a determination to take an active part in the church by helping our pastors in the work of the Sunday school, the Young People's Society, and gospel teams.

AT the end of a long, hard trail and after many days' journey deep into the interior, the missionary in the Far East is often astonished to find that the sewing machine, the soda pop, and the oil company have long preceded him. He is amazed to discover further that the man already there pedaling the sewing machine, pouring the pop, or pumping the gas is a pleasant, ambitious Chinese — unquestionably the greatest merchant of the Orient.

Centuries back the ancestors of these ambitious business people migrated thousands of miles from their overcrowded homeland in order to make a living, multiplying and prospering so consistently that today they constitute a nation within every Far-Eastern nation and comprise a tightly packed separate entity, too often overlooked spiritually because they are not the "people" of the land to which the missionary has been sent.

To the task of foreign missions these Chinese migrants present many problems. Because they are scattered wide and have penetrated far into the most remote corners of these Asian lands, because they are acquainted with only the market vocabulary of these languages, because among their own race they struggle with three entirely different Chinese languages — Cantonese, Swatowese, and Fukienese, and because they are so thoroughly enwrapped in their business adventures that they have "no leisure time" to stop and listen to the gospel story, these people are exceedingly difficult to evangelize.

But what is being done for the one

million Chinese in Viet-Nam? In Saigon where one half of this million Chinese reside, our mission has one church, one missionary couple, one Chinese pastor, and one Chinese Bible woman. In the interior cities and country villages where the other one half million Chinese are scattered, there are as yet no missionaries, no native workers, no churches, and only a handful of isolated Christians. We call your attention to this tremendous need, this sad neglect.

THE FORGOTTEN CHINESE

by Christian Fowler

What shall we do? It is not enough to say, "Let the Vietnamese National Church evangelize these Chinese," because, the fact is, they are not being reached. Nor can we look to the already over-loaded Saigon staff to take an occasional trip into these great areas. Missionaries and native workers familiar with the customs and fluent in the language are a must. We have appealed to Hong Kong to send the Chinese workers. We appeal to you in America to send the missionaries. But most of all, we urge you to pray, to trust, to sacrifice much until in the cities, in the interior, and up the coast of Free Viet-Nam there will not remain one more forgotten Chinese.

NEWS

Two Daily Vacation Bible Schools were recently conducted in the Saigon area: one among the Vietnamese and one among the Chinese, the children responding with great enthusiasm.

Young people have been busily studying in Short Term Bible Schools: at Tam Ky, Quang Tri, and Tuy Hoa in Central Viet-Nam and at Vinh Long in the South.

On August 7th the Douglasses welcomed a baby boy into their home — David Ross.

The Harold Collins family has moved to Tourane and the Bordreuilts to Nha Trang.

The Franklin Irwins arrived back on the field in July and are stationed at Nha Trang. The W. H. Holtons arrived in August and are working among the Chinese of Cambodia.

The Duttons have moved into their new Quang Ngai residence. The receiving home in Saigon and the mission residence at Tuy Hoa are both more than half finished and will be completed by the end of September.

Press sales continue to show substantial increases.

In September Betty Arnold, Nancy Mack, and the R.H. Taylors will sail for furlough.

We will be happy to welcome two new couples to the field in October: the Stanley Lemons and the William Mocks.

Expecting a larger enrollment of about 90 students, the Bible School at Tourane is building a temporary thatch classroom building and is using the regular classroom building for dormitory space. Mr. Fisher will be teaching in the Bible School during the month of September.

The National Church is about to construct the first building on the new Bible School property at Nha Trang. They are hoping to have enough completed on the new school to open the 1959-60 session there.

PRAY

Pray for an increased staff of Chinese native workers to evangelize the 1,000,000 Chinese in Viet-Nam.

Pray for much needed funds: 1) to build churches in the provincial capitals of Viet-Nam, 2) to support the second-year Bible School students now out in practical Christian service, 3) to build the new Bible School campus at Nha-Trang.

Pray for the new missionaries presently engaged in language study.

Pray for a fresh spiritual awakening within the Church and a great harvest of souls throughout the land.