

Dear Fellow-Workers,

Many of you have shown a deep concern over the political situation out here, and we are indeed grateful to you for all your prayers on our behalf. Let us hasten to assure you that so far we are all well and the work is going ahead unhindered. The internal strife in Indo-China does not affect us very much here in the south among the tribespeople, although recently two of our fine preachers, Y Tit and Y Dlung, were taken by the Viet Minh.

The severest fighting is going on about a thousand miles to the north of us in Tonkin near the borders of China. Of course an invasion into Indo-China of the Chinese Communists would alter the picture considerably and probably necessitate our leaving the country, but so far this has not occurred. We are exceedingly thankful to you who are interceding for our work. With this Communist menace it sometimes seems like the work of God here hangs by a thread, but that single thread will hold if it is in God's hands. He, upon Whom we call, is OMNIPOTENT.

Our New Plane.

We have wings again! With our new creamy-white Piper Pacer 125, a sturdy little magic ship which flies superbly, we are again skimming over our jungle-clad mountains in minutes instead of hours, and days. Our hearts are full of gratitude to our good friends at the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, who purchased and sent us this lovely plane fully equipped last November. We also thank those of you who gave to our plane fund which made possible the various expenses of customs formalities, the setting up of the plane in Saigon, the purchase of an automatic fire extinguisher which was obligatory in this country, and other things.

A number of very important trips to the port city of Saigon have been made and several flights to our Mission Headquarters at Dalat. Several missionary families and supplies have been ferried from places off the beaten track, and already Gordon has logged 30 hours in it. It is extremely useful and convenient, direct and fast, and for the next four months of this clear dry season we have very flyable weather. Our plane equips us with the means to secure big results in our work. The next trip is to the Mission Executive Committee Meetings at Dalat in a few days.

Christmas Conference, 1950.

Our Banmethuot chapel and housing facilities were taxed to the limit as many hundreds of Christians from various tribes in and around this Ralay center met for a four-day Conference. Several districts were unable to come because of Viet Minh infiltrations. For the first time our hundreds of M'ng Christians held their own three-day Conference at the Lake chapel, after the Ralay Conference was finished at Banmethuot.

Our two trucks were kept busy for several days before and after the Conferences, hauling the Christians, old and young, with their food and cooking pots. Most of the trips were from 15 to 20 miles from town, but several were fifty miles away. We were happy to have a number of missionary guests with us for Christmas, among whom were our cousin, Rev. Ivory Jeffery, Chairman of the Indo-China field, and his wife Ruth. They arrived on December 23rd in time for our evening program. The chapel was crowded to the doors while at each window stood an overflow crowd and many were turned away.

The Christmas program lasted for two and a half hours with 35 Ralay Bible students taking part.

On Sunday the 24th we had meetings all day for the crowds of tribespeople. A great revival swept over the audience on Sunday afternoon after Ruth Jeffery gave a touching message. Every one was bursting to pray and call upon God. They rose to their feet in dozens and couldn't wait on one another to cry out to God.

They began to cry together. Waves of power and strong conviction flowed over the vast crowd and everyone was crying, confessing sins and ~~stirring~~ in prayer for loved ones. It was almost overpowering. The Lord was truly in our midst and the tribespeople were meeting Him. After a long session of such praying as you've never heard, the Christians came up in groups to the platform confessing their sins and getting right one with another and with God. Some brought pipes and tobacco and put them on a chair, yielding them up to God. It was deeply moving, and a true revival meeting.

God will do great things through this wonderful service. We believe it was a direct answer to the prayers of you dear ones that God came down in such power on these stoical tribespeople. These are the people who never cry when their teeth are sawed off; the men who do not cry at the burials of even their own children. To see them broken and weeping strongly over their sins was really seeing a supernatural working.

On Christmas morning the Christians all crowded in front of our houses, giving us speeches, oranges, rice, eggs and flowers. Then we distributed four big tin cans of peanut candy that our cook and his wife had made for them.

In the afternoon there was a great baptismal service when 127 publicly followed the Lord in baptism. One whole day of our Conference was given over to the discussion of Church matters, and the organizing of the Tribes Church in this Darlac Plateau region. The Christians elected their own President, Y No of the Lake chapel, their own secretary, treasurer and two counsellors. The meeting was not over until 1 a.m., that night, because it was necessary to allocate the 45 tribes preachers, some of them students, to our 28 stations. Not only were the Christian groups consulted, but, as in the homeland, the preachers and their wives were permitted to show their preference as to where they wanted to go. A number of the students were placed with older preachers on the same station until they become more experienced.

Self-Support.

Great steps toward self-support were also made at this Conference. This must be stressed at all times, but especially in the light of present war conditions. For some months the chapel at Banmethuot has been not only paying the salary of their own Ralay preacher from their offerings, but also they took care of the support of one of the Bible students, and a caretaker for the Church, and also the electricity for the nightly meetings.

When the President of the Tribes Church was elected the native preachers offered their tenth from which his salary will now be paid. One Church, Buon Tuor, pledged the full support of their pastor. Half a dozen churches pledged half the support, that is, all the rice and vegetables for their preacher, and several others promised to give as much as they could. One man cried, "We'll share our meat, toads and locusts with our preacher."

Not only does this strengthen the Church, but it enables us to train new workers with the money that is saved. There are a number of ~~pr~~ ~~of~~ promising young people already asking for enrollment in our next session of Bible School for whom funds will be required.

Lake Conference.

We had two days of breathing space after our Banmethuot Conference, then we all packed into the cars and trucks, taking all the Bible students and their wives, and the missionaries, and off we went to the Lake Daklak chapel, 32 miles away, for a three-day conference with the Mhong Christians. Y No and Y MIL had the bamboo longhouse-chapel decorated with whole banana plants, and it was a tropical bower. We filled the sleeping quarters at the back of the chapel, and the crowd of 400 Christians slept in a long leafed-in shelter. They slept on mats on the ground around their fires. Some made their camp among the bamboo clumps nearby.

We met with these dear Mnongs in seven a.m. prayer meetings, and in morning and afternoon and evening sessions. Our Bible students brought beautiful messages, and we were greatly thrilled. These were from the lessons they had learned throughout the school term on prayer, the power of the Holy Spirit, being empty channels for the rivers of Living Water, abiding in Christ. These preachers have all truly met God this year in the Bible School and have been cleansed and consecrated. We know that God will use them in these coming six months of preaching before they re-enter Bible School.

We put on our special Christmas program in one of the night meetings at the Lake chapel, using a long row of big red candles as footlights, and the Christmas story depicted were very beautiful in the soft light and banana-leaf setting. The chapel was packed to the last inch. All the Christian school children came from a village six miles away with their fine Christian school teacher.

At the close of the program Y No and the preachers surprised us. With their own tithe money they had bought big wash basins full of colored Chinese candy and 300 oranges. There was a handful of candy and an orange to distribute to every child present, and it was a happy hour as everyone sat on the bamboo floor and the few benches in the red candle-light. It was thrilling to see these Mnong Christians having their first happy Christmas in their own headquarters chapel. On the last day of the old year at this Lake Conference, we baptized 57 Mnongs, of the Mnong Rlum and Mnong Gar tribes. What a setting for a service! A warm sunny morning, the towering blue mountains, the sparkling lake, green islands, white lotus lillies, and the baptismal service on the shore.

Leprosy Settlement.

It was a great day when at last we gathered in a number of our tribesfolk afflicted with leprosy. Picking them up in various villages by truck and trailer, they arrived at the leprosarium covered with red dust, their few rags and belongings in their back-baskets. The eagerness with which they climbed aboard showed the hope springing up in their hearts that a new day had begun for them. The saddest part was to have to leave so many behind.

In one village of about a hundred people we found eleven poor unfortunates waiting for us, having limped in from their jungle shacks when they heard we were coming that day. Many of them are Christians. We were able to take only five of them, with our still limited accommodations. Since we have no facilities yet for healthy babies, mothers who had leprosy could not be accepted. We took one man badly affected with the disease, who had been living with his wife and four small children in the same house. We hope by so doing that his family may not contract leprosy, although it may be too late.

There are probably fifteen hundred people with leprosy in this Darlad region, ostracized and often treated with cruelty begotten of fear. We have not the funds for equipment or personnel yet to care for more than several score of this number. There is great expense in dealing with this plague of the ages, especially in getting the work established, "But we never test the resources of God until we attempt the impossible." (F.B.Meyer). And when God commands us to care for these "hungry, strange, naked, sick ones," He gives us the power to do it. We know that He will enable us to care for these poor unaided, uncomforted people. We hope that within a matter of a few years that we can eliminate leprosy from this region as a public health menace. It will not be possible to do away with it altogether, but at least we can protect the healthy people, and keep it from spreading, as well as healing many who are afflicted. Our first exhortation to the patients consisted in turning their eyes to the Savior who alone can cleanse and heal, and not to rely upon the new wonder drugs or upon us. We believe God can use these modern scientific means to bring cures in a great many cases.

These men, women, boys and girls for whom we have room are happily enjoying clean living quarters, new mats, warm woolen blankets, good food, and good medical care. Miss Charlotte Schon, B.Sc., R.N., has her hands full as she tenderly

binds up the crippled feet, the hideous open sores whose stench is nauseating, and as she administers the new sulphone drugs. She is training some of the patients to help her with the dressings

Miss Mildred Ade, B.A., R.N., is expected to arrive from France after her term of French study is finished, and we are also looking forward to the arrival of a third nurse for this work.

Right now the patients, all except the most afflicted, are busily making gardens to augment their food supply. They have their own chief, and there is a fine spirit of co-operation among them. At the dedication service, it is wondrous to hear many of the patients thank the Lord for having brought them to this haven of hope. A young Raday preacher, Y Nguy, is living at the settlement and preaches to the patients each night, and he helps Miss Schon with the secretarial work in the clinic. A healthy Raday Christian woman also accompanies Miss Schon on her trips and helps her in many ways. Her name is Ha Deen.

The work received a set-back two months ago when our Superintendent, Mr. Ourgaud, suffered a partial stroke and has been laid up ever since. He is now much better but must still take time for a long rest. We were fortunate in securing the services of a first-class mechanic who looks after our motor vehicles and other equipment.

We have a fortune in fine hardwood trees on the property which has been granted to us by His Majesty Bao Dai. These we have been cutting and hauling into town to be sawn up into planks for the construction of a number of wooden cabins. The U.S. Economic Commission to Indo-China (E.C.A.) is going to supply us with a complete sawmill to facilitate our making use of this splendid wood. It will be some months before it can be sent and set up.

As the jungle is being cleared with thirty tribesmen wielding axes and primitive knives, we look ahead to the day when the settlement will be a hive of industry and profitable activity, as hundreds of these afflicted ones find new hope for their bodies and Eternal Life for their souls. We are deeply indebted to many of you for your gifts that are enabling us to purchase food and clothing and other necessities for these poor people. We shall be glad to give you one of these patients for your very own, if you would care to send just enough to cover the cost of the rice - about \$4.00 a month each. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me". "Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you."

May you see these pain-tormented ones and their grateful faces calling out to you. Christ says, in effect, "Do not tell me you love me. Go feed my sheep, and I will know, and they will know that you love me."

Every day now numbers of people with leprosy or relatives of them come to our back door imploring us to take them in. Even as ~~we~~ we write these lines, several are leaning in our office window (regardless of the danger of infection) asking us when there will be room for them also.

Furlough. Laura hopes to leave for furlough in May in order to see Douglas graduate from Wheaton College, as he expects to be inducted into the U.S. Army in June. She wants to spend the summer with Leslie and Stanley also. Gordon will likely have to remain here until July or August. There are so many things that must be accomplished before he can get away. We are expecting secretarial help to handle our correspondence and bookkeeping while we are on furlough. If any of our Chicago friends should hear of a furnished apartment to rent in that area, we would be grateful to them if they would kindly let us know.

Laura I. Smith Very gratefully yours in Him, *Gordon H. Smith*

P.S. Please send all gifts to our Headquarters, The Christian & Missionary Alliance, 260 W. 44th St., New York, N.Y., (In Canada - 145 Evelyn Ave., Toronto, Canada) Make the check or money order out to our Society and attach a note stating that it is for "Tribeswork (or leper work), Gordon H. Smith". The Treasurer will send you a receipt and as soon as we receive the equivalent in Indo-China currency we shall let you know. We are always happy to hear from you directly, at our Banmethuot address.