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As we boarded the plane in Saigon and winged our way toward Banmethuot we wondered what we would find of our resettlement churches which we had left the previous year. The reports of the political situation were rather disturbing and security conditions had deteriorated considerably since we had left on furlough. We wondered how many of our Christians were left and what was their spiritual and economical condition.

Upon arriving in Banmethuot we were welcomed home by the missionaries and other friends. Later on we met two of our student pastors who had to flee from their charges some time before because of the advance of the red tide. We learned that Thâm Trạch, Khuê Ngọc Điền, Phước Trạch, Vụ Bồn, Quảng Nhịêu, Phú Học, Đạt Hiếu, Đạo Tế and Lê Thanh were all in V.C. hands. These were all places where we had churches already constructed - and six of them had held great promise of becoming self-supporting within a year. People asked us what we were going to do now that the resettlement work was closed. Because of severe travel restrictions the ~~resettlement~~ villages were beyond our reach. What had become of the Christians - the churches - the work that had gone on for six years? God's Word told us in John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go forth and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." We knew that the resettlement work was not going to close because the work was not ours, but the Lord's, and He knows what is the best thing for the advance of His church. The Lord did not deem it necessary to supply us with the information of how He was going to work, but He did instruct us to pray. This we did with the confidence that the future would bring glory to His name. Gradually we began to see the Lord's direction in the work.

Our first visit to the refugee center outside Banmethuot began on a depressing note. It was a dark, drizzly day, and we pulled off the main

highway on to a veritable "slough of despond." As we slithered through the mud we saw the houses (if you could call the shelters made of scraps of wood, bamboo, tin and canvas - houses!) People began coming out toward the car and we recognized Christians from various villages. We held a service in the home of one of the Thâm Trach Christians. Afterward, while renewing old acquaintances, we were struck by the fact that these people were thanking the Lord for His goodness. Here they were - For the second time in a few short years they had lost all they possessed - and this, the second time, was worse than the first! Then they at least had land on which to build a new life. Here they were with hardly more than the clothes on their backs, living in shacks made of whatever material they could "scrounge." They had no money, no work and not enough to eat, but still they had not lost their Christian testimony. They had remained! Then, as had happened so often before, the witness that was given by them was attractive to those who had come from villages where we had had no Christians, and hence no way of entering to reach them for Christ. No, we couldn't go to them, but the Lord brought them to the place where they would hear of His love and mercy - and many believed. The Christian families now number 74 in this village which has been named, "The Village of Love."

We had not been back long when we heard the news that the pastor at Lê Thanh had been killed by the V.C.'s. After taking his wife and child out to Pleiku for safety, he started back for he felt that his place was in Lê Thanh, ministering to his flock. On the way the bus in which he was riding, was halted, and he was ordered out. The bus driver was told to continue on his way. As the bus proceeded down the road they heard shots, but dared not return. The next morning the Christians came out and sorrowfully carried the body of their pastor back to the village for burial. Why did Thầy Tân have to die? We don't know, but we do know that the fact that he "counted his life not dear" had a great impact on other pastors who had previously

been afraid for their own safety.

Shortly after this we had more indication of the Lord's direction in the work. First, one of our last two pastors behind V.C. lines had to flee at midnight from the village he had been for the past year. The account of the way God led and protected him was thrilling. After relocating in another village, he and his wife continued to minister to the needs of his first congregation. Although he himself could not return, his wife made weekly visits back and took with her sermons which her husband had written out. But then came the day when the V.C. held her prisoner. For 21 days she kept asking them to release her. Finally, tiring of her persistence, they let her go with the warning she was never to return. At Phước An, where they were now stationed, there was already a church building, but, as the young pastor put it to us, it would be much better if it could be moved to a quieter and more central location. At that time the church was on the outskirts of town, and when the government and V.C. forces had a battle, the bullets would fly about, sometimes striking the galvanized tin roof. This, he said, was distracting and made it difficult for the Christians to worship peacefully and concentrate on the message. In the few months that he spent at Phước An before returning to Bible School, this young man had led several souls to the Lord, moved the church to an excellent piece of property and put in some improvements in the relocated building. By his conduct he had given the church a good, respected name in the village. Now it was time for him to leave for school. We thought of moving the student pastor then working in the Banmethuot refugee center out to take his place at Phước An, but that would leave the refugee center without a resident pastor. However God was already working things out. The last pastor left behind V.C. lines came out and said he thought it best if he came out to Banmethuot for a while. Up to now he knew he was in the Lord's will by staying and he was not the least bit afraid. But now, it seemed that the Lord was telling him to move out, and all of a sudden he seemed to be afraid

to stay - but with it there was a peace that told him the fear was from the Lord. This gave us the opening we needed and the District Superintendent agreed that we should move the preacher from the Banmethuot refugee camp down to the government outpost vacated by the preacher returning to Bible School, and move this man into the refugee camp.

This was just before Christmas and we wondered what the Christmas programs were going to be like this year. We were a little worried, but should not have been, for the work is the Lord's. We are asked to serve and obey - the program is His. The government now came up with a plan to make this center a model for all the country, so the village was laid out in straight, even rows each neat house having a good-sized yard around it. Each religion was assigned a large lot on which to build a church. This presented a problem. Where were we going to get the money to build? These families had lost practically everything, so how would they have anything to give to the church? But when the Lord works in the heart of a man it is strange what will happen. When the pastor told his people that they needed money to construct the church the response was immediate and enthusiastic. They promised 5000\$ (piasters) and their labour. In answer to prayer, the week before Christmas the Christians were able to worship in their new building.....But now it was Christmas and more money was needed for decorating the church and for providing something special for the children. Again an appeal was made and this time they gave 2000\$. One of the Christians who contributed was a widower with two small children. In his house he had no furniture, just a dirt floor, a fire and a mat for him and his children to sleep on. Every day he worked he made just about enough money to buy food for that day. But when the need was presented he came forward to give. He pulled 110\$ out of his pocket which was all that he had. "I want to give to the Lord," he said. "But I also need to keep some money for my children." With that he gave ¹⁰⁰100\$ to the church and kept 10\$ for his family.

The evening of December 25th, the Christmas program was held in the new church building. Since ours was the only church already up in the village, many of the villagers and village officials attended.

But what was happening in other areas? What was going on behind V.C. lines? Were the Christians standing true? Were they still worshipping God? As the new year came in we began to hear of what the Lord was doing in the inaccessible places. In Quảng Nhiêu the Christians gave the Christmas program just as the pastor had taught them before he had to leave, and they even invited the V.C. officials to attend! In Vụ Bồn and Phước Trạch the Christians prepared their own programs and presented them. In Thâm Trạch it was more difficult. During the past year most of the Christians at Thâm Trạch had left the village which had been taken over by the V.C. However there were still some ~~left~~ among the few hundred people left in the village. Among them was a man zealous for the Lord. He saw that the church was kept clean and swept at all times. Never did he miss worshipping on Sunday, even if he was the only one in attendance. Every Sunday he brought his offering to the church and put it aside. As Christmas approached he decided that there should be a Christmas program like every other year, so he planned one all by himself. In decorating the church he told the village people and V.C. authorities that instead of the usual Christmas banner which proclaimed the happy anniversary of Christ's birth, he felt that this year the Lord would have him put up a different one in front of the church, saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." He explained to them that his reason for doing this was to let men know that not until they glorified God in heaven would there be peace on earth. The church was decorated and ready, but on the 24th. of December the government forces came in, destroyed the village, and brought the villagers out. 88 families (208 people) trekked through the mountains toward the government district headquarters. The village at Quảng Trạch which is under government control and where we have a church, was on the way.

There the Christians celebrated Christmas. This Christian had been able to escape with only the pair of shorts he was wearing and a little money in his hand. After the Christmas service he gave his offering to the church treasurer who at first refused it, saying that he should keep it as he had lost everything. However he answered, "No, this money is not mine, but the Lord's, as it is the tithe that I have been giving over these many months, and now you must accept it." The Christians in Quảng Trách took up a collection for the refugees and presented them with 10 gunny sacks of dried sweet potatoes and a sum of money. Out of their poverty they gave to those who had less than they. Only God in the hearts of men can do this! After Christmas the refugees continued their walk out to Lạc Thiện where the government is now resettling them. We were able to procure enough blankets to give one to each of the 88 families. The Americans kindly flew our student pastor at the Banmethuot refugee center out to Lạc Thiện where he distributed them.

These are momentous days, days of unprecedented opportunities. There is a steady stream of humanity travelling through mountains and over jungle trails to reach the safety of the refugee camps. They need many things - food, shelter, medicine, clothing, but most of all they need the Saviour. However there are still those who are as yet unable to escape from the bondage of communism, and among them are Christians. We praise God for the reports that they are guarding their faith, firm on the foundation God has laid for them. In spite of fire, pestilence and sword, they are remaining, and the work of the Lord ^{in the} resettlement villages continues on.

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

'Fear not I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, I will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my gracious omnipotent hand.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow,
For I will be with thee thy trials to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all sufficient shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine!

The soul that on **Jesus** doth lean for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!"