

Our very dear Friends,

For all your kind greetings, Christmas cards, gifts, packages of old cards, and clothing -- we say a hearty thanks. For those who kindly sent gifts for the work, our heartfelt thanks indeed. Our mail is stacked high, but we'll try and write a personal note to each who sent gifts, and we'll mail this bulletin too.

We had a wonderful Christmas -- three days of it. We always give a tea for officials, and this year in Vietnamese country, our house was swamped. Laura worked three days making cakes and cookies and we suggested that our visitors help themselves. This they surely did, for the first group nearly swept all up at once, some coming back for thirds. I had to rescue some for the crowds that were still pouring in to visit and wish a Happy Christmas.

The Scene of the Nativity put on in costume by our mountaineer students was very effective. The borrowed army tent was overflowing. After four weeks of steady rains, they stopped on Christmas Day in time for the program.

A BLESSED YEAR.

I am sure if many young people who hesitate to come as missionaries could spend a few days with us, nothing in all the world could keep them in the homeland again. They would eagerly give themselves for this glorious task of winning tribespeople to Christ. Looking back over 1956, which we count as one of the most important in our lives, who could wish for more than this --

- ...a chance to step out in faith and trust God to bring miracles to pass. To see the power of God opening doors, breaking down opposition, causing men and women to accept Christ. To see tribal centers being established with the Word of God going out for the first time.
- ...the thrill of being the first to proclaim the Good News. Nearly everyone we meet is a candidate for salvation, for they have never heard before. The joy of seeing converts grow in grace and testify of their salvation. The soul-stirring sight as tribesmen, only months out of the jungle, stand up and preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.
- ...the satisfaction of knowing that this is the most important work in all the world, more than atomic research, more than agricultural progress, more than the arts or philosophy of the world, no matter how good they are. Knowing that every effort we make in the power of God's Spirit is counting for eternity. Every hard, long trip by jeep; every rain-soaked muddy trail we climb; every filthy longhouse we sleep in; every long, patient explaining of the Gospel -- all is being done because God wants it done, and will reward it some day.
- ...the realization that behind us are the thousands of praying co-workers in the homeland, without whose prayers and gifts this work could not be done. The wonderful words of encouragement you write us, the cards, the letters, the checks -- all good gifts from the Loving hand of our God.

God has been with us. He has poured out His grace upon us, and we are truly thankful and humbled. We have been led to take great steps of faith as opportunities have arisen. As each hill-top of faith has been reached, we see still new horizons ahead, beckoning us to trust God for even more and greater things. When Vietnamese Christians come with a call to work among the tribes; when many young people say they want to study the Word of God and become missionaries to the tribes; when these workers send us promising tribespeople to train for workers -- what else is there to do but take them on by faith and trust God for their needs?

If we were to turn away from such glorious opportunities, knowing how eager God is to get the Gospel out to the tribes; knowing how much prayer is going up for us; knowing what limitless resources our Heavenly Father has for us; knowing that God has commanded us to go and preach; knowing that He has promised to supply our need - then we think it would be a crime to sit back and do nothing. It would be trampling under feet the very gracious promises of God who is just waiting for His children to dare to step out and trust Him entirely.

Friends, we are compelled to trust God. We cannot do otherwise. This work is too great, too vast, to be accomplished in any other way. We can only expect God's co-operation when we will to do His will. Otherwise we are flouting in God's face His Word which assures us He will honor unwavering faith. Call it presumption? When our monthly budget runs nearly a thousand dollars a month (including some building in tribal centers) we are convinced that if we are to have our needs supplied, we must walk humbly before God, trusting completely in His Word. We are sure also that God will raise up many more friends to share, like you are doing, so that we can advance and advance and advance. Our God is a GREAT GOD. He will never fail us.

We think of you dear friends as part of us, exercising your faith along with ours, accomplishing God's purpose together. Some day we'll share the glory together. In that day I don't want to feel regrets that I did not present the challenge and needs of our unreached tribes in Central Viet Nam in an adequate way to you at home.

BRIEFLY -

January 4, 1957. Placed the Kinh family, Vietnamese missionaries, among the Vanh Kiu tribe north near the 17th parallel. Many speak Vietnamese so they can start preaching at once. They will also learn the Vanh Kiu language. There is a good double house for sale there at Tan Lam, suitable for them to live and preach in, and to put up mountaineers to spend the night. \$250.00.

Our motor launch, named Thiong Bu (Mountaineer) is ready to launch again after a complete overhauling. We purchased it cheap in Saigon. The new 30hp Johnson outboard motor should make quick work of getting up the rivers into the mountaineer areas. We made a sturdy trailer to haul it behind our light truck. Pray for the first center we hope soon to open - Thanh My, among the Katu.

On January 2nd, our new Vietnamese Bible School began with 14 students. They study and eat together with the 10 mountaineer students. We have accepted these by faith. They cost us \$12.00 a month each for food.

Please pray for 13 more Vietnamese missionaries to place in as many new tribal centers. Their support runs from \$35. to \$55. a month according to the number of children they have, and the cost of living in their areas. \$250.00 will build them a house to live in. \$250.00 will build a reception-meeting longhouse.

SEND GIFTS THROUGH KING'S GARDEN, Seattle.

Vision Inc. will be glad to continue forwarding gifts, but they are so very short-handed we have arranged also with King's Garden, Missionary Services, Box 33, Seattle, Wash. to forward gifts from those wishing receipts for income tax purposes. They have a staff of 150 and are permanently set up for such service. If no receipt is needed, gifts can be sent direct to us. In Canada - Missionary Health Institute, 325 Sheppard Ave., Lansing, Ontario.

In order to send our receipts immediately to those of you who have sent gifts, I am enclosing them with this circular, and will try and write personally just as soon as I can. The fine weather is here now, and I expect to be out in the tribal areas a great deal. Again our very warm thanks for your wonderful help in prayer and by gift. (Laura is away for a few days getting her teeth fixed).

Very gratefully yours in Him,

Gordon H. Smith