

The following report by missionary nurse, Mildred Ade, comes directly from the wrecked mission station at Banmethuot, and was written just about a year after the Viet Cong Tet offensive of 1968.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance shares this vivid report of continuing work and witness by the faithful tribal Christians, who have their own growing list of martyred pastors and believers. Miss Ade's report is given to you as it appeared in THE ALLIANCE WITNESS.

# In Life Or In Death

Banmethuot - One year later

By Mildred R. Ade, missionary at Banmethuot since the beginning of her ministry in 1950.

ALL VICTORY is gained through pain, but it is a pain that spells joy

*Pain, joy, victory.* This is Banmethuot one year after the 1968 Tet offensive. There is pain. The

three gray marble markers in the small sodded enclosure on the north boundary of the Mission compound spell pain. So do those plots of consecrated ground in American cities and Raday villages that hold the members of our Banmethuot family taken from us at that time.

We do not deny the pain, but we also find joy and victory.

The Raday church building, now fully restored, stands bright and new again, a symbol of hope and a promise of a future. And as the people gather within its walls there is a greater awareness of God and of the reality of the "things not seen." The Raday tribesman has a religious system that offers the spirits a ritual service in exchange for material benefits, for health and wealth. He uses his gods rather than communing with them.

After Tet 1968 the Christian Raday stood alone in the midst of devastation and loss with a Book\* in his hand and a cry in his heart.

No one suffered greater loss than Pastor Ngue of the Banmethuot church. All of his possessions were destroyed by fire. The new church, not yet free of debt, was roofless and battered. He was held captive by the VC for three months and his body was fatigued. Two sons lay in a temporary grave on the ravaged Mission compound. He prayed, "O God, comfort me! You have taken the children born of my body; now comfort me with children born of Thy Spirit."

The Book has sustained him through doubt and further testings in the succeeding months. In September

his year-old son died suddenly without illness. "I wanted to scold God," he said, "like a child who doesn't understand scolds at his father; but as I read the Word, He spoke and corrected me. He said, 'I am but preparing you, My child, to bring My comfort to others.'" At his request Mr. Ngue will be serving as district evangelist, for he says, "My comfort is in preaching the Word of God. That is where I find joy."

Again, there is a new closeness among us, a communication of spirit that crosses old barriers of culture. When, on my return to Banmethuot, I first met Mr. Dhe, an elder of the church, he spoke no customary greeting. Taking my hands in his, he said, "Sister, I have lost five members of my family." I replied, "We know—we know your loss and we know your pain, for together we have lost our families." We met again after the proper expression of sympathy (a small gift of money) had been made. He thanked me for the gift, for the thoughtful observance of custom. Then he added, "But we want you to know that far beyond any gift is the comfort that comes when day after day we look over and see that you are here among us."

This is a fellowship that is like a rare and costly gift. Comforted of God to be able to mutually comfort and strengthen each other. It is a joy spelled out of pain. Mr. Dhe is faithfully serving in prayer and praise within his church and its four branches.

The Raday Scriptures have been the strength and comfort of the people. This has been repeatedly affirmed in testimony and conversation. In October we witnessed the Word's renewing power as Jerai, Bahnar and

Mnong preachers met with the Raday men at Banmethuot in a three-day evangelism conference. Living for months without respite under the threat of a repetition of the Tet offensive, they came with a heaviness of spirit and a weariness of mind. Daily Rev. Doan-van-Mieng, president of the Vietnamese Evangelical Church, ministered the Word in the Spirit, and we saw heaviness replaced by gladness, weariness expelled by new strength. All of the preachers had studied the Scriptures with N. Robert Ziemer in the Banmethuot Bible school, the Scriptures that he himself had put into the Raday language. The final afternoon they gathered at the memorial grave site of the missionaries to pay tribute to him and his colleagues and to dedicate themselves again to the Lord.

Some of these men had been in school at Banmethuot at the time of the attack and during the following months had carried in their minds the scenes of ruin and rubble. Now they returned to be quartered in the Bible school building, to meet in the restored church, to fellowship in the newly completed residence of the Vietnamese missionary with him and his family.

We trust that when they return for the second conference the buildings yet on the drawing board will be complete. These include three missionary residences (at present we in Banmethuot are living in rented quarters), a Bible school dormitory, a teachers residence and a clinic-directional center unit for the leprosy work.

We face the future with expectation, thankful for the continuing fruitful ministry of the tribal pastors and preachers. We are encouraged by the

\*A friend of William Borden, himself a missionary in Kashmir, wrote these words when Borden died in Egypt at the age of twenty-five while studying Arabic preparatory to missionary work.

\*The New Testament and Psalms in Raday, dedicated in 1965, was largely the work of Rev. N. Robert Ziemer, one of the six missionaries slain at Banmethuot.

monthly increase of patients again helped in the leprosy treatment program.

But we have confidence in nothing but the faithfulness of God. And we humbly pray, "Keep us thus, that we may know Thee and exchange our weakness for Thy strength." ♦ ♦ ♦

## IN LIFE OR IN DEATH

Contributions are still needed for rebuilding and rehabilitating the strategic Banmethuot mission station and Bible school. Please designate such gifts for "Viet Nam Emergency" and send to:

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A year-after sequel to violent death and martyrdom of national believers and six American missionaries at Banmethuot in Viet Nam.

