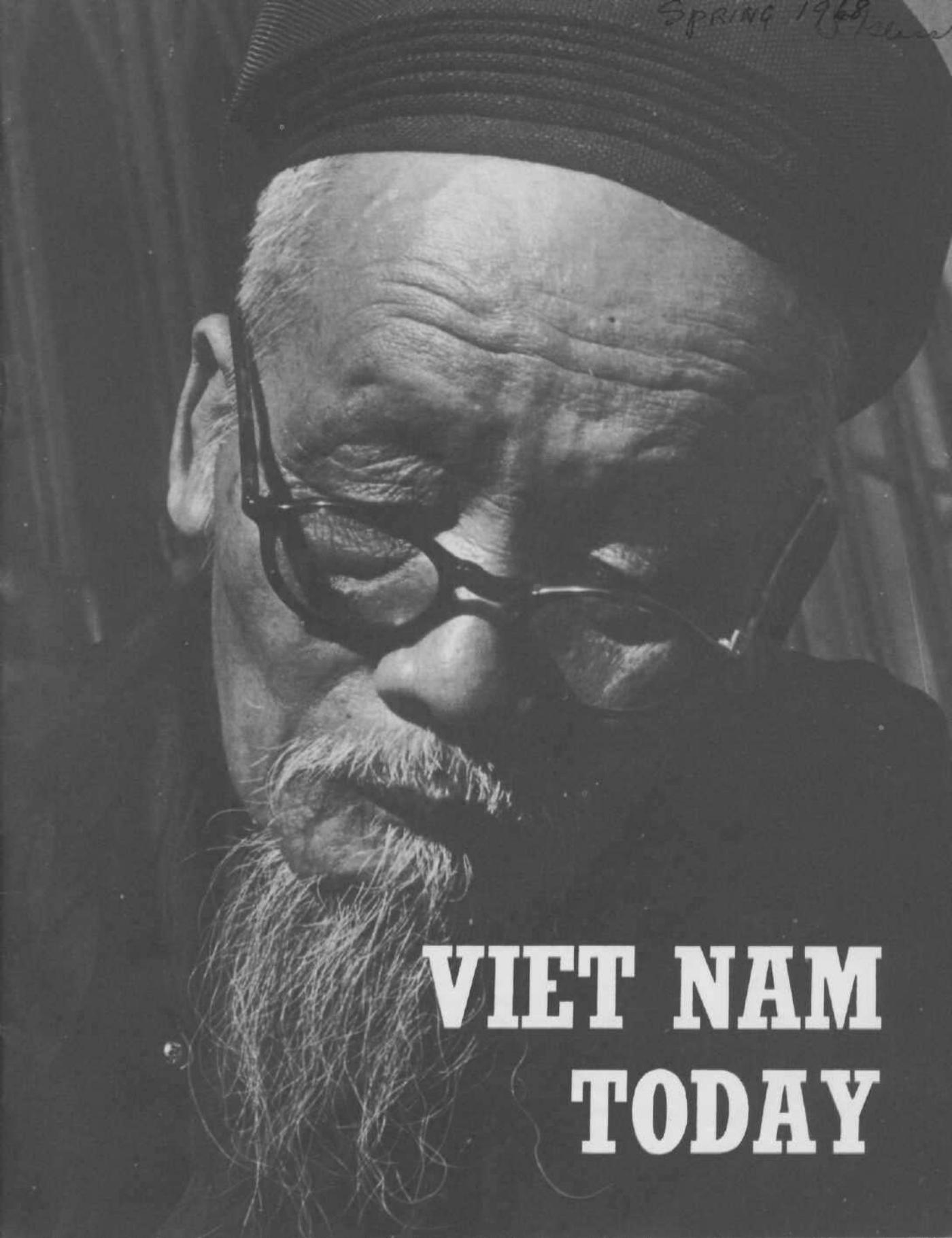


SPRING 1968



**VIET NAM
TODAY**

VIET NAM TODAY

NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE
VIET NAM FIELD

CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE

SPRING 1968 NUMBER 1

This magazine is issued twice a year by the missionaries serving in Viet Nam. We shall be glad to accept any special gifts to make the publication possible.

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Mined roads, blown bridges, canal checkpoints, and countless ambushes had brought travel almost to a halt in the Delta. The Viet Cong were attempting to show their power before the national elections to be held in September. Few areas were spared.

by Dick Pendell

Then it was our turn.

Suddenly at 2 a.m. we were jolted awake by the explosions of incoming artillery and mortars.

All around our home, guards, fearing a frontal attack on their buildings, opened fire on any shadow that moved in the street.

From a nearby military hotel a GI was yelling, "Where's the ammunition? . . . Quick! Pass out the ammunition!" While the duty officer bellowed, "Clear those balconies! Stay in your rooms!"

Soon the patrol planes were dropping flares on the VC positions. Armed helicopters quickly arrived with rocket, grenade and machine gun support action. But the VC forces were well entrenched and continued pouring in shells, round after round. The din was ear-splitting!

Our son Greg, too sleepy to realize what was going on, made but one comment: "Chopper make lots of noise . . . ooooh!"

The American headquarters compound and other American-occupied hotels appeared to be the primary VC targets of attack. However, the quick response of the American night patrols caused the VC to fire inaccurately and without apparent pattern upon the residents of Can Tho. The 46 dead were all Vietnamese; only 5 of the 237 wounded were Americans.

Over 100 rounds fell on our city that night. Many shells did not explode. One of these landed about 15 yards from our children's bedroom. The attack finally ended.

How does one react under an intense mortar barrage? Were we frightened? Perhaps, but we didn't really think about it. Amid the noise of exploding shells came the assuring words of the Psalmist—"Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night . . ." "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in Him will I trust." Psalm 91:2.

The night passed.

In the morning after breakfast we kept an appointment with a village pastor to complete plans for a new Christian day school.

Our life continued on as usual.

I knew
a

Patriarch

by Jean Livingstone

It was the winter of 1958 when we first met the patriarch. As our plane landed at the Da Nang airport an old gentleman leaning on his cane stepped forward to meet us. His face was kind and his speech jolly. He made friends with our two year old son immediately.

A few minutes later we were seated in his home enjoying a time of fellowship with the other new missionaries who had preceded us to Viet Nam. Suddenly a gong sounded from outside. The Irwins rose and excused themselves. It was then we learned that this couple, the former field chairman and his wife, not only carried on a very active ministry with the thirty three churches in the Da Nang district, acted as counsellors and advisors to sixteen Junior missionaries, but also taught full time in the Bible School. The gong was the signal that classes had begun.

In the weeks and months that followed I observed the patriarch closely. Mr. Irwin's office was on the cool, screened porch of their home.

Here would come the local pastors and church elders with their problems. He was never too busy to meet anyone. I was told that even during his earlier years when he played tennis, the same pattern was followed. If a visitor came, be he pastor or peasant, the game was stopped and undivided attention was given to the need of his guest.

The Irwins were never home on Sundays. Invitations to speak in the churches were made months in advance. Sundays found them bouncing over rough roads in the Land Rover en route to some village. No word of complaint was ever heard from Mr. Irwin even though his cramped position in the car brought considerable pain because of arthritis.

Mr. Irwin was a spiritual father and grandfather to most of the pastors. Many had known this missionary since they were small. He spoke in their churches with love and compassion showing plainly on his face. It seemed that the Lord



In the year of our Lord, 1914, there went one called EDWIN FRANKLIN IRWIN to French Indo China. He took unto himself Marie Morgenthaler to wed. They begot two sons, George Edwin and David Franklin, and one daughter, Helen May. Frank Irwin preached Christ to the ancestor worshipers and established churches in Viet Nam. When he went to be with the Lord his days numbered seventy and eight.

blessed the Irwins with an added measure of physical endurance in order to carry on their heavy schedule. Though the custom of almost everyone in the Orient is a time of rest during the noon heat, frequently Mrs. Irwin would be found at that time seated at her portable organ teaching a young student the fundamentals of music, while Mr. Irwin sat in his chair thinking of the afternoon lectures or other pressing problems.

Mealtime at the Irwin home was like a seminar on missions. While listening to Mr. Irwin our hearts were challenged as he shared with us his wisdom gained from years of experience. It was a benediction to be in their midst.

Finally, after forty-six years of dedicated service for Christ in Viet Nam, Frank Irwin and his devoted wife returned to Canada. I know that my life has been enriched for having known this missionary statesman — this patriarch in our times.



"Given to hospitality"

"A faithful ambassador is health"



G R O U P

I recently read where a professional basketball star signed a yearly contract for \$250,000. I do not begrudge him the money, but just wonder how the other members of the team reacted to the announcement. Could one star play the opposition by himself? The answer is obvious. It requires teamwork.

My wife and I are part of a team — a team of missionaries, Vietnamese co-workers and montagnard (tribal) pastors. Together we minister at Dalat Tribes Center for 15,000 Koho (Kuh-haw) Christians. The District Superintendent is a Tribesman; a Vietnamese is dean of the Bible School, and 8 missionaries assist or direct in translation, radio and medical work. The job is herculean. We could never hope to accomplish it alone. Side by side we work together in conquering present frontiers while constantly searching out new ones.

Viet Nam, plagued with suffering and sorrow caused by war, presents a real need for relief and rehabilitation. Through the cooperation and teamwork of a number of voluntary relief organizations we are together meeting the needs.

One facet of relief work is the Christian Vocational School and farm in Hue, sponsored by World Relief Commission. Here again teamwork plays an important role. There are 4 American college graduates skilled in animal husbandry, mechanics, carpentry and accounting. An American girl is doing a fine job teaching home economics. This is a program of self help that is so essential to the future development of Viet Nam.

A dream fast becoming a reality is the new Koho Christian Technical and Farm School near Dalat, a project sponsored by World Vision, Inc. The purpose of this school is to teach the displaced tribespeople how to support a new community through means of advanced technologies in farming and crafts. The spiritual impetus is provided by the local indigenous church. Here again teamwork is the key toward the completion of a multimillion piaster project.

Teamwork also appears from organizations other than those sponsored by the church or voluntary agencies. The U.S. Military has assisted in transportation of personnel and supplies to large resettlement areas. Without their ready help our program would be greatly hampered. In one area where missionaries conducted a three-day conference, relief organizations gave the food and the army provided transportation. At that time 200 decisions for Christ were made.

Special Forces teams give valuable aid to construction of clinics and churches. In one case they sponsored a new church for the Tribal Christians in their Strike Force. Many of these Christians, noted for their character and dependability, were chosen as platoon leaders. These were fellow Christians and teammates working to build the Church in Viet Nam while serving as soldiers in the Vietnamese Army.

One day as we waited in a tribal village for our flight to Dalat, a helicopter delivered eleven bodies slain that day by the VC. We watched in silence as each mangled body was quickly pulled out of the helicopter and taken to a waiting truck. We were unable to inquire concerning the dead because our flight was due. The following morning at the Dalat airport I saw a plane discharge 3 coffins with several sorrowing tribal women and children. I wondered if these could have been among the dead we saw the day before. As I read the names on each coffin I sadly noted that they were Christians. These had been part of the team. Yet, I knew that God is building His Church and will raise up more teammates for the work. I asked God to make me a more faithful team member.

"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple." Rev. 7:15.

by Wesley Schelander

S T R E N G T H

NIGHT VISITORS

His name means "blind" and he is blind in one eye. His hair is rather shaggy and his "missionary barrel" suit fits him rather loosely. He is not one of the more impressive-looking pastors among the Raday tribespeople. Yet God has put His hand upon this soft-spoken Tribesman. For many years he has faithfully served the Lord in his home area. A short time ago his village had some visitors in the night. Here is his story:

"About two o'clock one morning we heard the sound of guns coming from the south of our village. We knew immediately they were the guns of the Viet Cong. Then we heard the village soldiers return fire; however, they soon ran off because they were not able to hold up their side of the battle. When the Viet Cong no longer heard the sound of the defenders' guns, they entered the village. We watched the enemy as they filed past — some wearing black trousers and shirts, others with khaki clothes resembling the village militia. The majority of them were Vietnamese, but there were also tribespeople among them.

The Viet Cong climbed into our houses and opened our trunks. They stole clothes, money, cloth and blankets. Then they began capturing people. They came into my house looking for soldiers. They grabbed my son and tied him up because they said he was a soldier. When I objected and said he was a student, they wouldn't listen, but instead, tied me up with my child.

After they had tied us — father and son together — they carted us off. I saw they were dragging us to the middle of the village, so I asked my wife to bring by Bible and hymnal. But those men took them both from me — my Bible and my hymnal. Didn't they know what those books were?

When we got into the jungle they still hadn't returned my Bible and hymn book, so I begged them to give the books back to me. They said

they never took them.

We were all tied together on one rope, but individually our arms were tied together above the elbows and across our backs. All VC tie their prisoners this way. It is painful and the rope marks remain for a long time.

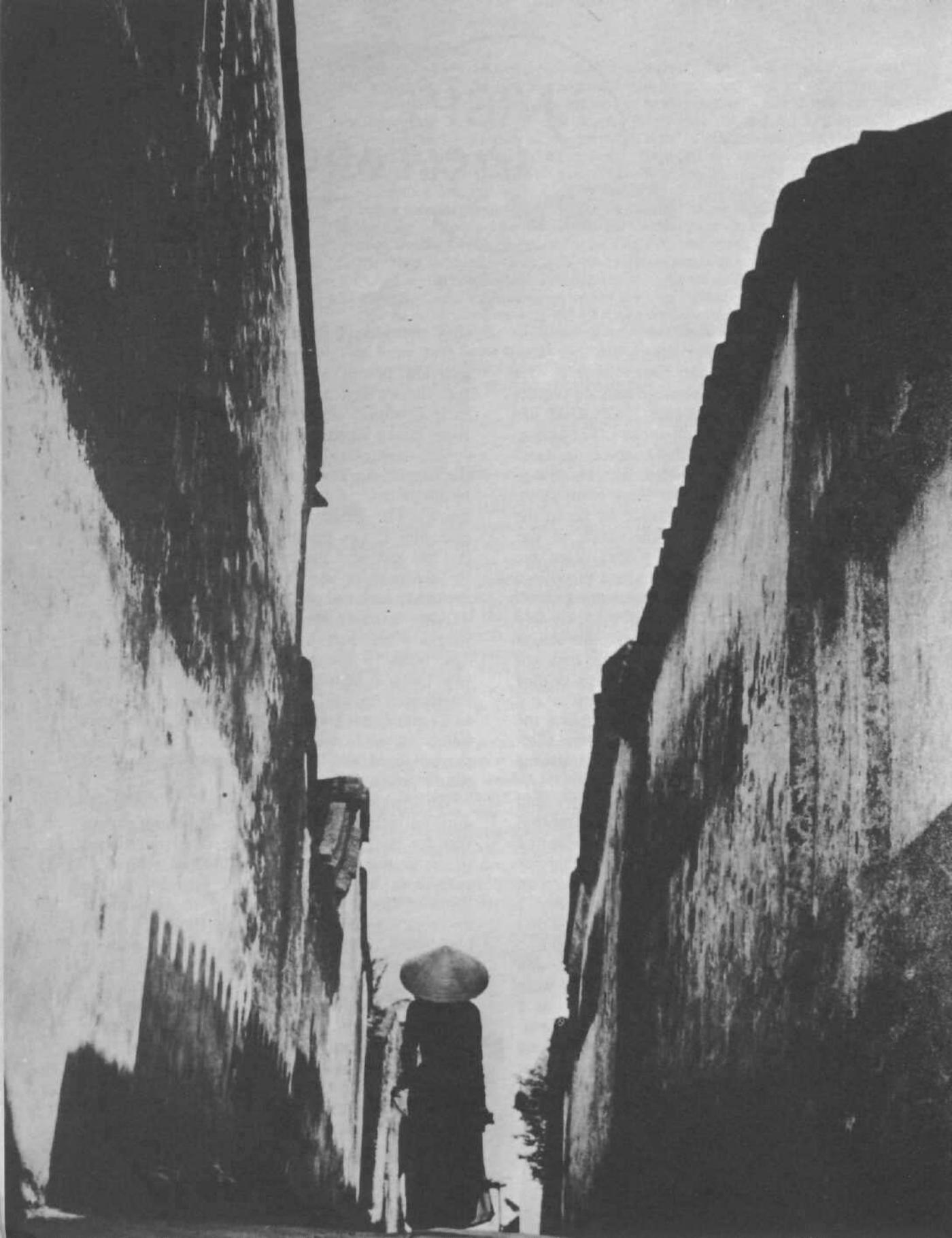
We were afraid as we were marched through the jungle, not knowing what the VC were going to do to us. I began to pray — out loud as usual. The guard asked what I was saying. I told him I was praying to the God that made the heavens and the earth and was asking Him to take care of us. That seemed to satisfy his curiosity, and we continued on our way.

After a while we came to a section of the jungle which had been bombed by big planes. The holes in the ground were huge. When I saw these I started praying again. The guard interrupted to ask what I was saying this time, so I replied that I was praying the planes wouldn't bomb us while we were there. I pointed out to the guard that because he was with us, God would protect him too.

We traveled deeper and deeper into the jungle until we arrived at the tree of questioning, a place kept for interrogating prisoners. They questioned us as to the daily work we did. I replied to everything by saying I was a preacher of the Word of God. When they asked me again about my work I asked them where my Bible and hymn book were. They replied that they knew nothing about them; however if they had taken them, they would return them.

After 5 days we were released and found our way home again. The first thing I asked my wife as I climbed up into my house was, 'Did you find my Bible and hymn book?' I was very sad to hear that the VC had torn them up and burned them outside the village.

How could they dare do such a thing to God's Word?



isole'

How does it feel to be unwanted? — to be isolated from family and friends? — to await death's slow, relentless march? Many from the western part of the world never know. The twisted face, the stubs of hands and feet, the fetid ulcers of a leper are never seen on the streets of American suburbia. Here in the Orient it is a common sight. Countless thousands are afflicted with Hansen's Disease — leprosy.

It is man's oldest and most feared disease. Yet it is probably the least contagious of all infectious diseases. Leprosy in its final stages is not a pretty sight. As the disease gnaws slowly away at his features, the victim's face becomes hideous and grotesque. Hands and feet become ugly stumps. Life offers nothing but isolation and inevitable death.

Often a tribesman with leprosy would be forced to live alone and unattended in a shack at the jungle's edge. When he became completely incapacitated, it was not uncommon for the villagers to set fire to the house while the victim lay inside — trapped and helpless.

Hope? He had none. Friends? They had long since abandoned him. His name was simply one of a long list of les ISOLEs.

Could we look at these people without compassion? Impossible! We had to help them. In 1951 our first leprosarium was built in the jungles

of Darlac province. In 1961 a leprosy program was begun in Phu Bon province. Segregation villages were organized. Hundreds of leprous victims were started on prophylactic treatment. A 100-bed leprosarium is currently being constructed outside Pleiku City.

Today a corps of nurses devote full time to the needs of the leprous while other personnel are engaged in a part-time ministry. The Mission is responsible for the leprosy program in four provinces in the Central Highlands.

These programs entail a great amount of work and considerable expense. At the clinic in Pleiku City, \$400-\$500 is needed each month to meet the operating budget. There our personnel treat and distribute medicine to 600 patients and contacts (families of lepers on prophylactic treatment). 25,000 deficiency vitamins, and, when available, 600 bars of soap are given out each month. There are 3 segregation villages in Pleiku Province and 12 outpatient clinics are conducted each month. The same program is carried out in Darlac Province, and in a lesser degree in Phu Bon and Quang Duc Provinces.

No — the leper is no longer neglected and isolated. Help has come. With the medicines now available to us, with food, clothing and vitamins in ample measure, the leper not only lives a normal life in natural surroundings but has hope for a brighter tomorrow.



Farewell to the Manghams

NEWS IN BRIEF

NEW AREA SECRETARY — Grady and Evelyn Mangham, former Field Chairman and wife are now living in Nyack. Grady is Area Secretary for Southeast Asia and the Near East. The Manghams closed out two decades of service in Viet Nam.

MORTGAGE BURNING — In just half the allotted time of 6 years, the congregation of the International Church in Saigon liquidated a \$50,000 debt. The note was burned on November 12, 1967 — just 3 years after the church was completed.

MORE CHURCHES BUILT — In June the Jarai church in Cheo Reo was dedicated. The structure — patterned after the Montagnard style architecture is a land mark in the town. Many Americans have commented on its simple beauty. New churches have also been dedicated at Song Pha (Roglai), Kien Duc and Dak R'tih (Mnong).

NEW FIELD CHAIRMAN — The Rev. Franklin Irwin was elected Chairman of the Field at the last Annual Conference. Mr. Irwin can truly claim to be an old Indo China hand — having spent most of his life in Viet Nam.

VACATION TIME FOR M.K.'S — Ton Son Nhut was busier than ever on November 11 when 45 missionaries' kids returned home for Christmas vacation.

IMPORTANT VISITORS — Oral Roberts visited the field recently and got a first hand view of Alliance Missions in action. He had a good ministry in Vietnamese military installations. The Palermo brothers also spent two months ministering with great blessing in churches throughout the country.

TWO SERVICEMEN'S CENTERS — Fred and Toni Zoeller and Bob and Peggy Gunther have arrived to work among the thousands of American servicemen.

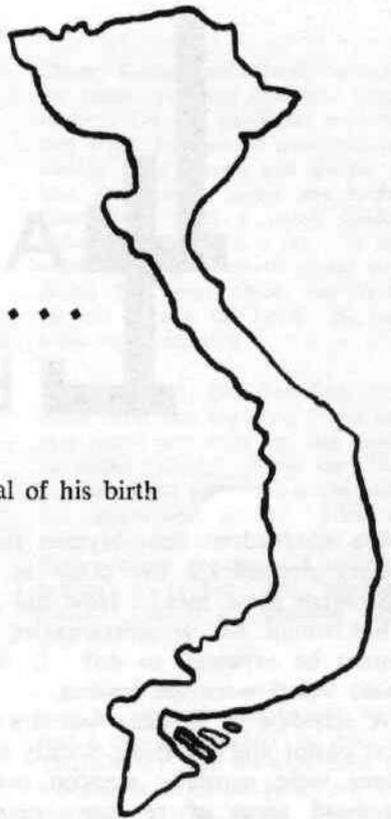
MISSIONARIES TO CAMBODIANS — Paul and Eunice Ellison are now settled in the town of Vinh Binh and ministering to part of the million Cambodians living in Viet Nam.

BACK TO SCHOOL — for Rick and Beth (Ziemer) Drummond, John and Penny Hall, Sharon Allwine, Joyce Collins and David Beack — all new students at the Vietnamese Language School at Dalat. Miss Jane Hamilton has joined the staff of the Dalat School for missionaries' children. We are grateful for these new teammates.

BUTTONS AND BOWS — A hearty welcome to four new M.K.'s — Madonna Katherine GUNTHER, Gail Yvette PENDELL, Bonnie Kim DOUGLAS, Drew Burton DUNCAN and Timothy Robert REED — all born since the last issue. Cynthia Gail has joined the FLEMING family on furlough.

Did you know that

- 1967 was the year of the goat.
- When a person is born his destiny is tied to the animal of his birth year.
- Since certain animals just don't get along together, a person born in the year of the pig should never marry one born in the year of the monkey.
- The Tribespeople (Montagnards) comprise about 5% of the total population but live on 50% of the land area of Viet Nam — mostly in the mountains.
- The Vietnamese women generally control the purse strings in the family.
- The finest cinnamon in the world comes from south of Da Nang in Quang Nam province.
- Nuoc-mam (fish sauce) represents material life to the Vietnamese and incense from the temples symbolizes the spiritual life.
- Viet Nam at the 17th parallel is just 40 miles wide.



LAYMEN LEAD

by Woody Stemple

We watched as four laymen from the Bible Society stepped off the plane at Quang Ngai. Who were these men? How did they operate? What would we as missionaries and national pastors be expected to do? It was their program. They were the leaders.

A schedule of services was drawn up by the local pastor and the Bible Society team. Market places were carefully mapped out as well as crossroad areas where many people could be reached. Appointments were made in prison areas and all official permits were secured. With these necessary preliminaries out of the way the real work began.

In the morning the team drove the van to a designated market area. The portable public address system was set up and the director of the group immediately began telling about their work and why they were there. A crowd soon gathered. He preached a short evangelistic message. During and after the message, the other three men went into the nearby market stalls and stores to sell Scripture portions.

After lunch the team would go to another market area or refugee village. The emphasis was on Scripture distribution and personal witnessing in the homes. Many people expressed their desire to trust Christ. We prayed for them in front of neighbors and friends.

No area was neglected. Even the prisons were visited. Here too there was a ready response to the Gospel. It was thrilling indeed to see these laymen in action.

These men were most capable in their approach. We were also impressed with their gracious spirit which was evidenced in their

humility, dedication, and love for lost men. Any free time was given to witnessing. They were here on an important mission. No time could be wasted.

The results of the operation were most gratifying. 435 new decisions were recorded. 7,500 Scripture portions were sold. 10,000 Scripture portions were distributed. During those three weeks there were few who had not had some contact with the Gospel. We are indebted to the Bible Society personnel for their effective ministry in Quang Ngai.

God has promised that His Word will not return unto Him void. This we firmly believe. But prayer is urgently needed that these new believers will now become firmly established in Christ. This is so essential. We will be grateful if you will share with us in the ministry of prayer.



Bible van displaying literature

During the month of April, when the weather is unbearably hot, the hills dry and barren, the leaves of the trees turned yellow, and nature wilting with the heat, the Seminary held its closing exercises for the school term. Two days later some friends and I boarded the bus that would return us to our homes in the South. We had just completed our second year of study. Our spirits soared as we anxiously anticipated the two-year practical work assignment for which we had prepared so arduously.

Following the District Church Conference, the arrangements were made where each of us was to serve. I was appointed to a place called THUAN-MY. I had never before heard of THUAN-MY, but I soon found it was a tiny hamlet located 60 kilometers (about 40 miles) from the province center of Long-An. The road had been cut for a long time. The only way to get there was by boat or sampan. On that first trip in, my heart fluttered with worry as we passed banks of heavy foliage, long stretches of barren country and deep bends in the river. At one point we were stopped by armed forces from "this side" and later by the "other side." From the boat we saw the results of war. There was desolation ahead and behind. Skeleton houses were still standing and there was destruction everywhere.

We finally arrived. But what a sight met our eyes. The whole front part of the church was falling down. Symbolic of the desolation in

the area was the lone, tall coconut tree standing at one side of the church — leafless, fruitless.

Yet, in spite of the war, there had remained behind a group of Christians to carry on the work of the Lord. Seven adults, three girls, and two children attended my first Sunday service. There had been others, of course, but they had chosen to flee the area in search for peace. In the community, many of the houses were forsaken. The land was left uncared for. A sad and lonely situation indeed!

However, the Lord blessed much. The Christians earnestly loved the Lord and His servant. We wholeheartedly cared for each other. Though lonely and having been placed in adverse circumstances, I was content and eager for this opportunity to serve the Lord.

Because our area was under Communist control, evangelistic efforts and even a visitation program were prohibited. My behavior was under close surveillance. As I stood to preach on Sunday morning, this bothered me. I could see armed men in camouflaged clothing, standing outside listening intently for a chance to persecute us. They interrogated me incessantly. It was truly difficult for a young pastor with so little experience. But thanks to Him, my very weakness caused me to place my hope in the Lord.

Day and night the attacks continued, often until two or three o'clock in the morning. I was in the bomb shelter many nights.

Those living immediately around me came crowding into our bomb shelter. On one particular morning two F105 jets roared overhead releasing their bombs and shells. I had just ducked under my heavy board bed when a bomb landed right next to where I lay. In the explosion that followed metal and debris flew everywhere, but none hit me. Praise the Lord! He had been my protection.

Because of the bombing and noise from the big guns I can say that not a day went by that could be called "silent." Then came the day when all communications with the outside were severed. I had to go. My departure left the small flock without a pastor. I also left behind a broken and smashed house. That is the situation until this very day.

It is my fervent wish that peace may be restored soon to our land, that a new church may be built at THUAN-MY, and the experience of worship be resumed as of old for the glory of His name. Don't let the heathen have cause to ask, "Where is your God?" — while tears are "my food day and night." Ps. 42:3.

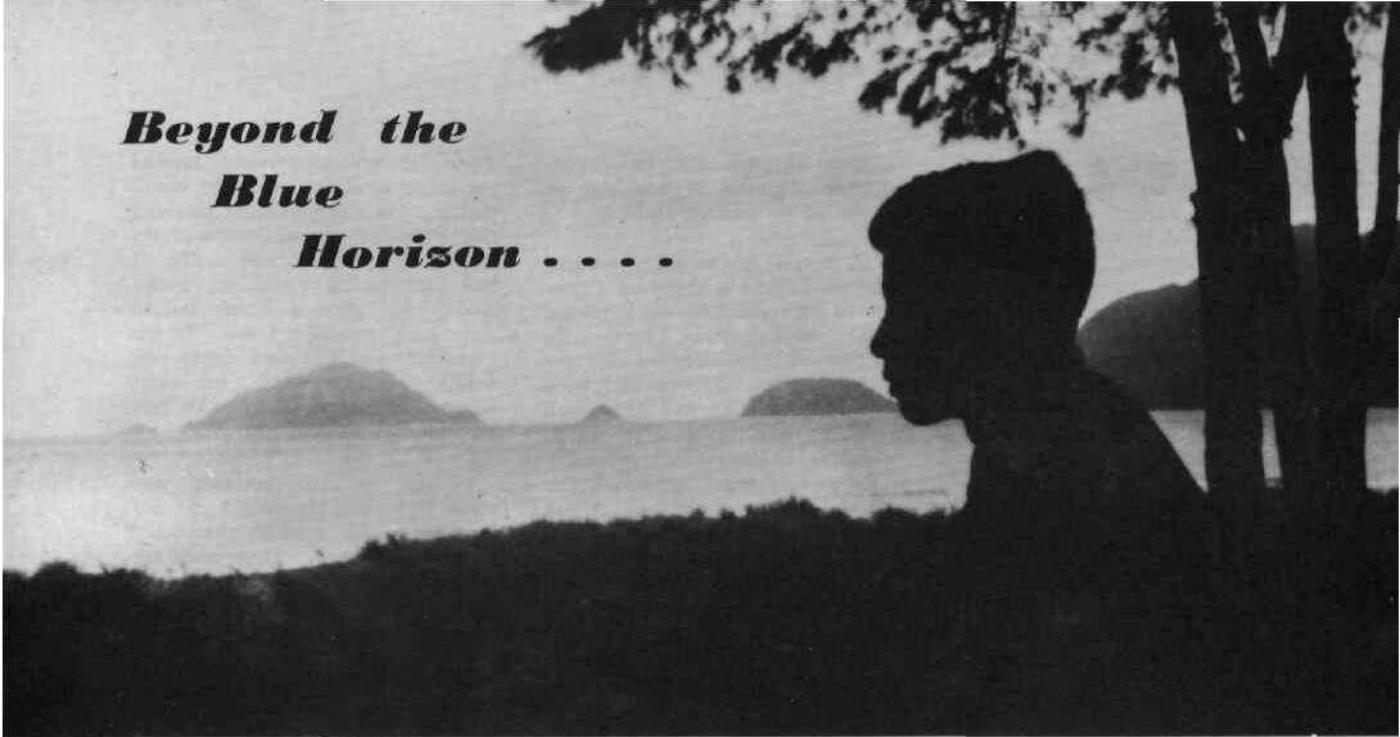
I am studying my final year at Nha Trang Seminary. Please pray for me that I will have grace and power to bring many lost sheep into the fold.

The above is the testimony of a Vietnamese student pastor now in his fifth year of study at the Nha Trang Seminary.

IN SPITE OF WAR



Beyond the Blue Horizon



The Con Son Islands

.....of the South China Sea, 148 miles south of Saigon, lie a cluster of islands called Con Son. Viewing them from a passing ship one would notice the red tiled houses, palm trees and suntanned children playing on the clean white beaches. Nothing gives the impression that these islands are the home of 4,000 of Viet Nam's most notorious prisoners.

After receiving permission from the Vietnamese Department of Defense authorizing our evangelistic team to preach there, we began to make preparations. How could we best present Jesus Christ to the 7,000 people of Con Son? — These included prisoners, civilians and guards. First we must trust the Holy Spirit for the birth of a church on Con Son. To aid us in our efforts we would place a Scripture portion and a copy of the "Dawn" evangelistic magazine in the hands of every person. If the available aircraft was large enough we would take hygienic kits, wheel chairs, medicine and vitamins supplied by World Vision to meet some of the physical needs of the prisoners.

The U.S. Air Force made available a C-123 fitted with two jet engines for our venture. On Friday morning, August 20, at 5 a.m. we filled

the plane with 5 tons of supplies and equipment and our twelve man team. Soon we were flying due south.

When we arrived on the main island weather became our first concern. During our five day stay the skies remained grey, producing intermittent heavy showers. Nevertheless, in spite of bad weather, we held 19 outdoor services for prisoners and islanders.

The governor of the islands was most gracious to our group. He made available to us a very comfortable thatched house facing the blue-green ocean. We were told it was the house that a former president of Viet Nam used when he visited the islands years ago. Not only did the governor entertain our team to a most sumptuous feast, but, every day at mealtime he sent us a delicious plate of fish prepared in various ways by his own chef.

Sunday morning was the time set for the distribution of the hygienic kits. The day before we were informed that we must open all 1700 of them and remove the stainless steel mirrors since any metal instruments are absolutely forbidden to the prisoners.

Each prisoner in the three large compounds



Each one received a hygienic kit . . .



. . .and the "Dawn" magazine

heard the Gospel message for four consecutive days. In Compound 3, three hundred hardened Viet Cong listened with rapt attention. However, not one man made even a slight indication of openly accepting our message until the last evening. After the service, while a religious film was being shown, one prisoner came forward in the darkness. "I believe the way you have taught," he whispered. "I want to follow your Jesus, but I am frightened. There are ten others who also want to believe, but they too, do not dare. We are afraid the other inmates will beat us."

One road laborer, a Christian working on the islands and evidently living in poverty, came to us. His story was one of hardship and long hours of toil. "I have been here for four years," he said. "No one has ever come to minister to us. Could you let me have a hymnal so my family can sing when we worship God each day?"

During our brief visit to Con Son there were 83 decisions to follow Christ. Now what? Pray with us that God will send someone to return to the island to nourish and shepherd these new believers. It would be a lonely life for a mainlander, but God would prove Himself sufficient.

Beyond the
blue
horizon
they are
still
waiting!

by Jim Livingstone

THE LEGEND OF THE LIZARD



Even the least observant of visitors to Viet Nam has noticed the abundance of lizards. Inevitably a legend.

Thach Sung was an exceptionally wealthy man. He had a friend who was also very rich. One day they began discussing which one had the most possessions. An argument soon developed.

Thach Sung boasted, "I have more than you."

"You don't have anything I don't have," replied the other.

Finally they reached an agreement. The one who possessed the least must forfeit everything he owned to the other.

Gold. . Silver. . Jewels. . Jade. . Lacquerware. . Antiques. Everything was compared. To Thach Sung's utter dismay he found that their wealth was equal.

Suddenly, Thach Sung's friend ran into his house and came out triumphantly bearing an old, broken, earthen pot.

Thach Sung searched frantically in every corner of his house, but alas. . he had no earthen pot — old or new. So his friend took all that he had, even his beautiful wife. Thach Sung, left destitute, died of a broken heart. Upon his death he was reincarnated into a lizard. As he crawled around on walls and ceilings he would recall his former life and the circumstance that caused him to lose his every possession.

"Tch. . . . tch. . . . tch. . . . how regretful," clicked his tongue.

"Tch. . . . tch. . . . tch. . . ." is the only sound a lizard can make.

And to this day the expression of regret is the click of the tongue. . . . tch. . . . tch. . . . tch.

