



The Christian and Missionary Alliance

260 WEST 44TH STREET - NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036 CABLE ADDRESS "PAROUSIA" PHONE LACKAWANNA 4-9282
(Now Box C, Nyack, NY 10960)

March 26, 1975

Dear District Superintendent:

When the massive offensive of the North Vietnamese forces began to build up in early March, there were nine Americans and two Canadians in Banmethuot. Seven of these people are missionaries:

Mrs. Archie Mitchell (Betty)
Mr. Richard L. Phillips, Ph.D.
Mrs. Richard Phillips
Rev. and Mrs. Norman Johnson (Canadian)
John and Carolyn Miller (not CMA)

Since there has been no contact with any of these to our knowledge and since Banmethuot has now fallen to the North Vietnamese forces, we can only presume that these seven people are being held by the North Vietnamese in Banmethuot or somewhere in the vicinity.

It should be pointed out that Mr. and Mrs. Johnson are from Hamilton, Ontario, Canada and that representations have been made on their behalf through the Canadian government in Ottawa.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance has ministered in Viet Nam since 1911. The 490 churches in Viet Nam are churches of The Christian and Missionary Alliance although with our indigenous policy this is a national church and these are self governing congregations.

In 1968 at the time of the TET offensive, six of our missionaries were killed at Banmethuot:

Robert Ziemer
Rev. & Mrs. Edward Thompson
Ruth Wilting
Carolyn Griswold
Leon Griswold (father of Carolyn)

At the same time Betty Olsen and Hank Blood (our missionaries) and Michael Bengé, a USAID man, were taken captive. Betty Olsen and Hank Blood died on the captive trail. Michael Bengé witnessed the death of both of these and testified to this in interviews in the

District Superintendents (2)

March 26, 1975

Bethesda Naval Hospital in Washington when interviewed in March 1973.

Going back to May 30, 1962 three of our missionaries were taken captive by the Viet Cong from our leprosarium at Buno Ta Ana, approximately fourteen kilometers from Banmethuot:

Dr. Ardel Vietti
Rev. Archie Mitchell
Mr. Daniel Gerber (~~shot and killed~~)

We had good reason to believe that these two were alive up through 1969. After that date the word to us about them was less reassuring. However, since it is alleged that the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese have something more than 1,300 Americans in custody whose names they refuse to reveal, it is likely that these three could be among them.

This resume of our casualties in 1962 and 1968 is presented here as a backdrop for the expression of our deep concern about the seven missionaries who have been out of communication at Banmethuot since March 10.

Our tragedy is compounded by the fact that Mrs. Mitchell follows her husband Archie in captivity after 13 years.

Please write to all of the U. S. Senators in the area covered by your district and convey to them in your own way your own concern using any or all of this material as you may choose to present the case. Specifically request the Senator to use his good offices to contact any and all government agencies who are involved in the matter of locating the Americans missing in action, prisoners of war and other captives.

We are asking that these people at Banmethuot be released and guaranteed safe conduct to Saigon. We are further requesting the release of Dr. Ardel Vietti and Rev. Archie Mitchell. If the report is that they are dead, then we would like to have certification of that fact, giving time and place of death and place of burial and what disposition has been made of any personal effects.

Encourage pastors and other responsible people in your district to write to their Senators and Congressmen expressing this deep concern.

Your continued prayers in this crisis time are so much appreciated.

Sincerely yours,


NATHAN BAILEY

President

NB/RB/mr



The Christian and Missionary Alliance

NYACK, NEW YORK 10960 • CABLE ADDRESS "PAROUSIA" • PHONE (914) 353-0750

PRESENT SITUATION AT BANMETHUOT, VIET NAM - MARCH 1975

When the massive offensive of the North Vietnamese forces began to build up in early March, there were nine Americans and two Canadians at Banmethuot. Seven of these people are missionaries:

Mrs. Archie Mitchell (Betty)
Mr. Richard L. Phillips, Ph. D.
Mrs. Richard L. Phillips
Rev. and Mrs. Norman Johnson
John and Carolyn Miller (not C & M A)

Since there has been no contact with any of these to our knowledge and since Banmethuot has now fallen to the North Vietnamese forces, we can only presume that these seven people are being held by the North Vietnamese in Banmethuot or somewhere in the vicinity.

There are 490 Christian and Missionary Alliance churches in Viet Nam. There were 58 missionaries in Viet Nam at the time of the attack, all safe and accounted for, except for the seven mentioned above.

BACKGROUND

The Christian and Missionary Alliance began to minister in Viet Nam in 1911. At times during the sixty four years of Alliance ministry in Viet Nam (formerly a part of what was known as French Indo China) the missionary staff was approximately one hundred. This would have represented about ten percent of the overseas staff and financial disbursements of The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

PREVIOUS C & M A CASUALTIES

The North Vietnamese killed the six missionaries listed here in the TET offensive that began January 29, 1968:

Rev. Robert Ziemer
(his wife, Marie was wounded
but recovered)
Rev. & Mrs. Edward Thompson
Miss Ruth Wilting
Miss Carolyn Griswold
Mr. Leon Griswold (father of Carolyn)

At the same time, Betty Olsen, R. N., and Hank Blood (our missionaries) and Michael Dennis Benge of Heppner, Oregon, a USAID man, were taken captive.

After his release by the North Vietnamese, Michael Benge, in an interview at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Washington, D. C., on March 15, 1973, gave a detailed account of the deaths of Hank Blood and Betty Olsen on the captive trail.

1 9 6 2 - FIRST CAPTIVES

On May 30, 1962 three of our missionaries were taken captive by the Viet Cong from our leprosarium at Buno Ia Ana, approximately 14 kilometers from Bannethuot:

Dr. Ardel Vietti
Rev. Archie Mitchell
Mr. Daniel Gerber - working
at the leprosarium; sent
out by Menmonite Central
Committee; was later shot
and killed by Viet Cong.

* * * * *

The acute concern for the people at Bannethuot can be understood in light of our sad experience with the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese forces dating back to 1962 as noted above.

Here is the bleak picture of heartache:

Two in captivity for 13 years.

Eight dead in the TET offensive
that began January 29, 1968.

Seven captive missionaries in
Bannethuot now, plus the five
year old daughter of Millers.

Betty Mitchell taken captive 13
years after her husband.

We are urging all agencies and the media to use their influence and authority to work for the release of the captive missionaries.

In accordance with the terms of the cease fire agreement concluded in January 1973, we urge the International Control Commission to secure from the North Vietnamese the guarantee of safe conduct for all of them to a point of embarkation with every humanitarian consideration and all speed.

RWB:mr
3/26/75