

April 1, 1975 - Vientiane, Laos

I arrived in Bangkok yesterday on schedule - found no one at the airport and made my way to the Guest Home. There I learned that we would be leaving for Vientiane on a flight scheduled at 4 o'clock. It was almost two when I arrived at the Guest Home, so I had very little time there. Dr. King had been able to interview the missionaries from Cambodia who are at the Guest Home in Bangkok. These included Dr. and Mrs. Kroh, (Ruth?) Miss Lynne Walsh, Mrs. Barbara Neath, Miss Grace Patterson, and also Mr. and Mrs. Norm Ens. Gene Hall, Andy Bishop, and Dr. Falkstad and Dr. Beck were all in Phnom Penh at the time. I learned from Dr. King that they Dean Kroh's had expressed their desire to return to the states and to terminate their missionary service. This was doubtless triggered by the withdrawal from Cambodia and the subsequent events relative to the hospital program there. The relationship with World Vision in Cambodia has been less than desirable, and all of the factors have contributed to the decision that the Kroh's made to withdraw from missionary service. They felt that at their age they did not want to transfer to some other field and face a new situation. They felt, however, that their ministry at the hospital in Cambodia had terminated. Dr. King and I both agreed that in light of the circumstances, we could not try to persuade them otherwise, and so we reluctantly agreed that they should make their plans to return to the United States.

There was little time for us to discuss others who talked with Dr. King in the time he spent at the Guest Home in Bangkok. He has taken notes on all of those interviews and will be including that in his report when he returns back to the United States.

We arrived in Vientiane in the late afternoon. We had a fellowship time with the missionaries in the evening and Dr. King gave a quite full briefing on developments in Viet Nam and decisions that had been made during our stay there. There were questions on the part of some of the missionaries. Our evening ended about 10 o'clock.

This morning we began interviews with different ones of the missionary staff, talking to them about their particular ministries and also about what possible reassignments they would desire in the event conditions here should develop to the extent that reassignment might be advisable. I have a listing of the missionaries who were

scheduled for interviews and brief notes on the responses concerning each one.

Very briefly, it is as follows:

The Kaetzel's had already written a letter of resignation. They explained that there was some problem, particularly as relates to Winnie's health. She has been appointed several times, but no answer, or no deliverance has been realized. It is her back which gives the problem. She is now teaching part-time only, and even then is in almost constant pain. She recently had some treatments from John Hall that gave some bit of alleviation from pain, but it was suggested by John Hall that a prolonged series of treatment would probably be required to get complete relief. therefore, the Kaetzel's see no alternative but to leave the field at this time. Dr. King suggested to them that they consider a leave of absence basis rather than a resignation. There was no final decision on their part. They do expect to leave the field in July. We explained that our chief concern was that they keep a relationship to Division of Overseas Ministries for possible future overseas service.

Person's. We had a brief interview with Wayne and Minnie. We talked about Wayne's acceptance of the appointment as Board Representative. He stated that he had read thoroughly the sections in the Policies and Procedures book and was prepared to wholeheartedly carry out the responsibilities as detailed there. He said that he recognized his own weaknesses and short-comings, but he is willing to do his best. They stated that if anything should develop which would necessitate their departure from Laos, their place of preference would be Thailand.

The Frank Gray's. Frank expressed the fact that he is seeking to have Lao leadership in the radio studio ministry by August of 1976. This fits in with their plans for furlough at that time, and he is interested in taking the Communications Course at Wheaton Graduate School. He has had correspondence and is doing some preparatory work so that he feels that he would be able to finish the course and get his Master's in one year's time. If the situation here developed to the extent that they could not return, he would like to be available for ministry elsewhere. Presently there is no Lao speaking Christian outside the country who could assist in radio ministry should it be necessary to carry that on outside. He said that it's possible

a missionary might be needed in Manila for a temporary period, at least, to help with the Lao programming, and he would be interested in that particular type of ministry. As far as relationship to The Christian and Missionary Alliance, he has decided he would like to be directly related to the C&MA. Dr. King pointed out certain inherent problems, but assured Frank that we too are interested in having him as a C&MA missionary and assured him that we would endeavor to work out the details regarding the support pattern that would best afford this kind of direct relationship.

The Roffe's. We talked about the project in which they are involved; the materials he is working on for a dictionary - English-Lao - has been approved by the Ministry of Education and by USAID, but the formal contract has not yet been signed. He anticipates that this will be done in the very near future, and then the program will be funded by USAID. They also stated that if it became necessary for them to leave Laos, they would like to reside in Thailand and continue the work in which they are involved.

The George Wood's. They seem to be enjoying their ministry at the International Church and report that interest has remained good in the services. If they had to leave here, they would be interested in another ministry related to the Division of Overseas Ministries, probably in the English language. He feels he would enjoy teaching, though he has never had any experience in that. They mentioned the possibility of service in the Philippines, they also indicated they would be open to assignment to ministry in the Spanish language, or in another International church pastorate if that were a possibility.

We had an interview with the U.S. Ambassador here in Laos. Also the political officer at the Embassy was present for that interview. The Ambassador explained in much detail the situation as it exists here in Laos. He pointed out that the period of fighting here is over and that the Pathet Lao now are in a position where they are gaining their 'ins' without further fighting. Primarily, they are making gains because of the ineptness, the corruption, and the bungling of the nationalists and the rightists. He said that in his experience during this past year with the coalition government, he finds that the Pathet Lao are faced with two rather difficult dilemmas: 1) their dilemma, as far as the U.S. is concerned, - they look upon the United States as their

enemy, but at the same time, they recognize that they need the United States here because of the aid programs that are needed for the development of the country; also to counterbalance the influence of Hanoi, China, and Russia. On the other hand, they have a very real dilemma as far as relationship with Hanoi is concerned. Hanoi has been the major supplier of materials, of troops and training for the Pathet Lao, but at the same time, the Lao are very much apprehensive about the North Vietnamese. They recognize that they owe them a great indebtedness because of the support they have had during the war years, yet they do not want to be in the debt of Hanoi to the extent that they will lose their own sovereignty and freedom. So, in light of this, the American Ambassador does not foresee any significant, drastic changes in the situation here. He anticipates a gradual ascendancy to power by the Pathet Lao and perhaps eventually a totally communist regime here in Laos, but he would foresee that even under such conditions, the U.S. Embassy would probably be able to function. U.S. citizens would doubtless be able to remain and organizations such as ours could probably carry on their work. This is his assessment, and it does sound logical from that point of view. He certainly anticipates no abrupt change in the present situation here in Laos.

We interviewed the Atkinson's. Dr. Atkinson has taken his exam for license in Thailand, and he believes he passed, though he has not yet received the report on that. They have also applied for visas, and expect to have their visas for Thailand within about three weeks time and then they will be moving to Maranatha. He will be assuming responsibilities a little bit earlier there than anticipated because both Dr. and Mrs. Payton have been sick with mononucleosis. The Atkinson's expressed their appreciation for the association they can have with The Christian and Missionary Alliance and explanations were given to them as to why their appointment had been handled on a regular basis, even after their request that it be on an Associate basis. Also, they raised the question about residence - whether in Khon Kaen, or at Maranatha. I told them that this would be a field matter. He raised a further question about a young medical doctor who would like to come out and spend some time at Maranatha at his own

expense. This young man is evidently from Vancouver and Dr. King pointed out that we would like to have the opportunity of meeting him, or at least have someone meet him, and discuss with him his doctrinal views and certain other things, simply as a sort of screening process in order to avoid any possible problems. This was simply on the matter of principle and the Atkinson's expressed a full understanding of that situation.

In the later afternoon, at 4:00 o'clock, we met with the men of the mission, and explained to them the purpose of our being here, a brief report of the Ambassador's briefing given to us, and then sharing with the men here the steps that had been taken in Viet Nam. We gave to them the principles that had been set forth there for the basis of decisions that had been made, also shared with them the criteria that had been set up for any further reductions of the missionary staff, talked to them about the matter of property, both real and movable as being turned over to the church, and also the matter of finances. In the evening we had a fellowship dinner with all of the missionaries, and then Dr. King delivered to them his discourse on Joy. That completes the day and perhaps there will be a few other items that I can add regarding Laos, but primarily I think this covers most everything here of any important nature.