NEWS

Suffering South **Viet Nam**

As conditions in South Viet Nam deteriorated rapidly during Holy Week, most missionaries there were reported to be safe, and they and other church people were helping in the vast effort to feed and resettle hundreds of thousands of refugees.

Seven missionaries and a child, however, were presumed to be in the hands of the Viet Cong or North Vietnamese

invaders. They are:

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Mr. and Mrs. Norman Johnson, both 39, of Hamilton, Ontario (Christian and Missionary Alliance); Richard and Lillian Phillips, 45 and 43, of Bloomington, Minnesota (CMA); Mrs. Archie Mitchell, 54, of Bly, Oregon (CMA); and John and Carolyn Miller and their five-year-old daughter, of Pennsylvania Allentown, (Wycliffe Bible Translators).

All were at Ban Me Thuot in the central highlands, where the CMA op-

Vorth Viet Nam Da Nang Laos Cambodia ·Ban Me Thuot .(Nha SAIGON South Viet Nam

erates a leprosarium and hospital. The Johnsons fled into the jungle at the outset of the attack on the town early last month and still had not been heard from as of March 26. The others, along with one or two other foreign civilians, had reportedly sought shelter in the compound of the International Commission for Control and Supervision as fierce fighting raged through the area. Radio contact with the group was lost on March 14.

North Vietnamese sources, in replying to inquiries about the missionaries, said no harm would come to civilians genuinely engaged in humanitarian work, according to a U.S. State Department source.

Mrs. Mitchell's husband was kidnapped by the Viet Cong from Ban Me Thuot in the Tet Offensive of 1962. Two others taken with Mitchell at that time were Elinor Ardel Vietti, a doctor from Houston, and Mennonite worker Daniel Gerber of Dalton, Ohio. Gerber is presumed dead; Mitchell and Dr. Vietti are listed as missing. Mission leaders say privately they believe the pair are dead also, but there have been scattered—and disputed—reports suggesting the two have been seen alive in Viet Cong captivity.

Concern was also expressed for the well-being of national church workers at Ban Me Thuot and for the nationals there on the staff of Vietnam Christian Service, a joint project of the U.S. National Council of Churches and Lutheran World Relief.

Mennonite worker Earl Martin of New Holland, Pennsylvania, stayed behind in Quang Ngai. A friend said Martin didn't believe political barriers should affect his relationship with the people. Martin is on good terms with the Viet Cong, added the friend.

Most CMA missionaries in inland locations left their posts in mid-February when rumors spread that an attack was imminent, then returned when nothing happened. Miraculously, only

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those in Ban Me Thuot were trapp^|P^crited | Were | Thfl<- were evacuated I | ••"oni Hue and seven from Da Lai bein March. Ihosc cilice fol

In another miracle of sorts, Cliffe's sixty Viet Nam-based a d* United World Mission of St Peters workers and lheir children were nttensowyg, Florida, and Worldwide Evan ing a translation conference on the translation coast a. Nha T.ang when .he reported their "So. reported their "So, mumst offensive heg.m Normally. | * rkors. , number of them would have bci sferred safely from Da Nanowith fc'^'gaworking up in the hill country.

The Millers left the conference represents likewise safe. said ihei for a two-week stay in Ban M lo check ihe final stages of a Irib' New Testament translation. (Wycli has twenty language projects und way in South Viet Nam.) Mrs. Mill is the daughter of Stephen Paine, f New^k'fbree older Milkr child were m Saigon at month's enc ing word ahoul their parents.

As the fighting interfiled, the V diffc and CMA p e « l lured mainly in Nha Trang and Saig

Trang. BOtb. $^{\circ}$ yclfjc_ and $n_{_{\circ},_{\circ}}|t\,a_{_{\circ},_{\circ}}9_{_{\circ}}|$ congregations served by more have important them a CMA Bible school some TOO some $J \ll 172$ despite the war and unrest, forces were left in Nha trang Da Nang

The majority of mrwonar ^K^mR S,dgon phclKHl «1 to helP ^ " W of refugees; others were "" BK,,,, upelonged only a month or so ago. elsewhere Some missions laid cont gency pi.ms to evacuate their work to the Philippines or Bangkok

CMA has ninety-three missionaries tiCsigned Ui South Viet Nam, incluJ several on loan from other groui (4 eighty-five are Americans. Most * tin Saigon late last month.

All thiiiy-six of the Southern B tist Convention's missionaries were

PRAYER REQUEST

Archbishop Pulton j. Sheen Archbishop Pulton j. Sheen started praying three years Mi'' ->e years

lonien services in New J then went lo belaud to do t " ' Meanwhile were still at their posts in Week services daily, tout h preaching on Ciood Iriday services on F.asler Sunday

to die "on a feast of the Bie Molliei and in The presence of Blessed Sacrament."

"If I don't," he says, smiling. ' is going to be very embarrassed.'

The situation with the nationals is mething eke. Ihe refugee situation *» "horrendous," said a missionary in a elcphone dispatch. Many hundreds of 'Ousands of persons poured inlo coastal areas from the northern and terior provinces. Food was scarce.

IIOM. Thousands died of malnutrition, iwase, and wounds by the wayside; usands who made it to the coast live were not expected lo live,

Most of the Protestants in the land Sius More Easter the govern** Most of the Protestants in the land my just wriwing requested the transionar's to ua row the CMA-allitated Evangely-requested the transionar's to ua

> His more than 5.1.000 baptized mcniand perhaps their limes that many ., these people are refugees, separated perhaps for-

Catholics number over one million, d they are served by hundreds of reign missionaries, teachiitg brothers, " nun's. Most of the one-tnillion-phis 'fsons ihe U.S. airlifted from Hanoi the south in 1954 were Catholics, y' in time assumed much of the ilical power iir the soiilh. Ibis Iped to fuel the Vicl Cong cause.

Relief efforts are being spearheaded Catholic Relief Services (CRS), odd Vision, and other church agen-*• Four Americans and a Canadian says Jj | month were helping World Vision's

teged Phnom Penh at month's end included Pennsylvanian Carl who is World Vision's director Sheen says he's added a con Cambodia, and medical doctor Pcne-or two lo his prayer request: he * Key of England. Dr. Key says that Key of England. Dr. Key says that * of the 26.000 palienls her learn recently were children in urgent hospitalization. Only 125 could she adds.

EDWARD E. PLOWMAN

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