

For - David Fitz

This will appear in our next newsletter.

A Word From the Director

A few hours ago I attended the funeral service of my colleague and fellow missionary to Vietnam, Rev. D. Ivory Jeffrey. He quietly entered the presence of our Lord this past weekend at the age of 89.

Ivory Jeffrey is an unsung hero whose life is a model for us all. He went to Vietnam as a missionary in 1918. There, during 46 years of service, he played a key role in opening that needy country to the gospel and establishing the Evangelical Church of Vietnam.

I first met Ivory Jeffrey while researching old mission correspondence for a masters thesis in seminary. I was impressed, as I read, with the wise and far-sighted leadership he gave his mission in troubled times in Vietnam.

I had the honour of first meeting him in person when he made his last visit to Vietnam in 1974, just before that country fell to communism. I was privileged to take him on a tour of the Mekong delta where he had formerly worked. I listened hour after hour with fascination, as we travelled, to the problems and victories of the pioneer missionaries. A highlight was a visit to the buildings which had served as the Japanese internment camp for Mr. Jeffrey and his colleagues during WW II. A particularly poignant moment was a visit to the gravesite of a Rev. Grubbs, who had died while interned with Mr. Jeffrey. During that journey, 10 years ago, we became good friends.

As I viewed his remains today - tall, erect and gentlemanly even in his coffin, my mind raced back a year or so to another coffin in another country. In December of 1982, I visited the masoleum and viewed the remains of Ho Chi Minh, father of the Vietnamese revolution, in Hanoi. He is, of course, a well-

known historical figure. How tragic, though, that the wars and revolution he lead his people through have not brought the independence and freedom he promised. Really quite the opposite. As I viewed his remains, I felt deep pain and sadness.

Ivory Jeffrey, called of God to be a missionary, also served the Vietnamese people. But, in sharp contrast to the better known man in Hanoi, his life brought spiritual and personal freedom and transformation to countless Vietnamese as a bearer of the good news of Jesus Christ. As I viewed Mr. Jeffrey's remains, I felt a deep joy and peace. Praise and admiration welled up in my heart for his life of faithful service. Today he rejoices in the presence of his Lord in the company of his beloved wife, Ruth Goforth Jeffrey, and their young son, David, whom they buried in Vietnam many years ago, as well as countless Vietnamese christians who preceded him.

Ivory Jeffrey lived a life for others. Right until the end, he faithfully and consistently supported the development of the Vietnamese refugee church here in Toronto. It was there that I met him for the last time, in the company of the people he loved, just two weeks ago.

A few months ago, when we sent out an appeal for the famine relief in West Africa, he responded with a cheque of \$80 from his meager pensioners income, and, in a phone call, he expressed his sincere regret that he could not do more. He lived a life for others.

Those of us who share his relationship with Christ know that he will be greeted with the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Ivory Jeffrey and our Lord would both be honoured if we examined our lives in light of the kind of life for others that Mr. Jeffrey lived.

Reg Reimer

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