

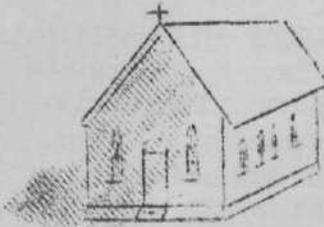
Our Dear Friends--

What a wonderful Christmas we've had! Before the series of Conferences we visited the fort at M'Drak, 60 miles east of Banmethuot, to see if we could open a chapel in this frontier center. We have not been able to travel this road in safety since the Japs invaded Indo-China in 1941! Now that the Communists have been forced back toward the coast, it is open to the Gospel.

We were told that we could now go without convoy, but there is always the possibility of being fired upon. Last year there were many fights along this road. We loaded our Dodge with Y No, Chairman of the Raday Church, our three Vietnamese missionaries, and were surprised to see the road in such excellent condition. We passed three forts heavily barricaded, and they phoned ahead to M'Drak that we were on our way there.

At the fort we were given a warm welcome by the five French soldiers, their chief, resplendent in a huge red beard. They were quite upset because we had eaten our lunch on the road and had not waited to eat with them. So they insisted that we stay the night in their bamboo barracks within the mud and log fort. During that afternoon, despite the drizzle, we walked through the village and agreed upon a fine site for a chapel. At night it took some time to get used to the quarter-hour rattle of tin cans as the various native sentries showed they were awake and on the job.

Authorization to build the chapel is being granted, and a Raday evangelist, Y U, and his family, are there now living temporarily with friends until we can erect a chapel with living quarters in the rear. We have no funds for this as yet, but believe that God would have us open this vast new district among the Raday, Kdrao and Mdhur tribes, now.



\$1,000 will build this  
in the new district of  
M'Drak.

AT BANMETHUOT--Some days before Christmas, began a great whirl of activity that was to last well after New Years. Gordon and Dr. Joe Webber flew to Saigon to meet our new missionaries, Olive Kingsbury, nurse for the Leprosarium, and Carolyn Griswold, missionary-secretary, arriving from France on December 18th. On the 19th and 20th we were to have our annual Christmas tea and receptions for the French in town, the second evening for the Delegate of His Majesty Bao Dai, a Vietnamese prince, the French General and his higher officers, and the administrators, etc. So Joe and Gordon, and the new missionaries simply had to be back for those events.

Doctor Joe returned early to Banmethuot with the girls' baggage on the mail plane, but when Gordon and the new missionaries got within twenty miles from town around noon, flying our Piper Pacer, they had to turn back the 175 miles to Saigon. It was impossible to pierce the storm moving in from the eastern coast. The reception that evening went off all right without them, but not without much disappointment to all of us.

December 20th turned out fine in Saigon, and weather reports indicated it was safe to fly home. The little plane skirted some storms but found the sun shining on the Banmethuot airfield where it landed just an hour before our illustrious guests were to arrive. It is very important that we keep friendly with the authorities, for the sake of our work, for it makes it easier for them to grant us permission to obtain land, build chapels, etc. Our house looked like a Christmas bower inside, while the little cedar tree in front of the house was covered with colored lights. All it lacked was the snow instead of the blooming gardenias, pointsettias, roses and azalias! With the singing of carols and Auld Lang Syne in French, our guests heartily entered into the spirit of Christmas.

Sunday, 21st--a great service in the church. The Raday choir sang "God So Loved the World," from Stainer's CRUCIFIXION, in two parts, and did it very well. In the afternoon we went to the Leprosarium for a baptismal service. Of the 250 patients, some of whom were already baptized, 28 more were buried in baptism in the little stream, reminiscent of the first such service filmed in NOW WE LIVE. We had cautioned the patients not to rush into this step nor to do it just to please us. It was a precious time together as these maimed ones testified to their faith in Christ.

Monday, 22nd--decorating the chapel with a pine tree from the mountains 40 miles away, garlands, tissue bells, palm fronds and whole banana stalk plants and leaves. Final rehearsal of the program of the Nativity with 75 students and Christians taking part.

Tuesday, 23rd—~~Four-day Conference begins in a packed-out church.~~ After the program, Dr. Webber gave an illustrated chalk talk with beautiful colored lights, entrancing the people. He drew a scene of a Raday village amid tall trees, with the face of Jesus looking down from the sky. The evening ended after ten o'clock when we showed our film, JUNGLE BLOOD HUNTERS. Many saw themselves and enjoyed it all immensely. Hundreds were turned away who could not even get a peak through the windows.

Wednesday, 24th—early morning prayers, then services morning and afternoon. That evening's program was made up of recitations and dialogs by the children and young people, as they set forth the message of Christmas. Following a sermon, our other film was showed: NOW WE LIVE.

CHRISTMAS DAY—Presents from kind friends in the homeland were given to our evangelists and students. Leading Vietnamese Christians in town, and Raday clerks in the Government offices contributed stacks of candy and oranges to the great crowd of Christians who gathered on our lawn to give us their greetings. Their lovely speeches, gifts of rice, eggs and flowers, were received with full hearts by us missionaries. Conference and program continued throughout the day.

Friday, 26th—78 Christians baptized in the stream in front of the chapel. Many more from distant places wanted to attend the conferences and be baptized, but owing to lack of gasoline, our trucks could not fetch them in the 40 to 60 miles with their food and families. (Recent convoys have been attacked, cutting short our fuel supply.) Dedication of children, the marriage of a young couple, and a lovely communion service brought the meetings to a close in the afternoon, and that evening the program was put on again, with movies afterwards.

Saturday, 27th—our whole program was taken out to the Leprosarium in trucks, 8 miles from town. The patients sat on the ground under the stars, as electric lights lit up the decorated platform. For many this was their very first Christmas, and they sat amazed at the unfolding of the Christmas message. Those who could not walk were carried on backs or on stretchers, so that only a few were unable to attend. Candies and oranges, gifts of the Christians in town, were distributed to them all. Those with no fingers to hold them had others take the gifts, unwrap the candy papers and put them in their mouths.

\$1,000.00 will build this  
at Buon Ho, among the  
Adham tribespeople.



In the nursery for healthy babies, Mildred Ade had her little Christmas tree decorated and lit with pretty candles. There wasn't much to put on it, as the week before, the convoy had been attacked, the mail truck burned up, and fifteen packages of bandages, clothing and gifts were destroyed. However, two weeks later everyone was made glad when 19 more packages arrived from you dear friends at home. You cannot know how much joy they bring, especially to those whose feet or hands have to be bandaged twice a day. Keep on sending them; for we never have enough.

December 29th—We all piled into our car and two trucks with camping paraphernalia, and drove 40 miles south to the Lake Daklak district among the Mnong Rlum and Mnong Gar tribes. Carolyn and Olive, our new missionaries, were thrilled with the beautiful bamboo chapel there in the lovely setting of lake and purple mountains.

LAKE DAKLAK—(Where we need a new missionary couple)

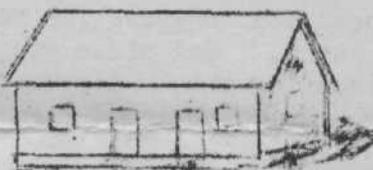
Under a leafy shelter around their fires, the Christians camped out for the three days Conference. At night the great longhouse chapel was lit by many big red candles as we put on the Christmas program again. We slept and ate in the big rooms made of woven bamboo, in the rear, and our appetites were good in the lovely lake air.

These days at this Lake chapel only served to increase our already heavy burden to reach the hundreds of villages in this vast district. We planned a site for a house for a new missionary couple, and asked the Lord to send us one soon. What a life's work for an enthusiastic pioneer winner of souls in this great region, to take charge of the native preachers, open a Bible School, and do translation work.

WEST 50 MILES TO DAK SONG

New Year's Day at Bannethuot, with wild boar and home-made ice cream for dinner! The afternoon was spent preparing camping equipment for the trip to another outpost of the Gospel. The lovely chapel at Dak Song in this frontier of civilization had been beautifully trimmed with garlands of pale mauve-blue daisy wild flowers that grow profusely at this time of year. We stood big red candles on beams along the brown wooden walls and they glowed red among the green palms and pale blue flowers. Y Brong, the evangelist, has been doing a good piece of work, and over 20 of the Mnong Preh children at the Government school are now Christians. Two of their teachers and the male nurse in charge of the clinic are also saved. We found 15 former savages of the Mnong Nong tribe from a village 12 miles away, on hand rejoicing in their Savior.

All around the chapel on the ground lay the Mnongs on beds of branches, covered with a few leaves to keep off the drizzle at night, their feet a few inches from their camp fires. We invited them to sleep inside the chapel and soon the place was full. We have a piece of ground levelled off upon which we hope to erect a house for the preacher, with a large room for visitors where they can have their fires at night. It gets quite cold in this jungle at 3,000 feet altitude. So far we have not the \$500.00 needed to erect this building.



\$500.00 will build this guest house and preacher's living quarters at Dak Song.

We found the fort crowded with hundreds of tribespeople of the Mnong Preh, Mnong Nong and Mnong Bunor tribes, gathered by the French Administrator for a sacrificial festival. They looked wild with their long, coarse, black hair in knobs (men and women alike) held with brass skewer ornaments and red pompoms; huge ivory earplugs in their ears, or heavy pewter rings dragging down their lobes to their shoulders; thick brass wire wound up their arms and legs; hand-woven blue skirts and vests; all with sawed-off top front teeth, and some of their lower teeth filed to sharp points—a very wild, primitive forest people!

They crowded into the chapel at night until the place was packed, and after Gordon and Mr. Nhuong preached, 11 came forward and knelt in prayer. Next day the buffalo was sacrificed, as shown in our film, cruelly hacked and stabbed, given alcohol to revive it so that it could be hacked at again. All day the crowds drank at the rice alcohol jars and played their gongs in various ways, according to their tribes.

The second night we preached to another packed-out chapel, and 12 more accepted Christ. What a victory! We had calls from chiefs to send preachers to their far-off villages. They had never heard the Gospel before.

Mr. and Mrs. Cung, Vietnamese missionaries, have just arrived and will be placed in Dak Song as soon as a building is erected. They will work at the language and translate the Word of God, besides evangelizing the vast district. Still further west fifty miles is another such frontier post where we should have a chapel. And this is only the beginning of a vast territory still unreached, where Mnong Dip, Stieng and Mnong Biat tribespeople have yet to hear the Gospel. We fly over them every time we go to Saigon, and each time the burden gets heavier. Will no one respond to these tribes in their need? Pioneers with no thought for personal comfort, rugged preachers of the Good News, are needed now. Send us single women in pairs to do this, if young men are not willing to come. We've waited 23 years to open these areas.....

We have just taken in and given several months training to 15 new workers. They are now out helping the preachers, and will come back to Bible School in July. We have no support for these yet. (\$15.00 a month for a single worker).

Since New Years we have been visiting some of the villages, as we are able to obtain gasoline. At Buon Cu Blim we sat on the longhouse floor with 170 Christians in a fellowship feast. The days ahead are going to be just as full, for there is so much to be done while the doors are open.

ENGINEER COMING—The Board is kindly sending us a fine engineer-builder for our Leprosarium, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Powell and son, Billy. They sail for French studies in France on January 23rd, before coming to us. How we need them, and what a help they will be when they get here! We praise God for these capable, consecrated missionaries.

LEPROSARIUM CONSTRUCTIONS—Besides new wards for the patients, three missionary residences should be built at once. The much-needed hospital building is shaping up on the drawing board, and to date \$1,500.00 has come in from friends in Detroit to begin this. Another part of the building will be dedicated as a memorial for the Johnsons, martyred in Siam, as some gifts have come in for that purpose. At present Dr. Webber is doing his surgery in a tiny shack behind the temporary clinic. He has forty patients who should be receiving hospital care right now, but we have no place to put them, nor can we accept any more until accommodations are provided.

OUR FAMILY—Douglas: At Chicago University taking graduate course in Political Science. Living at Wheaton, Illinois, with his wife, Ruth and baby Linda (who is getting to look more like her Grandad Smith every day, they say!) Leslie: He has just returned to St. Paul Bible Institute after spending a year in California. Stanley: In his senior year at Wheaton College Academy.

Space and your time will not permit more now—yes, we need your prayers for our rice-field project, for equipment to be provided, for funds to build. God bless you as you share with us in this glorious work of reaching the lost, cleansing the unfortunates with leprosy, and building the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ in this Tribesland.

Ever gratefully yours in Him,

*Laura L. Smith*

*Gordon H. Smith*

P. S. Please make out all gifts to the Treasurer, The Christian & Missionary Alliance, 260 West 44th Street, New York 36, New York, and mark them—"Leprosarium," "Tribeswork," etc., care of Gordon H. Smith. Any parcels sent directly to us by mail and marked "Leprosarium" enter duty free and arrive in about two months time.

G. H. S.