

1964

Land of Triumphs, Tragedies, and Tears

"A sound of battle is in the land, and of great destruction." —
JEREMIAH 50:22.

IF any reader of these lines should confess that he does not understand the situation in East Asia, in lands such as Viet Nam, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos, and is tempted to ask, like little Wilhelmine in Cowper's famous poem we learned at school, "what they fought each other for," let such not blush for shame. No one else does, as far as we can make out. Perhaps we are not meant to understand, for it does seem at times in all the miasma of political parties at war there that "there is no judgment in their goings." To attempt to write about the chronically unstable condition of the Far East would be folly, but unfortunately there is a vital relationship between the political and the religious situation. If Communism should triumph in the present struggle in Viet Nam, the work of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in that distressful country is as likely to be finished as it is in China today. For that reason the internal troubles of Viet Nam cannot be altogether ignored.

At the time this is written the United States has become deeply involved in the undeclared war between North Viet Nam and the Republic of Viet Nam in the south. Into the latter state America has poured since 1954 some two billion dollars to strengthen the nation against Communist aggression from the north. She has also furnished men and materials to aid the south. Statesmen in the United States talk of another Korea developing there, and not without reason. China threatens to pour a huge army into the north to aid the Viet Cong, while Russia casts a colossal shadow over the whole scene and demands that the United States withdraw all aid of men and materials and leave the country. Should that be done, then would be brought to pass what former President Eisenhower predicted and all Southeast

Asia would fall into the hands of Communism. That is what the missionaries in the country also fear. A brief mention of how the present situation came to pass may not be out of place here.

The collapse of empires — British, French, Dutch, and Belgian — spawned a host of minor states left high and dry in many cases by the receding tides of so-called colonialism. Most of these nations, while shouting for their independence, were ill equipped morally, spiritually, intellectually, and politically to grapple with the problems their newly acquired freedom imposed upon them.

The area in question, composed of Viet Nam, Laos, and Cambodia, was occupied by the French in the nineteenth century and up to the time of World War II was known as French Indo-China. Following the war a coalition, including nationalists and Communists, called themselves the Viet Minh and made war against the French. In one of the bloodiest battles of modern history they defeated the French forces at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. A cease-fire arranged at Geneva, Switzerland, ended the war against the French, granted full independence to Laos and Cambodia, and partitioned S-shaped Viet Nam at the 17th parallel, giving to each part approximately the same land area of some 63,000 square miles, with a population in each division of over 14,000,000. Communists rule the north and a pro-Western government controls the south.

It would seem that this being the case each country would be free to go its own way and work out its own destiny. But it is not so. An undeclared war goes on, fierce and bitter and all the more terrifying since it is largely waged at night in the depths of the jungle with only sporadic outbursts in the eye of day. Saigon's veneer of gaiety cannot altogether cover the gnawing warning that history's wind is fiercely blowing through the jungles and across the rice fields of Viet Nam, threatening to blow its shaky political and family-dominated structure to smithereens.¹ To a visitor like myself the outward calm of Saigon, its brilliant sunshine and leisurely pace have a soporific effect, a sort of *dolce far niente* that spreads a pleasant façade over the sterner uglier realities beneath the surface and leads one to yawn and say with Bunyan's Simple, "I see no danger." But the danger is there, and the bombs that shattered half of the royal palace early in 1962 awakened many out of their somnolence.

It is in this maelstrom of battle, murder, and sudden death that

¹Since this was written the Diem government was overthrown and the country is governed (early 1964) by a military junta.

J.H. HUNTER

Beside ALL WATERS

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The Christian and Missionary Alliance labors today, and where much fruit has been seen for their faithful proclamation of the gospel. Now, after fifty years, the work here faces what may be the supreme crisis of its history. No field has had more time, energy, prayer, finances, and sacrifice than this, but it is also true that none has produced more bountiful results or developed an indigenous church more competent to carry on the work if and when the doors of gospel opportunity close.

In writing thus there is no thought of making any invidious comparisons where God does not. Here is a paragraph from the history of the Alliance, *After Fifty Years*, which looks back across the work of a quarter of a century in this field as we survey it after half a century today. Though the past twenty-five years have completely changed the picture, it throws light on a side of colonialism too often forgotten today. The writer says of French Indo-China, as it was called then, that "it was not until 1911 that the Mission finally entered the field to permanently occupy what is the largest, and what has become one of the most unique and exclusively Alliance of all the many fields of the Society.

... In those years from 1887 to 1911, God in His inscrutable providence was making a great and mighty preparation for a period of service which was to be so speeded up in both extensive activity and intensive accomplishment, that twenty-five years was to witness a growth which a century of effort had not seen on some fields. One aspect of the preparation was the extension of French power, culture, and language over the area, the creation of a stable, reputable government, with all the assurance of law and order. Roads were opened up through the land to transport rubber and coffee and for military purposes. These were to become highways to speed the gospel, thus literally fulfilling the prophecy of the crooked made straight and the rough places plain. Savage, warring tribes were brought under the same sort of law that made a hearing for the gospel when the first missionaries of the cross, perhaps even the Apostle Paul himself, followed the Roman legions to land on British soil. Morrison in China, limited by prohibitions and antforeign hatred, and Judson in Burma, at the mercy of a capricious Eastern despot, had to meet handicaps that were spared the missionaries of Indo-China, for everywhere French power has made a way, and the might of French justice reaches into the jungles to protect the missionaries.

Unfortunately, that is not true today. The old order of things has changed and the existing government can no longer safeguard the

workers, both foreign and national, seeking to reach the tribespeople of the hills. Already some of them have paid the supreme sacrifice. There is peril everywhere. It lurks in the dimness of the dawn when the mists rising from the mighty Mekong River shroud the land with a ghostly pall. It is there in the splendors of noon when the patient peasant is at work in the rice paddies of this lovely land, and most of all it is present when the shadowy gloaming creeps softly out of the depths of the jungle to hide the Viet Cong on their sinister mission of pillage and murder. In Saigon we were told that the Nationalist forces ruled the country by day and the Viet Cong by night. Billions of dollars in aid have been poured into the country, but it is a very tenuous hold the government has on the nation. We were told that the country was slipping quietly, almost unobtrusively, into civil war. A fatalistic atmosphere was prevalent everywhere, a what's-the-use attitude which expressed in words might be, "If the French could not hold the Communists, how can we?"

Can the Viet Nam forces contain the Viet Cong with the help of the U. S. military aid group working there? That is a question time alone will answer. The Communist guerrillas have a seemingly endless stream of recruits and supplies from North Viet Nam and Laos. One writer thus describes the situation as it at present exists:

The United States suffers from a great handicap in South Viet Nam. Its 4,000 military technicians and support troops are bolstering a regime which has failed to win the allegiance of the peasantry, largest single segment in a population of 14,000,000.

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In a country which has known eighty years of French colonial rule, wartime occupation by the Japanese and a struggle for independence climaxed by physical severing of the nation in the Geneva agreement of 1954, the populace has tended to transfer old resentments to the existing regime.

Such is the background and such are the conditions under which the work of The Christian and Missionary Alliance is being carried on in the Republic of Viet Nam today. But amidst all the strife and turmoil of the past years the Lord has glorified His Word and many have been added to the Church. Today there are more than 32,800 baptized Christians in more than three hundred churches.

At such stations as we were privileged to visit, one marveled at the work being done, and could not but be impressed with the tremendous potentialities in this strife-torn and tormented land. We believe that here is a field of unparalleled missionary opportunity in the world

today. Though the work is carried on in many places in the midst of conditions of danger and privations undreamed of in the Western world, many brands are being plucked from the burning. God is glorified in the tribulation of these people, and should a stable government be established on democratic principles a great harvest will be reaped.

It was early morning in brilliant sunshine when we left Saigon for Vinh Long, where the Rexiliuses and the Pendells were holding the fort within sound of the guns in the struggle against the Communist guerrillas. It is a good highway that runs through a picturesque land of rice fields, mangrove swamps, coconut trees, and jungle. The peasants were at work in the rice paddies, some literally scattering "bread" upon the waters, others tending the rice crop that spread a vivid carpet of green here and there, pleasing and restful to the eye and promising a rich harvest for the hungry after many days. In the far distance we could see the Mekong River we were to cross later on. It carries on its broad surface much of the commerce of the country as it wends its way for 2,600 miles from Tibet to empty itself by its five mouths at its delta into the South China Sea not far from Saigon. But this same river had gone on the rampage when we were there and had flooded 80 per cent of the country in the south, destroying 90 per cent of the rice crop to add to the sufferings and heartbreaking difficulties of the poor people.

In spite of all the difficulties encountered from the ravages of nature, and the hatred and enmity of devil-inspired men, the progress of the work of the C&MA everywhere in Viet Nam is a continued astonishment to any who see it. It seems as though God has sweetened by His presence the very adversities from which the people suffer today. There were saints in Caesar's household and white garments in Sardis, and under the shadow of Communism and in the midst of persecution the work proceeds and our God is marching on. At Vinh Long we found an excellent laymen's training school with keen young men and women anxious to be prepared for the service of the Lord. There is an intensive course of several weeks given there for young people who go back to help pastors, teach Sunday school, or go out and preach. Many of these young men come from Communist-infested areas, and are daily risking their lives to serve the Lord Jesus. Some of them dare not go back to their homes for fear of the Communists. There is great need for prayer for the missionaries and the national Christians in this area as they dwell daily in the midst of dangers.

Beautiful indeed for situation is the station at Dalat, 5,000 feet

high, set amidst breath-taking scenery of mountain and jungle as savage as the predatory tigers the missionaries told me inhabit the region. The roads to Dalat are excellent and the climate is salubrious. From a bridge in the center of the town we looked into a valley that was well watered everywhere, even as the garden of the Lord, with long green rows of lettuce and other vegetables, crops which grow one after another all the year round. The market is a show place, modern to the nth degree, where the old and the new in transportation and dress make a pleasing picture and mingle in charming confusion. To the eye of the visitor it was a peaceful and happy scene as one viewed it on that lovely Sunday morning, but in the hearts of the people there was fear, for much blood had been shed there and the Viet Cong menace casts an ominous shadow over Dalat.

Everywhere we went in Viet Nam we had heard of the school and home for missionaries' children located here. When we saw it, we were not surprised that it is a place much beloved by teachers and pupils alike. It is modern in design and equipment, and is making a magnificent contribution to the training of the young and the evangelization of Viet Nam. There is also an indigenous church there, and it was filled on Sunday morning with tribespeople to whom we had the privilege of speaking.

Then, what is one to say about the work of the school where Rev. and Mrs. Jean Funé and their colleagues give the tribes young people the rudiments of Christian teaching, and send them to teach others what they know. This must be the most unique Bible school in the world. Mr. Funé told me these students cannot concentrate for long. They come for two weeks at first, and six months at a stretch is all they can take. But what they know they pass on, and tell to others what great things the Lord has done for them. This is the most efficacious sermon anyone can preach. When we were at Dalat there were thirty-one women and forty-four men in attendance at the Bible school.

The work abounds in human interest stories. Here is one concerning Pastor Ha Sol, a trophy of grace and typical of many others won for the Lord in Viet Nam. His story is told by Rev. H. A. Jackson, who with Mrs. Jackson has been on the field since 1920.

I knew a man named Sol. Who was this man?

He was the boss of a road gang, breaking rock along the road between Djiring and Dalat. Only a tribesman, yet he was the boss, aggressive, born to lead, to command, to bear responsibility, and a hard taskmaster he was.

Driven himself, he drove his men and cursed them at his will. Alert to his own self-interest, he exploited every man, withholding a portion of every wage for his personal gain. He loaned his money to less resourceful tribesmen, his money for their children — and he acquired two slaves, also alcohol jars, gongs, and buffaloes. Proud and ambitious, he was becoming a man of wealth and reputation, respected for his power and property, admired for his ruthlessness and shrewdness, the tribesman's measure of a successful man!

I knew this man Sol. He made our first contacts with the forest folk at a time when they had little confidence in the white man. He was also my interpreter.

He was still the same man. His temper was the terror of the workers on the mission property. He was hard to manage. He resisted God. He drank until often he could not do his work. Out in a village, he would interpret a gospel sermon for me, then join the tribesmen at their rice alcohol jars. "My people will never follow your doctrine," he told me. "They will never give up their alcohol, for when their throat craves it, they have to drink it."

But we had prayed, "Lord, give us the best man in the jungle." And God had sent Sol. Early one morning, Sol called us before breakfast. "I must begin studying the Bible. I am a Christian." He said that during the night, when very sick, he had cried to the Lord. God healed his body, saved his soul, and called him to a life of service. Sol wasted no time.

How can I describe the change? Black turned white, storm changed to calm. I knew the Sol that God transformed . . . Sol the wholehearted, the all-out believer. He did study the Bible and continued doing it all his life. It became his rule, and he applied it sternly, first to himself and then to the churches God gave to his care. "What the Bible says, that is what you do." It was as simple as that.

He was among the first tribal believers, and he set a high standard for those who followed. One time the government demanded an end to animal sacrifices and the drinking and crimes that accompanied them. But who could tell this to the village officials now called in by the district chief for special instruction? Only Sol could deliver this order. His life backed up his words. And he welcomed the chance to preach the new birth to this unusual gathering of village chieftains as the answer to drink and all forms of evil.

He never excused the weak church or Christian. He would not compromise for anyone's sake. A man very dear to him fell into

sin; Sol asked that the man be removed from his church. It was the scriptural way to deal with sin in the church, therefore Sol's way.

He came to know the Bible well. After all, he helped translate parts of it. Phrases in the Koho New Testament will always bear his mark. "Repentance," as he expressed it, was to "hate-forsake-sin," meaning to hate sin to the point of forsaking it. That to him was repentance. He knew the Old Testament in Vietnamese, as very little of it has been translated into Koho. Sol made a special study of Bible characters, observing the way that God blessed the just and punished the wicked. Believing that God is the unchangeable One, Sol applied his findings to the people of his generation. Noah, a just man, and his family were saved from the flood while all others perished. Daniel was preserved in the den of hungry lions, and the three Hebrew children lived in the fiery furnace because they trusted in the Almighty. But King Nebuchadnezzar was driven from men to dwell with the beasts of the field and to eat grass as oxen because of his pride.

Sol constantly referred to parts of the Bible for guidance in personal or church matters. When he studied, God talked to him from the Scriptures and gave him a message for his people. His practical sermons drew applications from the Word that many of us had never seen. The missionaries, as well as the nationals, were moved by Sol's sermons. A missionary once remarked, "I couldn't understand a word he said, but I knew what he was talking about."

He made charts to illustrate Bible truths, with figures drawn from a tribesman's mind: The devil laughing at the dupes who obeyed him was always a favorite. In preaching a sermon sometime after his first trip to Saigon he wanted to describe the celestial city as something beyond one's understanding. Said he, "It is better than Charner's store." But as time passed and the portions of the Word stood out in bold relief, he made a chart that revealed, to some extent, the glory of that place that eye hath not yet seen. To illustrate redemption through the blood, Sol prepared a chart depicting a buffalo sacrifice at the left and the cross at the right. He then explained that the blood of bulls and goats and of water buffaloes could never take away sin. But the priceless blood of Christ, the sinless Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin. Who could forget these pictures!

His poetry, filled with the lore of jungle people, returned always to Christ, the only Saviour, and the One who could satisfy their special needs. He preached with amazing simplicity. No one

could miss the point. He said to a missionary once, "You give people the truth in such big chunks. When you finish, I have to cut it up in small pieces for them."

The first hymns sung in Koho were prepared by Sol. His choice words still stir our hearts. They always will.

Yes, I knew Sol, our beloved Sol. Everyone did. Great or small, they felt his ministry. No one was so important that Sol was not at ease with him; no one so low that Sol could not fellowship with him. To government leaders he was the neat, sure man who politely but firmly put his service for God above any official position they offered. But ignorant tribesmen, dusty from the trail, knew that his house would always receive them. American officials, once lost on a hunt, remembered the man who in broken English spoke to them of God and handed them tracts while he served them a meal and gave them a night's lodging.

A poor man in a hospital and far from his family was brought his daily rice by Pastor Sol. In the scare of sudden illness people turned to him to take them, night or day, to the mission clinic. Yet when Sol himself was sick, in fact on his deathbed, they still came to him for his godly prayer and counsel as one loved by the church and respected by the world.

Sol had a multiple ministry. With a burden for the lost, he traveled widely, preaching fluently in Vietnamese and five tribal languages. As president of the Tribes Church, he led diverse and independent factions into a spirit of unity and submission to Christ. Pagans or believers—he touched all he met. He had a word for every occasion, an interest in every person. Today scores of churches and thousands of Christians are witness to the work that God did through Sol.

On September 3, 1959, Sol died. His work was finished and God took him. We knew Sol; God knew him too, and welcomed him into His presence. "Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord." In him the Word of the Lord bore fruit, not thirty-, not sixty-, but one hundredfold. Hallelujah!

We have told this story not because it is unique in the annals of the Alliance, but because it is typical of the work done. Time and space would fail to tell of all that has been done in this regard. The stories are legion concerning the trophies of grace in South Viet Nam and elsewhere. Many of the subjects are still with us today, living witnesses to the power of God, with the joy of the Lord shining in

their faces. Many others have gone to join the Celestial Choir that forever makes music around the throne as they sing the song:

"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

But the good seed that is sown does not always germinate and come to full fruition, human nature being the same in Viet Nam as in America. Sometimes there is not sufficient depth of earth for it to take root, and when the winds of adversity blow it withers away. Or it may be the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches or the lust of other things that enter in to choke the Word and it becomes unfruitful. Alas! how often that occurs. It was so in the case of the Raday official who had ambitions, as young men in the Western world have. But this young man wanted "to be a chief and the owner of many gongs and blankets, cattle and buffalo, horses and elephants. I should have a wealthy chief's daughter for my wife, and would learn the Frenchman's wisdom. Long ago I saw this picture of my future. Now the honor is mine." He worked, he studied at the school in Banméthuot, married the chief's daughter, passed through a Japanese prison camp, and in adversity came in touch with a church of the C&MA and professed to be saved.

I preached and witnessed to my people. I was appointed treasurer of the Banméthuot church and adviser to the work of God in that province. I remembered my dream of being an important man and I was determined to gain my goal.

I went to study again, this time to be an administrator. Since that time I have been very busy. I have risen from one position to another. Of course I do not have time for the work of the church any more. I leave that work to those who are not so busy.

Some of the pastors and missionaries say I have forgotten God. But I haven't really. It is true I stopped tithing, but only so that I could invest it and later have more to give. This idea was given to me in a vision. I have not forgotten you, my people, either. I have taken time from my important work to come and have this feast with you. I am important now. I have come here so you can celebrate my success with me.

Now see, I have not left the ways of our people . . . here is the feast, the gongs, the sacrifice, and the alcohol I have prepared. Come and drink with me and eat my meat, and may you be as successful as I am.

How familiar the story, in Viet Nam or New York. "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." So old, so new, so universal, so sad!

When we left lovely Dalat for the airport on Sunday afternoon to get a plane for Banméthuot, the sun shone serenely from an unclouded blue sky. Mr. Funé had assured us, however, it would rain, though it never looked less like rain when we left the mission. But he was right. Before we reached the airport the rains descended and the floods came, as I had never beheld in my life. In a short time the landing field was flooded, and the water eighteen inches deep was flowing like a river from the entrance to the field.

It is amongst the Raday tribe that Rev. and Mrs. N. Robert Ziemer have labored for a decade and a half. They and their colleagues have established a work, under God, in Banméthuot that has sent a stream of blessing through the surrounding country and brought many into the Kingdom of God. It has always seemed to us that one of the greatest achievements God can give to any man is the opportunity and the ability to translate the Word of God into another tongue, and make it possible for those who sit in darkness to read in their own language the wonderful words of life. I may have said this before, but it bears repetition. That is what Mr. Ziemer has done. Into Raday he has translated the New Testament and the Psalms, which at the time of writing have been sent to the British and Foreign Bible Society in London. It is expected that the book will be published soon.

While in Banméthuot we visited a church situated in the troubled area, and one could not but marvel at the patient courage of the people who in the midst of danger from a cruel foe still carry on the work of the Lord. We visited also one of the longhouses set up on piles in which the tribespeople dwell. Many families live under the same roof under conditions that are strange to Western eyes. Each family had a part of the house allocated to it. On one side is space for sleeping, though one could hardly call them bedrooms. The other side is kitchen, living room, dining room, and general meeting place. The walls were covered with cooking utensils, household appliances of the crudest kind, brooms, baskets, mats, lamps, bows, and crude musical instruments.

Two of the great spiritual achievements in Viet Nam are the Bible school and the Leprosarium at Banméthuot. The former is training young men for work among the tribes. A new building was dedicated in 1961 with more and better facilities for the training of the students. At least one of the graduates has sealed his testimony with his life.

Under the direction of Dr. E. Ardel Vietti¹ a splendid work of spiritual and physical healing is being carried on at the Leprosarium in the jungle some nine miles from Banméthuot. Miss Vietti became the resident doctor and director of the Leprosarium in 1960. The buildings are set amidst the jungle beauties of Viet Nam and accommodate some two hundred patients. Close by is a leprosy village, also ministered to by the Alliance. It is a regret that more space cannot be given to these many Christian projects, each of which is eminently worthy of a book in itself. Here the sick in body and in soul find health and healing for both. One illustration from the Leprosarium *Tidings* must suffice:

"There is a fountain filled with blood," sang Y Lot, the Christian, one Sunday afternoon in 1948. A pagan youth, bathing at the stream nearby, sang with him, following one word behind. A strange song, but he liked it. He then visited with Y Lot and went to meet that evening with the "believers" in Black Tung Village. After the service Y Lot asked him if he wanted to believe in this new Way. He answered "Yes." That night Y Suai Eban gave not only his heart but his life to the Lord.

He returned to the drunken revelry of his own great longhouse, a changed youth. His family and friends called him to the alcohol jar and the game. Formerly he delighted in both. Now the old thirst was missing. "I now believe in Jesus Christ," was his reply to their urgings.

The next day he returned to his studies at Banméthuot. Three months later he completed his secretarial course. Both reputation and security lay before him. His superior pressed him to name the position he would like. But he had no choice, for he had already been chosen. God had called him to bring the message of salvation to his own people. Instead he asked to be released. Four times his adviser sent him home to reconsider. Each time he returned, unmoved. Finally his request was granted. "If God has called you, I cannot hold you. Go, and be a pastor to the mountain people," said his chief. And this he did.

He entered Bible school immediately, and taught village Christian groups in the months between sessions. In 1955 he was graduated from Bible school. On March 10, 1957, he was ordained to the ministry. He has served as treasurer for the Raday church and

¹Shortly after this was written Dr. Vietti, Rev. Archie Mitchell, and Mr. Dan Gerber were captured by the Viet Cong and carried off into a Communist hide-out in the jungle.

for the united tribes district. In 1957 he became Leprosarium chaplain. We make you acquainted with Rev. Suai Eban.

It is a good road that runs from Banméthuot to Nhatrang, flanked by coconut trees and rubber plantations, a journey through mountains, valleys and jungles that are the haunt of the tiger, where flowers of many hues flaunt their fragrance and loveliness on the air. Rev. D. F. Irwin, who drove us to Nhatrang, told us that on one trip over that same road he had seen three tigers in one place.

The Evangelical Theological Institute for Vietnamese at Nhatrang is surely the *pièce de résistance* of all the educational institutions that are to be found on the far-flung foreign fields of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. Unsurpassed in its situation, overlooking the blue waters of the China Sea, the school was dedicated to God on July 9, 1960. Some seven hundred persons were present for the occasion, including government officials, representatives of the national church and Christian leaders from all over Viet Nam. Rev. L. L. King, Foreign Secretary of the Alliance, in his address to the gathering stated that this was the largest single building program ever sponsored by the Mission and executed entirely by the national church. The Mission provided the funds: the national church carried out the construction. While not wishing to indulge in extravagances, one can hardly praise the buildings and the site too much. Rev. Dale S. Herendeen, a teacher at the school, writing at the time of the dedication said:

The campus is beautiful. It is constructed on a low hill overlooking the China Sea. From it one has a more than 180-degree view of the ocean and islands. A lush, green valley and purple mountains complete the scene. Rising above the administration buildings, dormitories, and faculty houses is the lovely new chapel with a lighted cross which can be clearly seen in the city of Nhatrang. On the roof apex are the two words, *Good News*, in neon lights. This clearly identifies the campus with the national church. The buildings are magnificent and erected entirely by national labor and have been constructed with skill and economy that could hardly be equaled or surpassed anywhere in the world.

With these words we heartily agree. Not the least of the impressive features of this beautiful structure is the economy with which it was built.

If the site is beautiful by day, it is enchanting by night. It was full

moon when we were there, and the China Sea lay bathed in silver radiance on which the dark islands seemed to float, while around it stood the mountains like great sentinels placed to guard an enchanted land. And a wordless prayer welled up in the heart, a prayer of awe, ecstasy, and gratitude to Him who has made all things beautiful, whose way is in the sea and whose path is in the great waters.

There were 110 students in Nhatrang when we were there, 40 young women and 70 men. The program is unique. The course lasts for five years. There are two years of study, then two years of practical work must be done among the people. If the students make good in this, they come back and graduate in one additional year. Here is an institution that must exercise a tremendous influence on the future of Viet Nam and, under God, be a potent factor in the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God. But great prayer is needed that this wonderful institution does not fall into the rapacious maw of Communism.

Since the first Alliance missionaries entered Viet Nam, or Annam, as it was then called, in 1911, and erected a tiny chapel in 1913, the work has been established and the church built in blood, sweat, and tears. Wars within and without, hunger, want, cruelty, and fear left their mark upon the people down to the termination of the Japanese occupation of the last war, but could not quench the flame of the Spirit that burned within the hearts of the Christians.

The people of the Republic of Viet Nam are passing through the furnace of affliction at the hands of ruthless enemies who, in the inscrutable providence of God, have been permitted to come up against them. There are eventualities in the political and the religious spheres which, unforeseen today, may have occurred to change entirely the pattern of life in Viet Nam, as elsewhere, by the time this appears in print. But this is the kind of risk any author who comments upon controversial affairs must take in these days.

It is written that when the enemy comes in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. If it is in the permissive will of God that Communism should sweep all through Southeast Asia the church in these countries will stand the test, and weather the storm, and out of the furnace, like the Church in Ethiopia following the Italian occupation, will emerge pure gold, greatly augmented, tried, and true.

We are not for a moment suggesting that the Viet Cong will succeed in subjugating all of Viet Nam. Far from it. But great changes must take place in the very nature of things and the struggle may be

long and bitter. While we were in Saigon a correspondent of the *London Times* summed up the situation in these words:

Behind the Viet Cong are the immense resources of the Communist world, spearheaded by Communist North Viet Nam. The Hanoi regime has made it clear that the Communist purpose is to "liberate Viet Nam from the yoke of the American-Diemist Imperialists." There can be no doubt that North Viet Nam will back up this threat with arms, as well as commissars, when the need arises.

The West has seen how the Communist powers have used North Viet Nam as a *point d'appui* for Laos. Dr. Eugene Staley, who led a State Department team of financial experts to Viet Nam, has recommended that South Viet Nam's army, Civil Guard, and Civil Defense units should be increased to meet the Communist threat; that "agrovilles," or new towns, should be built in every district in the Mekong Delta; and that the Republican Youth organizations should be expanded. This "crash program," which has been accepted in principle by the State Department, is expressly designed to restore security in South Viet Nam by the end of 1962.

If this goal is reached, fifteen or sixteen months from now (1963) Saigon will be able to celebrate the end of a six-year "emergency." But before that eagerly awaited day many bitter sacrifices lie before the Vietnamese people. As the British army learned in Malaya, a war against Communist guerrillas is one of the most expensive, in men and materials, to bring to a decisive end.

What the end of this story of political strife and unrest will be we cannot tell nor would one hazard a guess. If blood is the price of political freedom and democracy, then Viet Nam has already paid dearly. Thousands of Vietnamese soldiers have died fighting beside the French or against them, while a great host of the village people have died and are still dying as the undeclared war seesaws back and forth in the jungles as the Viet Cong forces seek to secure control of the country.

The future of The Christian and Missionary Alliance here is linked to a certain extent to that of the country. In writing this we are not unmindful of the fact that man proposes but it is God who disposes, and that He can turn even the wrath of man to praise Him. So it can still be said that the future of this beautiful and much-troubled land is as bright as the promises of God. Its greatest hope lies in the free spread of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and given religious

liberty there is a great multitude there who will respond. The great need is prayer that the doors may remain open.

The fiftieth anniversary of the establishing of the work in Viet Nam was celebrated in 1961. Rev. P. E. Carlson, who has spent some thirty-five years there, and who was present at the celebration, wrote concerning it:

The largest Alliance church in Saigon, with 900 seats, was filled for the jubilee celebration. Hundreds stood in the aisles or crowded one another at the windows. The exquisite decorations in the church reflected the artistic taste with which the Vietnamese are gifted.

The morning program was a review of the progress of the gospel in this land over the five past decades. The facts well presented drew forth expressions of surprise as well as of praise to God who had surely worked marvelously. Some heard for the first time of Dr. A. B. Simpson, to whom God gave the vision of evangelizing Viet Nam, and of Dr. R. A. Jaffray who put the plan into action in 1911. Sketched briefly in the report were the periods of advance and of stalemate and the steady over-all progress to the present day. In 1960 there were 158 churches, 124 branch churches, 97 ordained ministers, 80 unordained preachers, 82 student preachers, 77,296 Christians. The church has advanced far toward the objective of self-support, self-government, and self-propagation.

The night is darkening; the shadows are gathering; the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. *Sursum corda!* Let us indeed lift up our hearts. The Lord is on the field. One more effort to preach the gospel to every creature and the work may be done. Let us therefore brace ourselves to the struggle against sin, and so bear ourselves to the end, that, if the kingdom tarry longer, the very angels of heaven may say of us, "This was their finest hour."

ALLIANCE MISSIONS ON THE MARCH



Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries in Viet Nam, June, 1964

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised"

THIS is the testimony of our 125 missionaries in tortured Viet Nam. Despite the tragedies of war and the setbacks resulting from enemy activity, as well as continued concern for our captive missionaries,* the manifestations of God's power and goodness call for praise to His name.

The Alliance began to preach the gospel in this land in 1911. The Lord has brought into being a strong group of 333 churches (organized as a self-governing body in 1928) with 334 pastors, teachers, translators, etc.

While war conditions restrict some activities they permit increased emphasis on others. For example, the great concentrations of young people in the cities afford unlimited opportunities for ministry. Cantho, the education center for the entire Mekong Delta region, has a student population of 5,000. In Huế, near the 17th parallel (which divides the republic from Communist North Viet Nam), 250 young people regularly attend classes and 50 of them prayed the penitent's prayer last year. The new international church and youth center being built in Saigon will make it possible to expand the ministry among that city's restless and searching student population.

God's power is shown also in local church groups. An increasing number of short term Bible schools, youth conferences and instruction classes for lay workers have strengthened the church and resulted in a widening outreach. Congregations in Saigon and Danang recently sponsored three branch churches, giving both members and financial help. Two groups of Christians in resettlement villages have recently assumed the support of full-time pastors; five other groups are building churches.

Through the witness of a Stieng tribesman, a victim of leprosy who found the Lord through the ministry of the Banmethuot Leprosarium, over 700 Mnong tribespeople have turned from spirit worship to faith in Christ.

There are 54 gospel programs broadcast weekly over FEBC in Manila and local government stations. Thousands hear the gospel in this way.

*Pray that the name of the Lord will be exceedingly great
among the 12,000,000 persons of Viet Nam.*

* Dr. Ardel Viotti, Rev. A. E. Mitchell and Mr. Dan Gerber were captured by the Viet Cong in May, 1962. Continue to pray for them.

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