

NEWS AND INFORMATION

FROM THE INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS OF

THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE

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MINISTERING IN 42 NATIONS AROUND THE WORLD

CONTACT: PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 21, 1975

SOURCE: Henry Paasonen, director of communications
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Dr. Nathan Bailey, President of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, confirmed this morning receipt of a report that Alliance missionaries detained by the Provisional Revolutionary Government of Viet Nam will be released in late October or early November.

This report, received from the U. S. State Department, is based on an announcement from Hanoi, North Viet Nam and verified by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. It indicates that the missionaries will arrive in Bangkok, Thailand by way of Vientiane, Laos.

Dr. Bailey said, "We hope that the assurances we had previously received from the Provisional Revolutionary Government of Viet Nam, that our missionaries were being well cared for, will now be confirmed by their physical release." He added that the C.M.A. center in Bangkok is ready to receive the missionaries and to provide them with a place of rest and with any medical attention they may need before proceeding to the United States.

OVER

Local Contact: _____

October 21, 1975

Five Alliance missionaries--Rev. & Mrs. Norman Johnson, Dr. & Mrs. Richard Phillips and Mrs. Betty Mitchell--are expected to be released as well as two Wycliffe Bible Translators--Mr. & Mrs. John Miller and their six-year old daughter, LuAnne.

They were in Banmethuot, South Viet Nam in March 1975 when military forces moving into that area seized the town. In the following months, reports were received that they were being held in the Pleiku Province of South Viet Nam.

The C.M.A. is still seeking information on three other missionaries, taken captive in May 1962 when a party of Viet Cong raided the Alliance leprosarium at Banmethuot--Rev. Archie Mitchell, the hospital administrator; Dr. Ardell Vietti, a medical missionary; and Mr. Dan Gerber, a medical assistant.

Dr. Bailey said that no word has as yet been received about them though repeatedly sought by officials of the Alliance.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance has been active in humanitarian and missionary work throughout Viet Nam since 1911. A world-wide missionary society, it was founded in 1887 and today has close to 1500 churches in the United States and Canada as well as some 5400 churches abroad. The Evangelical Church of Viet Nam, with a constituency of approximately 200,000 people, became one of its largest overseas missions.

With the fall of South Viet Nam, C.M.A. churches and families sponsored close to 2000 Vietnamese refugees in North America and raised over \$500,000 in four months to assist their fellow Christians fleeing from South Viet Nam and Cambodia.

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