

1974

ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE VIET NAM FIELD FOR 1974

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FOREIGN DEPARTMENT 5
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One missionary concluded his station report for the year by saying: ^{FILE}

"It is a real opportunity to serve Christ in Viet Nam in these days. In spite of the instability and insecurity to which we have become almost accustomed, as well as unprecedented new problems, it is of encouragement to me to see Christ building His Church, to see God giving beauty for ashes. There are encouraging signs that the Church in Viet Nam is beginning to be revived, too. Still, there are so many unreached that the situation cries out for new and innovative approaches. I trust that the Lord will find me putting a sharp sickle into the ripe harvest in 1975."

That paragraph, I believe, expresses the true feeling of all C&MA missionaries serving Christ in Viet Nam in these days.

This report is only a partial picture of what God has accomplished through the Church and Mission during the past year. But partial as it is, it does give some exciting glimpses into the life of the Church in this war-lacerated land. Let us begin by considering the work among

THE TRIBES

A. Mnong

1. Reconstruction. 1974 began with 65% of the Mnong Church living in refugee camps, having just lost everything they owned in the wake of war. It ended with all of those people resettled in new villages near the province center, living in new houses made largely of materials supplied by the government, and worshiping in new church buildings made possible by a generous grant from The C&MA. In a spectacular four days in December, six churches were dedicated -- five (Mnong) built by the above mentioned grant, and one (Vietnamese) by the Mission's refugee chapel program.
2. Evangelism. The Mnong evangelistic goals for 1974 were 600 conversions, 400 baptisms, and two new congregations. The first two figures were easily surpassed, even before the Christmas baptisms. Most of the growth was in the non-refugee areas. New congregations were established at Duc Xuyen and at Dak Sak, which is the second group to branch off from the Bu Dak church in the past two years to meet separately under the leadership of trained laymen.

(Tribes. B. Raday)

? ? Finished since then ? ?

Hopefully, this will be ready for printing in 1975 along with a hymnal. Five tracts have been printed this past year and a revised edition of the Gospel of John.

C. Jarai.

1. Evangelism. The most thrilling event in Pleiku province this past year has been the turning to the Lord of large numbers in two villages in the Plei Mohu district. In the smaller of the two villages nearly the whole village has come to the Lord. The larger village now has over 300 believers. This leaves only one Jarai village along the Quinhon road with no Christians.

In another village a young soldier who was converted in Phu Bon has brought 100 to the Lord - a great number of them children and young people. In Plei Ia Lu, which is part Bahnar and part Jarai, 35 have prayed. Phu Bon province has 4 Jarai churches including one in a leprosy segregation village. All the churches, except the leprosy village, have witnessing ministries in nearby villages. From the Phu Bon church, visits have been made to 47 villages with over 100 people taking part in these witness bands.

2. Bible Training. The need for more pastors and trained workers is evident when 16 of the 26 churches in the Pleiku area are without pastors this year.

Five Jarai are presently studying at the Banmethuot Bible School. A program of lay leadership training was begun with 23 men from 16 villages coming to study. A second training session is planned for February 1975. By the end of this year, seven of these trainees will be in charge of churches.

In Phu Bon province a three-day Village School had 60 students enrolled. All of them showed a great desire to learn more about the Gospel.

3. Literature. The New Testament with the Psalms has just been printed and will be dedicated to the Lord in February, 1975.

Over 65% of the Old Testament is in first draft or revised draft form. Several Scripture portions have been prepared for new readers. Work is now being done on a compilation of Scriptures covering the life and ministry of Christ.

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157 pages ←
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975 - 70
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D. Bahnar.

1. Evangelism. One of the most encouraging happenings this year came in August when two men and two boys in the Bahnar resettlement near An Khe prayed for salvation. Others have come to the Lord since, and now there are about 15 believers there. It is 15 years from the time the Gospel was first preached to these people. Many things have transpired in the meantime - all Bahnar in the area broke contact with the government several years ago and just in recent years some have been brought in from the hills and resettled. There are about 1,000 people from 11 villages gathered into one settlement 11 kilometers west of An Khe. Plei Kong Brech is the largest church in the Golar area. Souls are saved regularly in this church and earlier this year 32 were baptized. Converts have been won in other Bahnar villages but only in small numbers.
2. Bible Training. A "first" this year was a two-day youth conference held in November at Plei Brel Dor. About 250 young people came from all the villages.

In March a Short Term Bible School was held with emphasis on training deacons and elders.

In September a lay leadership training session was held for 2 weeks with representatives from most congregations. The emphasis is on developing lay preachers, some of whom will become full-time workers.

3. Literature. The first draft of the entire New Testament has been completed by John and Betty Banker of SIL. This is an important milestone in the Lord's work.

Printed 1977-78 - No Distribution as yet

E. Roglai.

1. Evangelism. Our missionary to this tribe says, "Experience is teaching me that our situation demands of us to originate evangelistic opportunities, not only to be invited by the national pastors to accompany them. Two particular villages of special prayer concern will soon be two areas of evangelistic activity."
2. Bible Training. About half of the 50,000 Roglai-speaking people live in secure areas. There are 14 pastors and missionaries and approximately 1,000 believers to reach them with the Gospel. Training of additional workers is a priority ministry.

total 5. Roglai, N. Roglai, Du Long
Dialer

(Tribes. Roglai...cont'd.)

A Short Term Bible School of one week was held in June.

The first EDW training seminar for evangelism cell leaders was conducted November 29 and 30 at the Phan Rang Tribal Center. There were 52 students including 7 pastors who attended as auditors and 20 Koho cell leaders. Sixty per cent of these students passed the final exam.

3. Literature. The local missionary cooperated with the Wycliffe Bible Translators in conducting 2 dialect surveys among the Southern Roglai. The purpose of the surveys is to know which sub-dialect is most widely understood for the future work of Bible translation.

One month was also spent in the study of Bible translation techniques.

F.

Koho

1. Evangelism. Wes Schelander's report says: "Every other week-end was spent in key centers throughout the district. Taking 15 students at a time, leaving Friday after classes and returning Sunday afternoon, we held 5 different preaching sessions and workshops for the evangelism cell leaders in the district. The idea was for all the students to fan out in a concerted effort of witnessing to the unsaved."

North of Da Me over 100 people have turned to the Lord through the testimony of several who have been healed.

Kon Do, one of 4 churches at Da Me, launched a program to start a branch church in '73. A good group of Christians are now meeting regularly in this new church. In '74 this same church opened another work at Phim Nom. This work is growing and was dedicated this past Christmas.

The Koho Missionary Committee was able to support their three missionaries throughout the year. These three are enjoying remarkable results in their fields of ministry.

2. Bible Training. The Koho Bible School held 2 sessions during the year with 50 and 54 in enrollment. The economic squeeze has been so great it was feared attendance would be very low unless scholarships were offered. The final decision was to let only the men come and each would have to fix his own meals.

Concluding each session of Bible School a three-day preachers' conference was held. Over 100 preachers attended each time. Church Growth and Spiritual Gifts were the main themes of the conferences.

(Tribes. Koho, ...continued)

Evangelism Deep and Wide as a nation-wide program has also been promoted in this tribal area. A special class on EDW had 54 students enrolled. Five workshops were also conducted in the district.

A six-weeks Short Term Bible School was held for 14 students of whom 6 completed their requirements and received their diplomas.

3. Literacy. A ten-day workshop was held in Bao Loc for government teachers and another workshop was held in Dilinh with 41 teachers in attendance. It is estimated that there are from 1,000 to 1,300 students attending the literacy classes. A lack of supplies and money have closed some of the night classes in the villages.

4. Literature. Work continues on the translation of the Old Testament. Several of the books of the Old Testament have been accepted as being ready for printing.

A Koho Topical Bible is in the process of preparation and should be ready in about 6 months. *DONE - NOT DISTRIBUTED CAN OBTAIN COPIES*

The printing of a hymnal with over 400 songs is about half done. *1/2 done in Ph. 1/1/74*

Sunday School lessons are also being prepared.

G. Hre.

Mostly WEC work

1. Evangelism. The Lord has worked in great power among the Hre tribal people in Quang Ngai province. The young Koho student-missionary, Ha Wan, continues to have a Spirit-anointed ministry. Approximately 800 have prayed for salvation. The little temporary chapel in front of the mission property is filled almost every service. Meetings are also held weekly in 4 other places. Twenty-four evangelism cells are now functioning in almost all the Hre areas of Quang Ngai.
In April one young lay worker was sent and supported by the main Quang Ngai Hre church to evangelize the Minh Long district, 25 miles away. In several weeks approximately 150 people had prayed for salvation and several remarkable healings were reported. In August, Minh Long District was lost to government control. Several of the new believers were killed and many fled into Quang Ngai where they are resettled in a huge, new refugee camp. The lay leader is now enrolled at the Biblical and Theological Institute in Nhatrang. The church among the Hre tribe is increasing daily in spite of unusual obstacles.

Having taken a look at the work among the Tribes, let us now consider the newest of our missionary efforts in Viet Nam, work among the

KHMER

A. Church Planting

1. Ba Xuyen Province: August 4 was a red letter day. Mr. Son Sonne, President of the Khmer Evangelical Church Foreign Mission, preached the dedicatory sermon for this first Khmer Evangelical Church Center of South Viet Nam. Seven people gave their hearts to the Lord at this meeting, including the lady who had given 16 pillars for the church and the carpenter who had donated his time to build it.
The day before Mr. Son Sonne took the lead in organizing a temporary committee for the Khmer Evangelical Church of South Viet Nam.
The Ba Xuyen Church has 200 people who have prayed since mid-1973. Besides the city work there are 2 large out-stations at Tan Hung and Dai Tam and three smaller, newer out-stations, all within 15 miles of the church center.
2. Kien Giang Province: The missionary effort of The Evangelical Church of Viet Nam's Missions Committee among the Khmer centers around the Minh Luong church group. Rev. Nguyen-lap-Ma pastors this group which was organized 4 years ago. One hundred Khmer have prayed in this area. Sixty have prayed in the last year.
3. Phong Dinh Province: Three works have developed around Cantho with 6 Khmer believers in Cantho; 19 in Phu Ly just across the Cantho ferry in Vinh Long Province; and 20 in Omon. Both Omon and Phu Ly could become established works in 1975.
4. Vinh Binh Province: There are now 56 Khmer Christians in this province, mostly scattered. A church group may be developing in Da Loc.
5. Chau Doc Province: Eight trips were made to this province. This has been an area of response which accounts for the many trips made there. One hundred and fifty people prayed in the province this past year.
6. Long Xuyen Province: At Nui Ba The a work has been started. There are 30/ Khmer Christians and 8 Vietnamese. This group must have Khmer elders and lay leaders who are literate in Khmer if the group is to become strong.

(Khmer - continued)

B. Bible Training

1. Short Term Bible Schools: Two of these week-long sessions have been held in Cantho during 1974. The first had 2 full-time and 2 part-time students. The second had 5 full-time students. This type of school is planned to train elders to the point that they can lead church groups in worship, Bible teaching, witness and service.
2. Village Bible Schools: Three of these 3-day schools have been held in 1974. They teach basic Christian doctrines, Christian life and ethics. They deal with problems of syncretism and separation of life. Christian hymns and choruses are taught. Christians are encouraged and taught to give a personal witness for the Lord.

C. Literature

1. Tracts and Booklets: Four tracts already available in the Khmer Republic were reprinted with Vietnamese Government numbers in editions of 20,000 each.

Scripture Gift Mission provided 18,000 booklets under 7 different titles. Every Home Crusade printed 185,000 tracts for distribution to the Khmer families in Viet Nam.

A new edition of the diglot Khmer-Vietnamese tract, The Prodigal Son, was prepared for the United Bible Societies.

An attractively illustrated, Program for Christian Worship, in tract form was printed.

Having noted the progress which has been made in the Khmer work this past year, we now turn to the work among the

CHINESE

A. Evangelism

1. The Cholon Church: At the pastor's suggestion 1974 was given to emphasizing evangelism. Early morning prayer meetings, the distribution of 30,000 New Testaments by the Chinese Gideon Camp in private schools, hospitals and hotels and a very effective program of newspaper evangelism has resulted in an upsurge of interest and attendance at the weekly Saturday evening Gospel service. Every week from 100 to 125 young people attend this meeting and about every week several of them come to Christ. A Bible class has been started to give these new converts a better understanding of the Word of God.
2. Cantho: This past year Miss Grace Lam moved from Dalat to Cantho to begin work among the great number of Chinese who live in this very important city.

(Chinese - continued)

She has now been joined by a young missionary couple from Hong Kong. These missionaries need our prayers as they endeavor to plant a church in that city.

3. The Chinese Bookstore: The Chinese Bookstore continues to have a very effective ministry not only to the churches in the Cholon area but to the unsaved people who come in to buy books. Once again the sales for this year have shown an increase over the previous year.

The half million or more unevangelized Chinese living in Viet Nam challenge us to pray that the Lord of the Harvest will thrust workers into this part of the harvest field.

That leaves us with one more section of our missionary outreach to be considered; the work among the

VIETNAMESE

A. Church Extension:

1. Danang: Two new churches were begun this past year:

- a. Thanh Duyen: This new group was started through lay witnessing and a prayer meeting held in the home of the head nurse of the Hoa Khanh Children's Hospital. About 40 people attend the Thursday night meetings.
- b. Phu Loc: Pastor Quy of the Tan An Church has reopened this refugee chapel after 30 or more people prayed during a recent campaign with the PTL evangelist.

2. Saigon: Five new churches were begun in the Saigon Metropolitan Area during 1974. Each of the five congregations is still under the care of the pastors of the mother churches which started it.

Three of the five congregations are meeting in nicely repaired store-front type buildings acquired with the help of our Mission's so-called 2-year rent program. The other two congregations are looking for suitable meeting places. The congregations at this stage average about 30 adults each.

- a. Thanh Da: This congregation under the leadership of the Go Vap pastor has been meeting nearly all year in a private house right next to the large 4,000 unit, Thanh Da government multi-story housing project. After considerable difficulties in agreeing on the location of a meeting place, it now appears

(Saigon - continued: Thanh Da)

that an apartment right in the housing project will be acquired right after the first of the year.

- b. Cho Nho: The Thu Duc Church opening its second branch church in as many years, established this one in the village of Cho Nho near the Thu Duc military training camp. A number of mature Christians form the nucleus of this congregation which meets in an attractive 2-story building acquired with Mission aid and dedicated in October, 1974.
- c. Tan Thoi Hoa: The Binh Thoi congregation under the dynamic leadership of Pastor Dinh Thien Tu, having itself just become self-supporting, launched out in faith in opening a branch in April at Tan Thoi Hoa in the populous western edge of Saigon which had been heavily settled by refugees during recent years. A congregation of 25-35 meets regularly in an attractive store-front building acquired with Mission aid through the two-year rent program.
- d. Phu Tho Hoa: Setting an example for the larger, long-established congregations, the Binh Thoi Church opened its second branch in 1974 at Phu Tho Hoa near the race-track bearing the same name. Working together in an unusual show of unity and overcoming opposition due to the jealousy of another church nearby, the Christians and pastor themselves put in a lot of time and labor to virtually rebuild a hovel into a very attractive meeting-place spacious enough to hold about 150. The most encouraging aspect of the church opening was that during the six weeks the construction was going on some 30 adults prayed to receive Christ through contacts with Christians at the church. People are continuing to find the Lord in both spontaneous and organized evangelistic efforts in the area.
- e. Truong Minh Ky: A group of Christians from the Truong Minh Giang Church which has long been overcrowded, have been meeting for worship for several months in the home of a Christian in the populous Truong Minh Ky area. Two things have hindered this group from acquiring a building for worship. One is lack of support from the mother congregation and the other is the difficulty in finding a suitable building in an area where all property has high commercial value. I believe in 1975 these problems will be resolved. 1

3. Quang Ngai: Five churches were started this past year;

- a. Son Tinh: The Quang Ngai church has officially opened a new branch church in Son Tinh District, and purchased a house on Highway #1 with assistance from our Mission program to assist in refugee areas. A new student-pastor now holds a Sunday service with an average attendance of about 60.
- b. Binh Sa:- Binh Giang: Mainly through the witness of a lay leader (EHC) about 50 people prayed in less than one month. The average attendance at weekly services is about thirty. A small chapel was built with Mission assistance. The lay leader has been given a new assignment, and presently the Binh Son pastor holds worship services only twice each month. A new pastor is needed to live in Binh Sa.
- c. Sa Huynh: Services were conducted for several months by a lay leader (EHC) but presently the Duc Pho pastor travels there once each week to hold a worship service. Twelve families have prayed and average attendance is about twenty. Funds were appropriated for a small chapel however, because of the unsettled war situation there, it has not yet been built.
- d. Tu Quang: This new church continues to grow spiritually and numerically from week to week. The new student-pastor is having a good ministry. We taught there regularly for a number of months. A young fellow who was definitely demon-possessed received complete deliverance and I baptized him. Praise the Lord! Before we moved, we had baptized ² twenty new Christians. Tu Quang presently has about 60 believers.
- e. Kien Khuong: With the coming of a new student-pastor in September, this new church began to flourish and grow once again. A small parsonage has been built almost entirely by the people themselves who are extremely poor. The average Sunday attendance is about 50.

B. Evangelism:

1. Danang: Most of the Danang churches have experienced renewed interest in evangelism in recent months. There are between 35 and 40 "evangelism cells" operating throughout the city. The main Danang Church has 14 active cells and has been having a marked increase in attendance. The Hoa Khanh Children's Hospital operated by World Relief Commission has also been the scene of active evangelism this past year. Many patients have received Christ while receiving medical care.

Probably the most successful evangelistic venture in this district is being

(Evangelism - Danang - continued)

done by the district evangelist with the use of the Pocket Testament League truck. He has conducted scores of evangelistic services in cooperation with local churches and many hundreds have prayed in recent months.

2. Quang Tin Province: There are 47 evangelism cells in this area. During the first part of the year, 636 people prayed and 212 were baptized through the efforts of those attending these cells.

3. Quang Ngai: At least 40 to 50 thousand pieces of literature have been distributed in schools, hospitals and the prison.

4. Quinhon: Most of the missionaries' time in this area has been spent in language study. They have, however, made a real effort to reach some of the refugee villages in the district. This they have done in cooperation with the pastors and the young people of the churches.

In September the evangelism van came to the province for a week of meetings. The results were encouraging. Where follow-up work has been done, church attendance has increased as a result of this campaign.

5. Saigon: The highlight of the year was the visit of the M/V Logos in August. Many people, probably for the first time, became aware of the "Tin Lanh." Some 400 decisions to receive Christ were recorded. About 700,000 pieces of Gospel literature were distributed. The Logos visit gave the small Christian community a new-found sense of healthy pride and self-hood. Under the sponsorship of the Pocket Testament League, 250,000 Gospels of John were made available for distribution by the PTL teams and through the special program of evangelism among military men in Viet Nam.

C. Bible Training:

1. The Nhatrang Theological Seminary: September brought in the largest student body on record with nearly 100 new students enrolling. The majority of the students are following the diploma course. An increase of teachers has made for lighter teaching loads.

The cornerstone for a new library building was laid at the beginning of the school year. It is hoped that the building will be ready for dedication when the graduation exercises are held in April.

2. EDW Seminars: Nine of these seminars were held with a total enrollment of 611 trainees. These seminars have created a number of new evangelism cells, revived the interest of some of the older cells and created enthusiasm among the members of the district committee for the EDW program. All of these seminars were held in the North Central District.
3. The TEE Program: There are now over 700 students enrolled in this program. The over-all effectiveness of this approach is difficult to assess. To date only a small number of students have completed any of the courses. Work is still being done on getting this program properly organized.
4. Graduate Program: This year a graduate program leading to a Master's Degree in Theology, New Testament Studies or Church History was begun with an enrollment of 11 students. It is hoped that this program will attract professional people who would like to have a degree in one of the above areas of study.
5. Short Term Bible Schools: Short Term Bible Schools were held in each of the districts with a definite increase in enrollment over last year. These schools are of great value for the young people, providing them with a knowledge of the Bible they will not get in the local church.

Having completed our survey of the Lord's work among the various ethnic groups of Viet Nam, we now turn to some of our other

MISSION PROGRAMS

A. Support Ministries:

1. Publications: The Publication's Department has been without a full-time director this past year. It has been supervised from the Chairman's Office. Sales increased from 10 to 14 million piasters. Some of this increase can be accounted for by the increased price of books but sales have improved in the various bookstores and the district offices. More than 38,000,000 pages of literature were published. This was less than the year before in order to reduce our inventory before printing many new books.
2. Radio: The Church's radio report shows that the number of broadcasts from the local information halls increased from 30 to 62 a week. Effort was made to secure time for programs in the tribal languages on the local radio stations but without success. The ministry of FEBC continues to be very effective in spreading the Gospel throughout the country.

(Radio - cont'd.)

The weekly church program and those of the military chaplains added to what was being done through this medium.

3. The International Church: The ministry and outreach of this church has greatly increased in the past few months. The average attendance is now over 200 on Sunday mornings. The Sunday School has shown a healthy growth and the evening services also showed an increase in attendance. The choir added to the musical ministry of the church and a youth choir was organized. A major renovation project was done on the building. Financially the church prospered while making generous donations to several Church and Mission projects.
4. Dalat Conference Center: Eight different conferences were held at the Center in 1974. These conferences ranged in size from 75 to 360 delegates; in length from 3 days to an entire month.
Improvements were made on 2 of the chalets and a new water line was installed which has pressure enough to reach the storage tanks at the Center and on Jackson's Hill without pumping.
This Center is serving the cause of Christ and helping to promote greater fellowship and effectiveness in the various groups serving Him in Viet Nam.

B. Social Welfare Ministries:

1. Medical Ministries: The leprosariums at Banmethuot and Pleiku ministered to about as many patients in 1974 as they did the year before. In Pleiku they treated 1,382 lepers while the number in Banmethuot was slightly higher. In Pleiku the national nurses were given their first uninterrupted course of study since the beginning of the work. A medical doctor was added to the staff and progress was made in training an office staff. At least 25 patients have accepted the Lord during the year.

The Banmethuot Leprosarium found it necessary to lay off several of their workers because of the increased cost of administration. Our medical director states that in his opinion: "The leprosy work in Banmethuot is functioning well under national leadership. Although minimal medical advice and assistance in physical therapy and the shoe program are still needed, the main continuing need is for someone to handle the bookkeeping and correspondence."

In the latter part of 1974 arrangements were made with Medical Ambassadors to take over the operation of the Jackson Clinic. This should result in a much larger and more effective ministry for the clinic. During the past year two

(Medical Ministries - continued)

days a week were given to handling out-patients with an average of 25 people being treated each day.

In July of last year, Dr. Greene and his family moved to Pleiku. He is now serving in the Mennonite Clinic and the Leprosy Center. A unique evangelistic opportunity has developed through his contact with doctors and professionals in the province.

2. CAMA Services: This relief arm of our Mission was of great help in meeting some of the urgent needs of the Church this past year. More than 10 million piasters were spent on such programs as the purchase of wheel chairs, mosquito nets, medicines, roofing, sewing machines, relief to refugees, orphans and a tractor and plow for use in the Pleiku area. In addition to the monies spent for these items, tons of donated relief goods and other items were shipped by CAMA to needy people throughout the country. In one quarter alone, the value of such goods was in excess of 3,498,200\$VN piasters. We thank God for what has been done to help relieve the suffering of the people at this time.

CONCLUSION

In concluding this report, I would remind you again that it is only a partial survey of what has taken place in Viet Nam this past year. What is stated therein ought to compel us to say: "THE LORD HAS DONE GREAT THINGS FOR US, WHEREOF WE ARE GLAD."

J. H. Revelle, Chairman.

JHR:blh

1 - quote from Reg Reimer's report.

2 - " " Rick Drummond's report.