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I. President Wilson & Other G. C. Leaders Visit Adventists in China

Hundreds of thousands follow Advent message (posted Apr. 5, 2012) -- by Adventist Review staff

Pastor Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and other church leaders, are in the middle of a 10-day official visit to China, seeking to strengthen ties between the global Adventist family and an estimated 400,000 Adventists in the People's Republic.

"We have visited wonderful, faithful, dynamic and courageous Seventh-day Adventist church members," Wilson wrote in an April 4 e-mail message to Adventist Review editors. "We have seen lovely churches that we own, heard wonderful choirs, seen enthusiastic young people in churches and the results of earnest mission activities on the part of church members. We have seen some of the large, modern cities of this vast country as well as the strong infrastructure and natural beauty -- and, of course, the thousands upon thousands of people just about wherever you turn."

Joining Wilson are pastors G. T. Ng and Robert Lemon, General Conference Secretary and Treasurer, along with Pastors Jairyong Lee, Northern Asia-Pacific Division president, David Kok Hoe Ng, Chinese Union president, and Eugene Hsu, a retired general vice president of the world church.

One of the stops on the itinerary is the city of Wenzhou, in southern China. The city has 9 million inhabitants and one million Christians. With such a high density of Christians, it is sometimes called "the Jerusalem of China."

"In the Wenzhou area there are 40,000 Sabbath keepers that expect the second coming of Jesus," Hsu said. "They are approximately 10 percent of China's Seventh-day Adventist membership and the second largest Christian group in the region," he added.

China has more than 1.3 billion people and a growing Christian community. Adventists, in many cases, worship in the same church buildings used by other Protestants. Nevertheless, Chinese Adventists keep the Sabbath and embrace the same core biblical beliefs held by members around the world.

"It is touching to see how God's love unites us as a world family and how the Holy Spirit works even without a formal Church structure and external assistance in this country," said Ng.

On March 31, Wilson preached in the Shanghai Mu’en Church and met with more than 1,500 members. In the afternoon the delegation went to the city of Wuxi, two hours drive from Shanghai, and found an enthusiastic group of Seventh-day Adventist believers in the Wuxi Xi’an Church greeted the General Conference team with a service of music and prayer.

On the evening of April 1, a special program was presented at the Jingshi Seventh-day Adventist Church in the city of Wenzhou. At each stop, Wilson offered words of encouragement to the Adventist believers. --with information from Williams Costa Jr. in China

II. Remembering Wendell Wilcox

1. Nathan Tidwell <nathantidwell@yahoo.com> April 1:
I have a few memories of Pastor Wendell Wilcox when I was a child in Thailand, and he was the TAM president. He came to speak for Karen Camp meeting on the border, and I remember him walking with my family through the jungle on the one-hour hike from the road to the remote village through muddy trails and torrential streams. As a nimble child I thought he was overly cautious on the trails, but looking back, I admire him for making the difficult trek through the jungle. How many mission presidents do that?

2. Dennis Dean Tidwell <deantidwell@yahoo.com> April 11:
Wendell Wilcox who served in Indonesia, Singapore (SAUM President) and as TAM President, will probably be best remembered as a visionary who promoted the idea of a college for the Thailand Mission. He worked hard to raise money to purchase land in Muak Lek, Saraburi Province. It became Mission College and later morphed into Southeast Asia Union College, after the institution with the same name in Singapore had to close its doors. Without Wendell's persistence against opposition to establish a college in Thailand in the 1980s, there probably would not be a strong Adventist presence in Muak Lek today.

He was the son of missionaries and was interned by the Japanese in the Los Banos prison camp in the Philippines during WWII. Wendell used to recall in vivid detail the day that the U.S. Army launched a surprise attack on the camp and rescued the prisoners and then evacuated them across the lake in amphibious vehicles. He compared it to the rescue that Jesus will launch when He evacuates us from Planet Earth.

3. Dayton Chong <daytonch@aol.com> April 11:
I am so sorry to learn of Elder Wilcox's passing away! To me he has always been a real spiritual giant for Jesus! Many years ago, while I was serving as the senior pastor of the Penang English Church, Elder Wilcox often stayed with me whenever he visited the Penang Adventist Hospital. I had always remembered his dynamic leadership and great humility. He often gave me some very sound advice for my ministry. I always remembered him with fond memories! Let's look forward to the coming of Jesus soon!

4. David D. Dennis <davedennis@verizon.net> April 12:
We just received our April 11 FED e-News and were saddened to learn of the passing of a dear friend and work colleague, Wendell Wilcox. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to Audrey, Wendy, Debbie, Paul and Danny who grieve this loss of such a wonderful companion.

Wendell had already been president of the Union in Jakarta for some years when we arrived there in 1967. In fact, we were next door neighbors. Travelling around our large and challenging territory as I often did with Wendell it was comforting to watch how he took the burdens of our work to the Lord. Many times I would awaken in the early morning to find Wendell on his knees agonizing with God for direction. An exemplary Christian leader he directed the work and committees by his convictions. He also took seriously the prophetic guidance that "the final movements will be rapid ones!" Wendell was renowned for his rather fast driving, but with amazing reflexes. I well recall the day he brought his new little Holden to a halt on our missionary compound at Tjidodol. Gravel was still unsettled as he burst from the car observing his watch he announced, "I made it from the Publishing House to my home in exactly 2 hours 15 minutes." (Normally, this journey from Bandung fraught with many distractions on the road, would take me at least 4 hours.) So, I queried: "How did you do it?" He just smiled and said "Audrey was not with me and I sat on the air horn all the way!" We look forward to seeing our friend again soon when Jesus comes.

5. Bill & Beth Dickerson <billbethd@msn.com> April 10:
With the passing of Elder Wendell Wilcox, a truly great man has laid down his life. What a man of God! We are sure that many of you have been touched by his humble life of service. While our hearts are saddened, our thoughts are also filled with the joy of Heaven that God has prepared for all of us who love Him.

III. Memorial Service for Paul Essig
The long delayed memorial "celebration" of Paul Essig's life will be held on July 15, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. in the cemetery chapel in Keene, TX. This will be the first time our family will all be together since before Paul's death. His ashes are there in the Essig family plot where his grandparents, parents and older sister are buried.

[CHT/Sr. -- a personal note: When I went away to college (Southwestern Jr. College then in 1939) Paul's father was a prominent citizen of the village of Keene and an active member of the Keene SDA church. The family operated a church furniture factory.] ~~~~~~~~~~~~~ IV. Life Sketch of Leo Van Dolson
--from recent Adventist Review
"Former Adventist Review Associate Editor Dies
"Leo Ray Van Dolson, who served as an associate editor of the Adventist Review for nearly three years, died March 11, 2012, in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He was 86 years old.
"Van Dolson, a native of San Francisco, California, was a noted pastor, missionary, educator, and journalist, serving the Adventist Church in Asia and North America. He preached on six continents and published dozens of books and scores of articles.

"Van Dolson was known as a person who liked to keep busy. The late Kenneth Wood, a former Adventist Review editor, once called Van Dolson an 'idea' person who made many contributions to the magazine. Despite his heavy workload he eagerly helped fellow staff members, Wood once wrote.

"Leao and I worked together for about a year on the staff of the Adventist Review, both as associate editors at the time,' says former Adventist Review editor-in-chief William Johnsson. 'I knew him well as a result of multiple contacts over the years. He was a pleasant person to work with and a fine editor. An abiding passion of his was the integration of Adventist health principles in the lives of clergy and lay people. I think he made an important contribution to our church through writing and editing.'

"After graduating from Pacific Union College, Van Dolson began his ministry in the Washington Conference. He later pastored in the Oregon Conference, where he was ordained.

"A veteran of World War II, Van Dolson served as a missionary in Japan after the war for nearly 10 years, holding positions as pastor, chaplain, and evangelist. While on furlough, he completed a Master of Arts degree from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. He later earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree.

"Upon his return from Japan, Van Dolson taught religion at Pacific Union College, La Sierra College (now La Sierra University), Loma Linda University, and Southern College (now Southern Adventist University). During these years he completed a Master of Public Health degree at Loma Linda University and his PhD from Claremont University.

"In 1973 Van Dolson joined the staff of the General Conference Ministerial Association as an assistant secretary and executive editor of Ministry magazine. Later he became editor of Life and Health magazine (now called Vibrant Life) before joining the Adventist Review staff as associate editor in 1979.

"In 1982 Van Dolson joined the General Conference Sabbath School Department as associate director. He retired from denominational service in 1987.

"Even with his heavy workload of writing, editing, preaching, and teaching, Van Dolson still found time to become a self-taught artist.

"Survivors include Bobby Jane, his wife of 66 years; sons Leo, Jr., and Randall; six grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren."

V. SULADS' Fred Webb Visits Southern Luzon Mission

By Fred L. Webb, April 14-18, 2012

I arrived in Legazpi at 7:30 am and was met by Brother Joven Hitosis, the Personal Ministries and Missions Director. We went directly to the mission office and had a great breakfast. After breakfast, I met with Pastor Nestor Dayson, President of SLM, Ely Mapusao, Treasurer of SLM and Joven Hitosis to gain an understanding of how the Gospel Outreach work was progressing here at SLM. Workers have been in the field here for 3 years so there is 2 more years to go before they must have completed their tasks of maturing a church in each area. They appear to be handling the funds for Gospel Outreach (GO) in a responsible manner. They have been reporting their QSA faithfully and therefore have received their stipend funds on time. During the past year, two GO workers have been replaced for various reasons.

After this interview Pastor Dayson and Pastor Hitosis and I left to visit the work in Sawanga, Sorsogon. This is about 80 km south from Legazpi.

Leaving the main highway, we went out on a very narrow but concrete road to Sawanga where we met Jose Dayson, the GO worker in the area. Jose has been in this area now for 3 years and has presented 45 new members for baptism and reclaimed 2 others for a total membership of 47. He already has another 12 preparing for baptism so has nearly 60 attending services each Sabbath.

Currently they are meeting in the front porch of one of the members but the Mission has purchased 2,700 square meters (about 2,800 square yards) of land on a hill right across the road from the village of Sawanga. They are currently constructing a church there of native materials for use until such time as funds are available to construct a permanent church building. Since the village is right on the very edge of the Pacific Ocean with very little elevation above sea level, in the event of a very high tide or a tsunami, the church property will be a safe haven for all the inhabitants of the village. We pray that it will be a spiritual haven for them as well.
Thursday morning, we left to visit our GO worker, Brother Bobby Nacario, based in Tubogon, St. Elena, Camarines Norte. This is about 5 hours by road from Legazpi. We arrived about noon and found a number of the church members and interests gathered in Bobby's house. After the preliminary introductions and small talk, we sat down to a delicious meal prepared by Bobby's wife and her friends.

After the meal, they gave me a time to speak to those gathered. I again gave a brief history of the plan of salvation from Lucifer's sin to Jesus second coming. The hearers seemed to be impressed with the importance of obeying God's commands. The entire group gathered for a picture before we left.

Traveling a total of 10 hours for a 1½ hour visit seems like a lot of travel but it was worth every minute of the time to see the joy and anticipation on the faces of those present. Bobby says he is sometimes discouraged by the gossiping of some of the older members but when he comes home a night, he and his wife present their joys and their sorrows to God in prayer. Upon completing that, they feel much better and ready to face another day.

Bobby has about 40 baptized members and another 12 are studying for baptism. He works with 6 different groups in 6 different villages. The number in each group varies from 8-16. Bobby has been very successful in reaching out to the leadership in the community and has been requested to teach a course in religion to the local public as well as a private high school. He sees this as an opportunity to reach out to the community at large. Some of those in the high school are some of those who are studying with him in small groups. He has held health awareness seminars that have been well received by the community leaders. I was deeply impressed with the sincerity of Bobby and his wife. May God continue to bless them in this work for Him.

Bobby has only been in this assignment for 1 year. Prior to that, another GO worker was assigned there for 2 years but has subsequently decided to become a literature evangelist.

On the way home we went some 30 km out of our way to visit the campus of Naga View Adventist College. I had never before seen this campus and enjoyed the opportunity to do so. It is a small school but seems to have a high standard of academics. As we approached Legazpi, I saw the full outline of the Mayon Volcano for the very first time. During my three-day stay last year, the clouds never cleared over the mountain. Yesterday, it was completely obliterated by an overcast sky. The view tonight was not spectacular but it was a full profile of the almost perfect cone.

On Friday morning, Brother Histosis took me to San Francisco-about 20 minutes from the Mission office in Legazpi. When I visited there last year, they had picked an area for a church that was offered by an Adventist brother in the USA. They have secured that lot and have begun the construction of the church building with funds provided by the same donor.

The basic structure is there and the façade on the front is finished. It looks beautiful and finished from the front but the interior and the rest of the outside is still rough. They have been meeting in this building since September.

There are about 40 members in the church there and about 20 others attending regularly and studying for baptism. There are three small groups meeting to study the Bible with 8-15 in each group.

We have had a GO worker in San Francisco for 3 years but Brother Raymundo Baisa, Jr. (commonly called Jun) has been there about one year.

Brother Baisa and his wife live just across the ravine from the church. The house is along the highway with a stairway going down and a nice bridge across a stream at the bottom.

Brother Baisa's greatest pleasure is house to house visitation. His greatest concern is livelihood for his members. One member makes slippers—we would call the flip-flops or sandals. He has offered to teach others his skill and go into a business making them but he needs capital to get started. He stated that about 10,000 (about $240) would be needed. I requested for the mission livelihood director to work with this brother, who says he has a degree in business management, to develop a business plan including a market plan that would detail the exact cost of production, the selling price and the plan for sustainability. I shall await the response on this request. This appeared to be a viable group of believers that will continue to grow in the future.

There is another GO worker, Brother Nestor Datu, who has been stationed in Rapu Rapu Island for three years. This is a remote island in the Pacific Ocean off the shores of Southern Luzon. I was told it would be a 3-hour boat ride and then a 4-hour hike to get to the place where he is stationed. I chose not to visit this site.

I questioned Brother Histosis regarding the work there. He tells me that there are about 50-60 members baptized and many more studying. When this project is mature, the GO worker will be transferred to another area of the island for another project there but will maintain contact with the original group. The mission expects to repeat this until there are a sufficient number of churches on the island to warrant a district pastor. Brother Datu has his work cut out for him for years to come!
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