I. Life Sketch of Helen Virginia Warren Lee

July 22, 1914 - April 25, 2012

Helen was born the eldest of six children in Shanghai, China. Her parents, Merritt and Wilma Warren were missionaries in Chungking. Her sisters were Eleanor and Dorothy, and her brothers were Merritt, Donald and Fred. An inspiring account of her father's missionary experiences is told in the book "Light the Paper Lantern."

Helen first met her husband, Milton, in Shanghai where they graduated in the same high school class from Far Eastern Academy. After graduating from Pacific Union College in 1936, they headed immediately back to China where both of them had grown up. He was an evangelist, and she a registered nurse.

For the next 44 years they were a beacon of light for God's work among the Chinese people all over the Orient.

When they started out on their life-long journey, they had the choice of taking a comfortable position in the Home Study Institute in Shanghai, a modern city for its day. But Helen's father urged the young couple to go deeply into the primitive highlands of Yunnan where they could pioneer mission work among relatively isolated mountain tribes.

They set out on horseback with coolies carrying their meager household possessions, except for one luxury, a comfortable bed, much to the dismay of Helen's pioneering father. The couple settled in the little village of Mojiang. Their first home was a makeshift dwelling they created by boarding up a covered stone bridge over a mosquito-ridden pond. Few in the village had ever seen a person with white skin. Since the closest doctor or hospital was ten day's journey away, Helen's training as a nurse was a special blessing in reaching the hearts and minds of their curious neighbors. She was kept busy doing things doctors normally do, like delivering babies, setting broken bones, and even pulling teeth. Helen got the reputation of nearly always delivering a boy, so people would recommend her to expectant mothers. Their son, Fred, was born in the hospital at Kunming in 1939.

During World War II the Flying Tigers air corps was stationed in Kunming while flying bombing raids over the Japanese. For three years, along with Doyle and Pauline Barnett, they provided a haven of rest and spiritual renewal for the young American pilots who visited them.

In 1944 Milton and Helen were forced to return to America for two years during the Japanese occupation of parts of China during World War II. During that year their daughter Sylvia was born in Ohio. Milton became interested in the Voice of Prophecy and spent some time learning how to evangelize on the radio and through a Bible correspondence school. In 1946, they and their two young children were on the very first ship carrying missionaries back to China. Three years later they were forced to leave China again because of the Communist revolution.

From Shanghai, they went to Hong Kong where Milton taught at Clear Water Bay College and Helen served as the college nurse. In 1951 they were sent to Taiwan where Milton conducted evangelistic campaigns in the major cities and Helen gave talks on health and nutrition. From 1960 to 1966 they were asked to make Singapore their headquarters so they could evangelize the Chinese people living in large cities all over Southeast Asia including Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam.
When Taiwan called again in 1966, the Lees were glad to have a more settled life and concentrate on developing a Voice of Prophecy broadcast in Chinese that could be beamed from a powerful station into mainland China. Milton and Helen wrote and produced hundreds of sermons that are still being heard in China.

In 1980 they retired and lived in Angwin where Milton continued to record hundreds of sermons in Chinese, which were broadcast by Adventist World Radio deep into the mainland. They also held several full-length "efforts" in the Far East. After China opened up for visitors, the Lees made 14 visits back to encourage people there, and even baptize a few in secret, including a couple of men in the bathtub of their hotel room.

While in Angwin, Helen tackled an enormous project that took years to complete. She translated 270 Bible stories from The Bible in Living Sound.

With the help of Pauline Barnett, and donations from members of the Loma Linda and San Francisco Chinese SDA Churches, these stories, complete with sound effects, were professionally produced and recorded in the National Radio and Television studios in Taiwan with Chinese actors. They have been broadcast all over the Orient by short wave on Adventist World Radio in Guam.

When Milton contracted Parkinson's disease, the couple moved to a retirement center in St. Helena. Soon thereafter, Milton's life ended abruptly in an automobile accident, which also left Helen in critical condition—with a broken neck, fractured ribs and legs, and serious internal injuries. Soon after, she moved to the Napa Valley Adventist Retirement Estates, in Yountville, to be down the hall from her sister, Dorothy.

Helen made a remarkable recovery, and two years later led a group of twenty-some people on another trip into China where her Chinese friends came out in large numbers to see her and shower her with their love. Since then she has made three more trips, a total of 18 trips after retiring. In preparing for one of these trips, she discovered she could buy some inexpensive solar-powered audio players. She packed as many as she could and gave them to villagers who had no electricity, along with The Bible in Living Sound. Because of a significant donation, more than 110,000 MP3 sets have been distributed in China, and continues under the direction of Dean Sanders, and his daughter Julie Keymer.

One of the highlights in her retirement was reporting on the gospel work in China to nearly 100,000 people at the Adventist World Congress in St. Louis when she was 91 years old.

Helen is known by her friends and family as a dynamic, loving, generous person, who is always ready to help someone in need, and who spreads hope and cheer wherever she goes. She has been an equal partner in all of the missionary and broadcasting efforts that made Milton Lee famous.

The week before she died, she was very weak, but was of sound mind, and was able to visit and pray with many friends and loved ones who came to see her. She is survived by two brothers, Merritt and Don, along with two children, Fred Lee and Sylvia Fillman who are married to Aura and Don respectively. Fred married Aura after the tragic death of his first wife, Margaret Butterfield, who contracted encephalitis while they lived in Singapore.

Their children are daughter Stacy, married to Terry Barter, and son Lorin Lee.

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II. Remembering Helen & Milton Lee

1. Marilyn Deiningger <deiningermg@verizon.net> May 2:

Al and I had the privilege of serving in Taiwan with Helen and Milton Lee during the years from 1975 until their retirement. It would be impossible to find a more devoted couple, both to each other and to their mission to the Chinese people. Their nurturing of us "youngsters in the work" was loving and inspiring. They were able to keep desired balance in their lives, speaking fondly of their family and enjoying their quiet retreat on the Yangmungkinshan compound where Helen lovingly tended her flowers. She often translated Milton's sermons in the Sung Shan church for the benefit of those new or short termers who had not yet grasped the Mandarin language. She kept in touch with so many of us during their retirement years and continued to work for the Chinese people. She is awaiting the call of Jesus on that great day!

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2. Bruce Wickwire. Jr. <Bruce@afmonline.org> May 2:

Just a little humorous note on Helen Lee. Our house up on Yang Ming Shan in Taiwan was just a couple of hundred feet from the Lee's house. For some reason our boy's dog seemed to really like Helen and would hang around her back porch a lot. (We never knew if she was slipping him some food or not.) However, when he began to relieve himself on the porch instead of the grass that was the last straw for Helen. In a kind and humorous way she let our boys know that
they needed to keep better watch on their dog and teach him some better manners. Helen was a precious lady and loved by all the people around her. I know that she will be greatly missed. Many will be in the Kingdom due to her's and Milton's influence.

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3. Carole Colburn <larry@larrycolburn.com> May 4:
Helen and Milton Lee were our next-door neighbors for 9 years in Taiwan and they were more than just neighbors; they were our dear friends and mentors. To our three children, "Aunt Helen" and "Uncle Milton" more than took the place of the blood aunts and uncles they saw only on furloughs and to Larry and me they were our inspiration and counselors.

Helen often invited us to join the out-of-town guests she was entertaining next door because she insisted "a table of eight was much easier to serve." Her cooking was gourmet, so the pleasure was always ours, of course. Helen was there to coach me through my first attempt at a lengthy presentation to our Chinese church ladies and before that for my first public prayer in Mandarin. She was there when our newborn son Lant was near death from pyloric stenosis to administer injections of fluid before the children and I got on the plane for his surgery in the homeland. (We have always credited Helen with saving our youngest child's life.) She was there to provide us with cozy slippers and warm toilet seat covers from her riding-to-the-office knitting routine! She was there to guide my child training with experienced advice, and to explain why our church deaconesses wore pants in winter. Even up to our last visit with Helen, she was recounting stories of little Lanny's offer to be her gardener so he wouldn't have to go to Chinese kindergarten and Roddie's guiding the lawn mower with one hand while he held the radio to his ear with the other. Work might have to come first, but he wasn't going to miss the ball games over the American station!

Both Helen and Milton were the epitome of the word "missionary." Their dedication and commitment to God were unquestionable and their skill in leadership and language totally inspiring. When we meet them again in heaven, I'm going to ask God to make us next-door neighbors once more on those streets of gold, not for 9 years, but for an eternity!

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4. Dorothy Nelson <dnn@healthexpo.org>
In remembrance of Helen Lee
To have known Helen is to know what it means to be a true 'mother in Israel'. From our first arrival in Formosa on the Indian Bear freighter in 1955, Milton and Helen's influence was early felt. My husband, Wilbur, and I were first-time missionaries and the example of this dedicated missionary couple was a real inspiration to us -- one we greatly desired in our own lives. It was the Lees along with another missionary couple, the Barnetts, who instilled in us as young missionaries a spirit of love for the Chinese people that has never left us. For the past 60 years I have personally had the privilege of Helen's friendship and counsel and her passing has left a deep void and emptiness in my heart. She is the last of those who have had such a strong and profound influence upon my life as a missionary to the Chinese people and I will miss her greatly. Praise God for the contribution of this untiring, selfless worker for the Lord!

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III. Death of Vietnamese Pastor Pham Thien
Beatrice Neall <BeatriceNeall01@aol.com> May 4:
Those of us who worked in the Vietnam Mission will have fond memories of Pastor Pham Thien, a godly, warm-hearted, dynamic Vietnamese preacher who served many years in Vietnam and also in the Orlando Vietnamese Church. He collapsed April 7, right during his prayer at second service and passed away seven hours later in the hospital. He was 92. We miss him!

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IV. AFM Appreciates SMs
by Leonda George in Adventist Frontiers' May magazine
"The Love Bug"
"Over the years we have probably had 50 or more student missionaries come and go through our project. It is hard having the turnover in staff. We must train and mentor them closely until they can really function in their new jobs and interact with the Palawanos in their own language. We have to learn new personalities and ways of working with new people. It isn't easy for the Palawanos either. But once newcomers show they are fun-loving and friendly and try to learn the language, the Palawanos soon allow them into their lives. And when they do, no student missionary is ever the same again.
I call it a love bug. It is a type of infection that bites everyone willing to put up with the difficulty of leaving the known for the unknown; putting up with the inconveniences of jungle living; persevering through discouragement and loneliness and enduring hard times in order to take Jesus' love to those who don't know Him. Once you're bitten by the love bug, the infection gets worse and worse as your love for your new brothers and sisters deepens, and you learn to hurt when they hurt, and rejoice when they are happy.

"At the end of our student missionaries' terms of service, we have to manage their departures to prevent the hysteria that can overcome the Palawano students at parting with their beloved teachers. 1) Don't tell the students about the departure very far in advance, and don't give the exact day. 2) Spread the goodbye over several days. 3) On the day of departure, leave very early in the morning before the students are in school so they don't have to watch you leave--it is too much for them, and they cry and sometimes scream and stamp their feet. If one doesn't follow this protocol, it is horrible for everyone.

"Yes, it is hard on the Palawanos when student missionaries leave, but it is also hard on us. We, too, form bonds with them and feel that they are part of our family. Through the years, we have tried to keep tab on where they are. Sometimes we run into them in various places--once even on a hike on Mt. Rainier! But mostly we don't get to see them and we miss them. This past December was different, though. Having an opportunity to be back in our home in Tennessee, we invited a number of our former SMs from the southeastern US. Fifteen of them spanning four years of service were able to come. We had a marvelous time. Since there isn't much else to do when you get together in Kemantian, we learn to really talk with each other. So we spent the weekend catching each other up on where we were in life. Kent and I updated them on various Palawano friends and projects. We sang our hearts out in Palawano; we talked about our burdens for specific people, and we had a precious time of prayer for our Palawano brothers and sisters.

"Friday evening, we had arranged to have student missionaries in Kemantian give us a call from church. The Palawano members were so happy to talk with old friends again. Conversations went from one to another until the phones were almost dead. Then we told them we wanted to sing a song for them, and then they got excited and decided they wanted to sing a song for us, too. Then the phones went dead. When they called us back, they had prepared to sing the chorus of 'Side by Side' for us:

'Meet me in heaven, we'll join hands together
Meet me by the Savior's side
I'll meet you in heaven, we'll sing songs together
Brothers and sisters, I'll be there.'

"As they sang, tears stung my eyes, and a joyful longing ached in my chest. When they finished, we replied by singing the chorus of the song we had chosen to sing for them:

'Meet me in heaven... Brothers and sisters, I'll be there.'

"It was a poignant moment as each group sang the burden of their hearts."

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V. SALT Ministry's Cambodian School Report

Tim Maddocks <tim@saltmin.org> Prayer Journal, April 2012

Growth of our School

We continue to have growth in the dormitory with 56 students now living in the dorm. The new school term saw 4 teenage girls arrive unannounced and unfunded. One of the hardest parts about doing a compassionate type ministry is saying "No" to people who would like to be helped. Almost all of our dorm students are funded by former volunteers or SALT Ministries. With each new boarding student, we add US$ 40 to the monthly operational expense. When it comes to students, I am a little too soft hearted, so all four girls were accepted provisionally. For all our SALT Ministries sponsored students the provision is that if God does not send me the money to feed them, they go home. We praise God that so far we have never had to send any home for this reason.

We are blest to have 9 foreign volunteers teaching in the school at present. As our volunteers are self funded, this eases the financial burden on the school considerably. If you are interested in being a volunteer for the new school year beginning September, 2012, let me know. It is a positive life changing experience for all who make the sacrifice.

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