I. A Furlough and a Wedding for Jephthae

The following is from the July 2012 newsletter of Adventist Frontier Mission’s Jephthae Calkins Campbell who has been serving in Laos. She was our 11-o’clock speaker in the Village Chapel of Seventh-day Adventists in McDonald, TN on July 7.

"A Jaunt with Jephthae"
"FURLOUGH PREPARATIONS"

"As I looked at everything that needed to be finished before furlough, I felt SO overwhelmed. How could it all be finished? Would we make it on time?
The last night in Vientiane I spent frantically trying to finish up a few projects. No! not only did I need to get everything together for furlough, I also had many things I wanted to bring to the States for my wedding.

"The last few days in Laos were spent in running around, getting Lao snacks and trinkets to share with those who were attending the wedding, getting the shirts for the groomsmen finished; finally, sealing up the house and getting it ready to sit unoccupied for four months. At last, the last morning in Laos dawned; my sister who had flown in from India to spend the time with me and my fiancé, Robert, all loaded into a tuk-tuk headed to the bus station where we would catch a bus to Thailand, then a plane to America.
I was a little nervous because we were rushed for time. My concern rose as the driver decided to go the back way, slowly picking up more and more passengers along the way. My tension mounted as the minute had climbed closer and closer to 12 and the hour hand crept near to 9...the time when our bus would leave. Finally we made it to the station; I jumped out of the tuk-tuk, leaving my sister with the luggage. I hurriedly made it to the counter to find out if we had made it in time. I looked at the seating chart only 5 seats were vacant. I praised God that He got us there in time! Soon, tickets in hand, we made out way to the bus, loaded our luggage, and found our seats.

"The air-conditioning didn’t work well, and after a few hours with sweat running down our faces, we moved to the lower level of the bus, seeking a cooler place. Instead of a reprieve from the heat, we found the exhaust fumes almost choking us. By this time someone had taken our seats up above, so we moved to the stairway, seeking at least a little fresh air.

"While cramped in the bottom of the bus, we met a young couple headed to the same place we were. When we arrived, they asked us if someone was meeting us. The city public transportation had stopped running, as the bus was hours later than normal. When we told them that we didn’t have anyone, they offered us a ride.

"Though the trip was rushed, and I was worried we wouldn’t make it, God proved Himself very able to take care of His children no matter the circumstances. I thank God for the blessings of a safe trip, and safe arrival in the States as we began a very busy summer of travel.

"THE WEDDING"

"It was 30 minute until two o’clock. I stood in the dressing room, adorned in the beautiful wedding dress my grandmother had made, and surrounded by my sisters, some close friends, and two young ladies I’ve known almost since they were born. We cheerfully chatted as the minutes ticked away. Soon the others left, and I was alone with my father, waiting for the moment when I would walk out to meet my groom and become Mrs. Campbell.

"The wedding went smoothly. The children’s story about Calkins’ birthday traditions, gifts to parents, joining of sticky rice (as is done in some Christian weddings in Laos), the special music played by a former student missionary from the
project, and the sermonette done by my father. Then came the moment when my father pronounced us man and wife. We walked out, no longer two single people, serving alone, but as man and wife, joining hands in ministry, with our eyes fixed on another wedding soon to come...

"As I think about where we are in history, I see distractions all around us. I see a world filled with people dying before they are prepared to receive the white wedding garment God has to offer. I see others struggling to choose which road to take, the one that leads to the heavenly feast, or the one leading away.

"Our time on earth is short, but I praise God He has called each of us to be a part in the work of sharing the gospel. Our plane ticket is reserved, and in two months we are scheduled to fly back to Laos. Before that, I need to complete the monthly goal that will make it possible for me to continue serving among a people who have had little opportunity to learn of our Savior.

"God bless.
"Jephtha Campbell"

II. 1300 Baptized in a Day in Philippines

"The Seventh-day Adventist Church's Negros Occidental Conference (NOC) in the central Philippines recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of an Adventist presence in its territory.

"Since January NOC headquarters administrators held a series of satellite meetings, resulting in more than 800 baptisms. Garry Gibbs, ministries development director in North America's Chesapeake Conference, was the evangelism seminar's featured speaker during the April 30-May 7 anniversary celebrations.

"At the opening of the golden anniversary celebration, leaders of the church spoke. Among them were Agapito Catane, Jr., president of the church in Central Philippines (CPUC), and Luisito Tomado, NOC president. Welcoming everyone was Alfredo Amada, Central Philippines Adventist College (CPAC) president. Other honored guests included 92-year-old Orlando Aguire, Sr., the first treasurer of the then-Negros Mission, and other retirees. Also present was Chester Clarke III, organizer of Adventist laymen's Services and Industries' Youth for Jesus programs and the youth representative of the church to the General Conference Executive Committee, as well as local government officials and Congresswoman Cynthia A. Villar of the Los Pinas city congressional district.

"During the week of evangelism, approximately 7,000 individuals registered for the event, on the CPAC campus. The dormitories and classrooms were packed with guests, tents sprawled the campus grounds, and all roads seemed to lead to the college. The nightly meetings were held in the college church while an extension monitor was installed in the gym to accommodate more viewers and listeners. On the final Sabbath more than 1,300 people accepted Christ as Savior and were baptized. The baptism was held in the college swimming pool and lasted for two hours. Among the pastors who performed the baptism was Alberto Gulfan, Jr., president of the church in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD). An estimated 10,000 church members were present as well.

"The church's Negros Occidental territory comprises 280 churches, 116 companies, and more than 33,000 members."
--Teresa Castello/AND in the July 2012 ADVENTIST WORLD REVIEW

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III. The Bairs Go to Thailand--Part 2 of 2

The Bair Family <missions@danielbair.com> July 23

When we arrived in Bangkok at 11 PM, we were met by Mike and Marilee Kier, which was such a huge blessing to first timers such as ourselves. They helped us with our luggage, with buying soy milk for Na-na, and then drove us to stay at their place in a "suburb" of Ayutthaya, Thailand. We stayed the weekend with them, and they taught us a lot of things about daily living and the culture of Thailand to help us get started. They also helped us get over our jet-lag too! It was such a blessing to enjoy Sabbath with their small church plant that meets in their village.

On Sunday, July 8th, we took the overnight train to Chiang Mai. Our tickets were for a sleeper car, and each parent took one child; the rocking motion of the train put us to sleep. The kids woke us at 4:30 AM (Thailand time) as they had fallen asleep in the car ride on the way to the train station, and stayed asleep while getting onboard! It was challenging keeping them quiet for a couple hours until the rest of the passengers in our car woke up. We are from the country, so we enjoyed seeing the beautiful landscape we woke up to. Rice and corn fields filled the valleys, and banana, mango, and other fruit trees grew on the little hills. We also went through a mountain region that reminded us of the Appalachian mountains (plus one very long tunnel, too)! Some areas had bamboo clusters that were taller than
the trees! We arrived at about 11 AM, and our project coordinators, Bill and Venie Osborn, picked us up and brought us to our new home.

We have been settling in and getting things setup in our new little Thai house. They had a bed ready for us, a kitchen cupboard, a lot of dishes, and a few other pieces of furniture. We got a laundry machine working, a clothes drying rack and even an electric dryer (so far, we use the low-tech drying rack mostly, since we don't have a manual for the dryer yet and the symbols are a bit mysterious). Also, Daniel installed a small inline water heater for the shower (which is the Thai way, since they only plumb one cold pipe line through the house, and no hot water pipe line). We now have a wardrobe for our clothes, too. The apartment floor-space is 17 ft. by 39 ft. The main room is 17 ft. by 25-28 ft. (which includes the bedroom space, with 5.5 ft. walls, at 9 ft. by 12 ft.). The bathroom is 7 ft. by 10 ft. and the kitchen is 10 ft. by 10-13 ft. (it has an inset into the main room).

Setting up house has taken quite a bit of our energies, but we have both begun our respective work tasks. Daniel has been working at the All-Asia TV Studio. Last week, a Thai pastor from this area came to the studio to begin the process of recording a TV program. The All-Asia TV Studio team had a planning meeting with him and did a practice recording.

The studio staff also began working on building a new set: a kitchen set that will be used for cooking programs and other health programs. The health message of the SDA Church is not well known in Thailand, so Pastor Phamor, the Thai pastor who is director of the Education Opportunity Foundation (EOF), is encouraging the studio to develop these much-needed programs.

This year, the Education Opportunity Program (EOP) has 16 girls, who stay in the dorm, and 7 boys, who are staying in a house across the field. The day we arrived, we joined them for evening worship in the dorm. Pastor Phamor's wife taught them the story of Abraham and Isaac in their Karen dialect. It turns out our little ones are too wiggly to join the EOP students for daily worship, but we join them on Friday nights, on Sabbath at church, and for Sabbath vespers. Friday and Sabbath evening meetings are held in the classroom next door, and our children can sit in the back so the EOP students can pay attention better. The students love to play with our children, and most days they are able to play with them for a little while in the afternoons, after the students return from school at Chiang Mai Adventist Academy.

It will take a while for Tesha to be able to fully fulfill a girl's dean position, since she will have to learn the language and customs. So far, she has started teaching the girls guitar, and plans to teach violin. We have also been enjoying the interactions where the EOP students have practiced their English with us informally.

We are happy to finally be in Thailand, and we plan to send periodic updates of daily life and mission work here. Many thanks to all those who have given funds for our support. God has provided the means for us to get here, impressing people to give small and large donations. We are trusting He will continue to provide for our daily needs too.

If anyone would like to donate, funds are still needed to finish the All-Asia TV Studio, to build a boys dorm for the EOP boys, and to continue to support our monthly needs.

May God richly bless each of you,

The Bair Family (Daniel, Tesha, Nathanyah(Na-na), and Nathaniel(Sa-no))

Our mailing address is:

Thailand Gospel Media Project
PO Box 216
McDonald, TN 37353

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IV. A SULADS Story, "My Spectacles"
--by Peter Barolo, SULADS teacher to the Mangyans

Brother Lonito Dasa became an avid reader of the Bible after he learned how to read, taught by an angel of God. Using a homemade gas lamp he would read and read, in the early evenings and early mornings. Sometimes when he would run out of gas he uses dried sap of trees to burn so he could have light to read. He became well versed in the Bible. I have to admit that even though I am a theology graduate from Mountain View College I am no match to Lonito in memorized verses. Sometimes in church whenever I need some help in verses to find in the Bible I would ask Lonito first before I go to the concordance. And sure enough he gives me correct verses.

Reading has become Lonito's hobby, and he reads nothing else but his beloved Bible. He brings his Bible wherever he goes. Just like David who brings his bag for smooth stones for his sling, so Lonito brings his small native bag for his Bible.
When waiting for someone, on the trail, in the house, by the river, in the farm or wherever he would get his Bible and read. No minute is wasted for Lonito for time is gold for him.

As he continued to read, he noticed that his eyes were failing. He could no longer read vividly as he used to. This concerned him. He came to me one day and told of his biggest problem. He thought would soon lose his sight and could never read again. Manyans never think of spectacles because they don't have things like that in the mountains. "Come with me to town tomorrow, Lonito, and we will see what we can do for your eyes," I told him.

"What do you mean! What will you do with my eyes," he asked.

"I will bring you to an eye specialist or an optometrist. I think you still can read with the aid of reading glasses."

"What are you talking about?" he was curious.

"Something you will wear for your eyes so that you can read and enjoy reading just like when you first read.

"That sounds too good to be true! But how? I can hardly wait!" he said with a broad smile.

Lonito came early to my door that morning all set to go with me to town.

He brought his Bible because he said this would be the first thing he will read when this magic that he will be able to read again clearly is true.

Before we left I said, "Lonito, I want you to pray before we go," "Dear Lord," he started, "we will be going to town to see somebody to help me with a magic for me to read again clearly. Please, Lord, make it happen just like how You made blind Bartemeous see again.

There in the eye clinic the optometrist tested some lenses on him. "Wow! Wow!" I could hear him as lens after lens was tested. "YES! WOW! I CAN READ NOW! I CAN READ NOW!" he declared gladly! With those temporary glasses still on he got his Bible and read. "Yes! THIS IS BEAUTIFUL! I CAN READ NOW!

I CAN READ NOW! THIS IS REALLY MAGIC! THANK YOU GOD FOR MAKING ME READ AGAIN!"

I paid for his pair of spectacles and he said, "Thank you so much, Teacher! How much do I owe you?" he asked.

"You don't owe me anything. This is my gift to you. You thank God for it."

"Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord," he whispered prayerfully.

One day while waiting for somebody, he pulled out his Bible from his bag and began to read using his new pair of spectacles. He found shade under a guava tree and there he read and read with gusto. After a long while his eyes got tired. He took off his pair of specs placed them on the grass and he lay on the grass and closed his eyes to rest.

After some time his friend, for whom he was waiting, came and said, "Thank you for waiting, brother. Let's go." That brought Lonito to his feet.

He returned his Bible into his bag and left.

Late that afternoon after a supper of roasted corn he pulled out his Bible again to read. He lighted his gas lamp and was ready to read. "Where are my spectacles?" He panicked. He searched his pockets, he searched his bag, no specs there. He thought and thought where he might have left and lost his specs. "Ah! There under that guava tree where I spent some time reading this afternoon," he mumbled.

"Lord," he prayed, "please take care of my specs where I left them on the grass under the guava tree. I believe you can do it like magic just like this pair of magic glass eyes you gave to me. It's too late now this dark night to go that far and I will get them tomorrow morning. In Jesus' name, Amen."

After worship early the next morning, he ran as fast as his legs could carry him to the guava tree. In the distance he saw the tree. But something he saw disturbed him. Tied to that same tree was a water buffalo. And this animal had made a mud pool under the tree.

"Alas! Lord, MY SPECTACLES, MY SPECTACLES!" He went straight where he left them on the grass. Nothing there! Using his bare hands he felt around and digging in the mud, no spectacles. "Lord," he cried in prayer burying his knees in the mud, "please bring me back MY SPECTACLES. I asked You last night to take care of them. I know and believe that You kept them somewhere for me. Please help me find them, Lord, just like magic. Amen."

Rising from his muddy prayer mat and looking around for one last combing search of the muddy ground to some other impossible place, he saw something glittering in the morning sun. "There you are! MY SPECTACLES!" he shouted for joy! Hanging on a twig was his pair of specs.

"How did they happen to be there?" I asked Lonito as he related to me the story.

"I prayed for it, Sir!" he said. "When my God can bring my sight back with the use of MY SPECTACLES, to transfer those specs from the grass up to the twig is so simple for my God to do. Even I can do that simple thing for my son. He is my Father and I am His son. I know He did it for me to bring back MY SPECTACLES!"
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