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VII. GC President Visits Indonesia's President ~~~~~~~~~ I. Pastor V. T. Armstrong & the "Divine Postal Service"

Edward Higgins <ehiggins@andrews.edu>

Kathy Marshall in last week's FED newsletter mentions that as the Armstrongs were in San Francisco preparing to sail for China, they visited the Pacific Press (which they hadn't planned to do) and there they were handed a letter from the GC telling them they were going to Japan instead of China. How did that letter come there, a letter that completely changed their lives? Divine Postal Service??

A second Divine Postal Service story for Pastor Armstrong was shared by Olivine Bohner (Youth's Instructor, Aug. 5, 1969, and also Aug. 12, part 2)). Through a series of miracles and providences a small group of Seventh-day Adventist believers developed in the Islands of Palau, Micronesia, during the late 1800's and early 1900s, led by James (father) and William (son) Gibbons. James was a Caribbean islander who was abandoned by the boat captain and then became integrated into Palauan society. Actually he did not have much of a choice other than that.

After World War I the Japanese took control of the Palau Islands and created a bustling colony. By this time, the early 1930s, the desire of William Gibbons and the believers was to see a fellow believer, especially an SDA pastor, who could baptize them. One day at the port William learned from a Japanese ship captain that there were seventh-day Sabbath keepers in Tokyo, but only the name of an Armstrong was mentioned. Excitedly William sent a letter giving a brief story of the work in Palau and the desire for a pastor. "Armstrong, Tokyo" was all that was penned on the envelope, and then sent by ship. One day to Armstrong, while in his office with other workers, an envelope was delivered, addressed to "Armstrong Tokyo." It was the letter from William Gibbons. How did that letter get there? Again, it must have been that there was a "DIVINE Postal SERVICE", no doubt. A Japanese pastor, Elder S. Miyake, was soon sent to Palau and the first believers were baptized in the ocean.

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II. Life Sketch of Beth Armstrong Coffin [Part 2]

Kathy Marshall <colorcat3@comcast.net> Feb. 13:

Summers in Tokyo are very hot and humid. The mission wives and children were sent by train to spend summers at Lake Nojiri in the mountains. Each family had their own little cabin, activities were organized throughout the lake for the children and the men came up on weekends to join their families. Beth often talked with fondness of those summer months full of swimming, sharing activities, and spending time as a mission family.

At the end of Beth's seventh grade year, she became sick and was diagnosed with rheumatic fever. The treatment was bed rest and inactivity.

It was disappointing to be left behind when her friends left for Lake Nojiri. Her mother once again came home on the train from Tokyo with a bulge in her satchel. This time it was a baby pigeon to keep Beth company through the lonely summer alone. Beth spent the summer on bed rest reading books and playing with her pet pigeon.

When Beth was 15 her father was elected President of Far Eastern Division of SDAs and the family moved to the Division Headquarters compound at 800 Thompson Road in Singapore. This was a property her father had been instrumental in purchasing for the Far Eastern Division.

Beth traveled by ship from Singapore to Shanghai to attend Far Eastern Academy. She arrived part way through the school year in the midst of a "No Shave Strike" by the boys on campus. Her first comment upon seeing Galen Coffin for the first time was, "Who is that guy with the beard!" He was one of a few guys who could actually grow a beard. He was
heard to say, "That Armstrong girl is always on the way, but never arriving!" It wasn't long, however, before the two were going steady.

During part of Beth's academy days at FEA they were evacuated to Hong Kong and housed in an old Chinese mansion in the country. The main floor was classrooms. The boys lived in the servant's quarters on the periphery against the compound wall. The 20 girls were in 5 rooms on the second floor with one bathroom and one bathtub with a sign up sheet for 5 minute baths on Friday afternoon. While living in this mansion, there was a problem with thieving. When there was a theft the boys would pour out of their quarters to chase the thieves. A favorite pastime for the girls was to sneak onto the third floor flat roof at night and holler "THIEF". When the boys ran out in their skivvies to chase the 'thief', the girls would suddenly shine their flashlights on them.

Beth played a marimba and had to ship it back and forth from home to school. While making a voyage on a French ship the waves were rolling, the ship was pitching and the passengers were confined to their beds. During this storm the steward knocked on Beth's cabin door and insisted she must come with him and identify her luggage in the baggage room. The steward was not satisfied with the confirmation that her marimba case was hers and insisted she open it. The French crew was sure Beth was transporting a corpse in the case, which was shaped like a Chinese casket. In reality, another passenger had violated the rules by stashing some durian in the baggage room. Durian is a tropical fruit - infamous for its pungent, unpleasant, permeating odor! This is why they suspected there could be a corpse in the case. When the story got around FEA, Beth was the brunt of several jokes about her "coffin" and was given a 3" carved soapstone coffin, which is still in the family today.

When FEA was closed during World War II, Beth was sent to Walla Walla Valley Academy for her senior year. This allowed her to be near her brother, Victor, who was attending Walla Walla College. She graduated from the academy in 1940.

On September 20, 1942 Beth and Galen were married in Portland, Oregon. Galen was a senior that year at Walla Walla College and Beth was expecting to end up one year short of her degree in Elementary Education when he graduated, however, as it turned out Galen attended an extra year after his graduation in 1943 to finish his Pre-Med requirements. Beth's major professor was very fond of her and encouraged her to petition for extra classes so she could graduate. She started taking 21 class hours each quarter in addition to her student teaching. It was a very busy, and financially tight year for them, but a chain of interesting events got them by. Since the girl's dorm was overflowing, the Dean, Amy Sherrard, asked Beth to be the housemother to an annex of girls in exchange for their rent.

The school added an extra bathroom to accommodate Galen in a house full of women. Beth's major professor also asked her to supervise the lunch periods at Roger's Elementary school. Beth declined because she needed to fix Galen's lunch. So it was arranged for both Galen and Beth to have free lunch trays sent to them from the cafeteria each day while Beth supervised the students.

A neighbor's fruit-tree overhung their fence and Beth canned the fruit. This helped them save money on their food expenses. There were no laundry facilities in the annex home so the college did their laundry for free.

Galen ran the PA system for the college functions, which gave them free admission to all the college programs. He rode his bike to work at a Milton Freewater nursery and brought home free flowers whenever Beth needed a corsage! Beth studied hard and graduated Cum Laude in 1944.

After working for the summer in Portland they moved to Loma Linda, California where Galen enrolled as a medical student at the College of Medical Evangelists now known as Loma Linda University.

Beth taught school in San Bernardino for the next four years until Galen graduated as an M.D. in June, 1948. On July 20 she presented Galen his graduation present - their daughter Kathy.

III. Burma Vignettes-- Early Missionaries # 19

Mervin Myat Kyaw <mervinmk@yahoo.com.au> and his wife Nan are Karen Adventists who worked many years in Burma and Thailand and now live and work in Australia. He has written a manuscript covering Adventism in Burma from its very beginning to the present and of his work in Thailand.

#19. Isaac Counsell (1920-22)

Isaac Counsell arrived from America in December, 1920. Counsell took charge as pastor of the church in Yangon, relieving Pastor Hamilton, who was called to care for the growing church in Calcutta. Brother Counsell continued as
pastor of the English church in Yangon until March 1923, when he was called to teach Bible at Vincent Hill School, Mussoorie, North India.

Brother Counsell was single. He married Martha Matterand, a teacher at Vincent Hill School when he came to the school. They worked at the school for 6 years, then he spent many years in the Treasury Department of the General Conference at Washington DC, until time for retirement.

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IV. Week of Prayer at Ekamai International School

Lee Chin Beng <leecc@eis.ac.th> Feb. 14:

Our first Week of Prayer, held during November 5 - 9, 2012 had the Nathaniel Trio: Pastor Nathaniel Tan, Brandon Lye and Rendy Chan, from Singapore explore the theme, "My Decision, My Life." Pastor Nathaniel delivered a talk emphasizing freedom of choice. His subthemes and titles included 'We Have a Choice over Negativity,' 'Embracing Hope Is a Choice' and 'Choosing to Put Him (God) First.'

He told the story of the 'Lost Son' from many different perspectives and asked students to identify the most personally familiar character in the story. On the last day, Kultida Keerikoolparn, 11B, won a guitar for her reflections on Pastor Nathaniel's messages. Every student had a great time during this event. One student said, "This is the best Week of Prayer ever." "I liked this year's Week of Prayer," said Motomi Fukui, 12B. "It was personal and interactive. Students expressed their feelings directly to the speakers through networking websites and Facebook." "The Week of Prayer has ended but the Nathaniel Trio's messages will always be with us," said Wannisa Planluprasit, 12B. "I think they have had a good impact on my life, and will help me live in harmony with the teachings of the Bible." --EIS Newsletter January 2013 ~~~~~~~~~ V. Mark Finley & Evangelism Team in Indonesia [Part 2 of 3]

"Longtime evangelist Mark A. Finley; General Conference (GC) Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department director Jonathan Kuntaraf; GC Health Department director Kathleen Kuntaraf, wife of Jonathan; vocalist Charles Haugabrooks; and other team members held a series of meetings in Manado, Indonesia, August 31-September 7. This resulted in remarkable conversions, including that of a tribal chief on a remote Indonesian island. Hope Channel taped the nightly meetings and aired them throughout Indonesia on its newly established 24-hour network there. Here are three reports Finley wrote of the event while in Manado.

"Report 2 -- September 5

"I have just returned from tonight's meeting and our audience may have been the largest yet. Thousands of people crammed into nearly every available space in the convention center and spilled over into the foyer and hallways. We have accommodated the large crowds by placing screens throughout the overflow areas. It's exciting to see people so enthused about Jesus and that message that they are bringing their friends to the meetings.

The Eastern Indonesia Union Conference president, Noldy Sakul, sits in the front row of the meetings every night and reserves seats for his guests. The other night eight of the people he invited attended the meeting. Our members here are on fire for God.

"The highlight of our day was the baptism of the island chief.

Throughout the meetings the chief’s faith has strengthened. He made his commitment to Jesus, and today he, his wife, and two of his children, and two of his grandchildren were baptized. It was a glorious outdoor service.

The chief sent a letter to his entire village explaining the he is now a Seventh-day Adventist and inviting them to consider the truth he has accepted. While videotaping his baptism, the chief looked into the camera and committed himself to lead his people into an understanding of God's message of truth for these last days, and is encouraging the Seventh-day Adventist Church to send missionaries to help him.

"Many hundreds of people who have been attending the Manado meetings have made their decision to follow Jesus in baptism and become a part of His remnant church. They are preparing for baptism this Sabbath. During the prework leading up to this series, hundreds more also were baptized as a result of our small-group Bible study ministry.

"The Holy Spirit is doing something special here in Manado, and it's a joy to be part of it-but this is just a foretaste of what God longs to do, and will do, through His people just before He returns.'

[Part 2 of 3] -- from the February, 2013 edition of ADVENTIST WORLD ~~~~~~~~~ VI. Taiwan College Plans Exchange with Southern Adventist University

--from local Chattanooga February 15 newspaper

"Three Chattanooga colleges announced [yesterday] plans to start long-time cultural exchanges with universities in Taiwan. Chattanooga State Community College, Southern Adventist University, and University of Tennessee each intend to sign memorandums of understanding with colleges in Taiwan. . . "


VII. GC President Visits Indonesia's President
by Mark Kellner, Adventist Review News Editor

"It is an honor for us to be able to be in Indonesia and a good experience to meet with the president to share the views of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in helping the people," Pastor Ted N. C. Wilson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, said to reporters after an audience with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono at the Halim Perdanakusuma Air Base, near the capital of Jakarta, on February 12, 2013.

Wilson is visiting Indonesia as part of celebrations of more than a century of Seventh-day Adventist work in the country. There are 1,547 Adventist congregations in Indonesia, and approximately 250,000 baptized members in the nation, whose majority population is Muslim.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute in this country, and I am grateful to the President for the religious freedom granted to groups in Indonesia," Wilson added.

"It's amazing to hear that Indonesia is a country with the second highest economic growth. But President Yudhoyono is also aware of the need to do more things," for his people, Wilson explained. The General Conference president said the church is committed to help in various ways, whether social, physical, emotional, and spiritual, as well as assisting in disaster relief on the island of Sumatra after the 2004 tsunami.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute in this country," he said.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church operates a number of facilities that serve the Indonesian people, including Adventist hospitals in Bandung, Bandar Lampung, Manado and Medan. The church also operates 372 schools and three universities in Indonesia.

"We hope to help the people of Indonesia to solve a number of problems. God understands what is best for our lives," he concluded.

Nancy V. Wilson joined her husband in the visit. They were accompanied by pastors Alberto C. Gulfan, Southern Asia-Pacific Division president; J. Syukur Peranginangin, West Indonesia Union president; Noldy Sakul, president of the East Indonesia Union and Lt. Gen. TB Silalahi (Ret.), a lay member of the church ~~~~~~~~~ To remove your name from the mailing list of this newsletter, simply reply to this e-mail and put "REMOVE" in the Subject line.

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