I. Indonesian Members of Azure Hills Church Sponsors Evangelism

Daniel Injo <dsintan@msn.com> October 22:

Indonesian members of Azure Hills Church at Grand Terrace, California, sponsored an evangelical crusade in Minahasa, East Indonesia, on September 15-21, 2013. They formed a Non-Profit Corporation about a year ago named Global Outreach Fellowship for the purpose of spreading the Gospel through educational, medical and religious institutions. This organization raised the fund and made all the arrangements in cooperation with East Indonesia Union Conference leaders to make this event possible. The Azure Hills Church leaders gave their full support to this plan.

The Crusade was held in 16 different sites, some are in churches, some are in makeshift meeting places and two in restaurants. The speakers for these meetings were 16 pastors, one physician from the US and one departmental director of local Conference. Also it was supported by 9 Union officers, and 119 local pastors. Three of the speakers were former East Indonesia Union Presidents -- Pastors Alex Rantung, Rein Kesaulya, and Bobby Sepang.

During that week, pastors and speakers went out doing visitation, counseling, perform marriage ceremonies, conducted baptisms for those candidates that wouldn't be able to make it to the Convocation on Sabbath. There were also seven charity clinics served by some medical personnel of the group that came from United States, more than a thousand people seen in those clinics.

On Sabbath, September 21, we had a Convocation in a meeting hall owned by the Union in Kawangkoan. The attendance was about 7000 with Pastor Dan Matthews, former Director-Speaker of Faith For Today as the main speaker. Members from all over Minahasa came to attend that meeting. It was a historical event when three former Union Presidents and the current one could meet in one place. Also baptismal candidates came with their families.

Twenty-five pastors conducted the baptism after the worship service there.

In the meantime, several other churches, due to distance from that site, had their own baptisms.

At the end of the Crusade Pastor Noldy Sakul, East Indonesia Union Conference President announced: "The final result for baptism: North Minahasa-Bitung District: 139 soul; Manado-North Maluku Conference: 139 soul; South Minahasa Conference: 132 soul, total of 433 soul. Praise the Lord, Amen."


II. The Beginning of the Adventist Work in Laos

--Dick Hall, from the 4th Quarter, '13 SAP Outlook -- Part 2

"When we arrived with only the bags we could take on the plane, people helped us carry them on to our rental place. 'Oh, sorry,' the owner said.

'You can't move in as it isn't finished yet!' What could we do? As we wandered down the road through the village, we prayed for God to help us. He brought us here for a purpose, and now He would surely find us a place to stay. A Pakistani man saw our dilemma and said we could share his hut. It was longer than most. It had a partition and he was using only half of it.

'We gladly accepted his kind offer and those helping us moved our baggage into the dirt-floored hut. On the other side of the partition was a raised split bamboo platform for sleeping and a place in the corner of the dirt floor to build a fire to do our cooking. We had some blankets and one small air mattress that Jean and I shared. Usually around midnight or after the one of us that was on the bamboo would awaken the other one and say, 'It's my turn now.' So this was the
only way we could figure out how at least get half-a-night's sleep. To our surprise, we did sleep quite well with the sweet aroma that was coming through the bamboo partition. The next day I visited with the Pakistani man and discovered why we slept so well. He was running an opium den and we were sleeping head to head with the opium smokers and that accounted for the sweet aroma we smelled in our hut! While I was trying to absorb this information and decide what we could do about this unexpected challenge, the kids asked, 'Where's the bathroom?' We told them they could bathe in the river with the village people a few hundred yards down the road. They said, 'OK, but where's the toilet?' We told them we will just have to use the bushes like the other people do, and let the pigs take care of it.

"We got settled into our bamboo hut and I thought it was about time I should get started doing the work the Lord sent us here to do. I was so happy that we had learned the Esan Thai language, because it was very much like the Lao so we could converse and they could understand everything I said. Yet another one of God's miracles to us. So I picked up the picture roll I had brought and when I could see a few people visiting together, I would open it up and begin telling them about Jesus. People walking by would see this and join the group. This is the way we started and it kept spreading. Then we started going to the nearby Thai Dum villages. Their spirit worshipers were surprised to see that the evil spirits did not bother us at all.

"Finally we were able to move into the three-room hotel and it was so much better. We also got acquainted with some of the Air America pilots that flew C-47 aircraft. They told me they usually didn't have much of a load and if there was anything we needed they would fly it up to Namtha for us or if any time we needed to fly it up to Vientiane we could ride with them at no cost. This was a real blessing. I told them about the things we had left in left in Lao and they said they would be glad to bring it to Namtha for us. So I went with a flight and got all our things, even a kerosene refrigerator, and they brought it all in for us without cost. We didn't know what we would need a refrigerator for as we hadn't had one for so long, but it wasn't long until we found a good use for it. We could make ice-cream now that we had ice and a place to store any leftovers!

"People began to come to me for every medical problem they had--from cuts that needed suturing to broken bones, abscesses, pulling teeth and even calling me to come their village to get a baby out that was breach. I told them right at the first that I was not a doctor and didn't know how to do all these things. They responded, 'You are an American, aren't you?' I said 'yes', not knowing what this had to do with it. Then they said, 'Doctor American did it so you can do it too.' Oh! So I had another job to do to help the people in need. Of course I had no instruments, so I used what I had: pliers and small screwdrivers to pull teeth, a sewing needle and thread that Jean had to do the sewing, and so on. I had no Novocain or anesthetic, but even with the pain, they kept coming for help. To deliver breach babies, I would work with my hand to get the baby turned around so I could get it out. We would talk to the people and tell them about Jesus when here on earth went around healing people and helping them in their needs. Now Jesus had gone back to heaven and asked us to go all over the world helping people. We told them Jesus had asked us to come to Laos and we were happy to be here to help in any way and tell them about Jesus. [to be continued] ~~~~~~~~~ III. Burma Vignettes--Early Missionaries # 58

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.

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#58. Erwin Christ Beck & Jackie (1953-58)

E. C. Beck and family arrived and served as the pastor of Yangon Central Church in 1953. He was an eloquent preacher. He held long evangelistic meetings at such big cities as Yangon, Mawlamyine and Pyin-Oo Lwin. His wife, Jackie, was a good singer and she helped with the success of E. C. Beck. I was a high school student at Mawlamyine at the time and I had the privilege of getting to know both Pastor Beck and Jackie. I marveled at his sermons and I had the pleasure of hearing them sing duets. My father was treasurer of the local Mission at the time. After Pastor Beck held his evangelistic meetings at Mawlamyine, he formed the church organisation and dedicated the mission work there. At the end of his service in Myanmar, he worked as the president of Sri Lankan Mission. Thence he was the president of Canadian Union Conference. He also worked as the president of a conference in the United States. Pastor Beck was one of those missionaries who loved Myanmar. He had one son and two daughters.

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IV. Singapore's Balestier Road Church Celebrates 62nd

Mark Chan <markchan@adventist.org.sg> October 22:
Senior Pastor Mark Chan would like to invite everyone, especially those who have been to Balestier Rd SDA Church to share a testimony on his/her walk with God by writing a brief sentence on Prayer. For example, "God may not always answer our prayers according to our wishes, but prayer should always change us." You may share the quotation in text file or jpeg file via to Pastor Chan <markchan@adventist.org.sg>

The quotations will be shared during the Church Anniversary.

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V. Humor at the GC's 2013 Annual Council ---from Adventist News Network (ANN)

Annual Council has a lighter side in what passes for humor at the GC.

Halfway through his Secretariat report on Sunday, Executive Secretary G. T. Ng felt attentions wane throughout the Seventh-day Adventist Church world headquarters auditorium. The light was dim as he showed his 30th slide featuring statistics, graphs and charts. He stopped and said, "Everyone turn to your neighbor and tell them they look marvelous."

Delegates laughed, and for a moment the room burst with chatter. Even some of the intense personalities lightened for an instant to call out to a colleague. "Dale, marvelous!" someone shouted out across an aisle to Pacific Press Publishing Association President Dale Galusha. A day later, Ng, told glazed-over delegates to tell their neighbor they "smell great."

Ng, a native of Singapore and former seminary dean, is often the in-house chief comedian during Executive Committee meetings, effectively using humor at the beginning of a presentation to make points on matters business or spiritual. But his humor often serves a more basic purpose: keeping jet-lagged delegates awake.

"You can see the energy level change. People come back to life again," Undersecretary Myron Iseminger told ANN.

Each second weekend of October brings 350 Adventist leaders from around the world to headquarters for seven straight days of sitting through Annual Council. While many meetings feature worship services and updates on evangelism projects, delegates are often subjected to hours of financial PowerPoint slides, statistical reports and long readings of policy. Most world division officers have been living in nearby hotels for nearly a month to participate in pre-meetings and institutional boards. For many, the chance for a chuckle is a welcome respite.

Some attendees use humor to diffuse an otherwise awkward situation or gently rib a longtime friend.

In announcing the comprehensive health ministry outreach, Mark Finley, the assistant to the president, accidentally introduced Health Ministries director Dr. Peter Landless as "Dr. Handysides" before quickly correcting himself (Landless became director this month following Dr. Allan Handysides' retirement). Landless didn't miss a beat while taking the microphone from Finley. "Thanks so much, Elder Vandeman," he said, referring to the late George Vandeman, who founded the Adventist television ministry It Is Written (Finley followed Vandeman as the ministry's speaker/director in 1991). The room exploded with laughter that sustained and drew some hoots and applause. . .

"That one brought the house down," recalled Vice President Mike Ryan.

Ng, the secretary, usually opens his reports with a drawn-out joke, often told with a serious and intense face. "As soon as he stands up I start chuckling," said Education Director Lisa Beardsley-Hardy.

Ng's opening tale this year featured a donkey trained to understand biblical commands. "Amen" would cause the donkey to stop, while "hallelujah" would command the donkey to walk. One day a rider forgot the commands as the donkey walked toward the edge of a cliff. In scrambling desperation, the rider prayed for safety and ended his prayer with "Amen," which brought the donkey to a standstill inches from the cliff. The rider was so excited his life had been spared that he shouted, "Hallelujah!" Ng's audience went bananas. . .

On Wednesday, the final day of Annual Council, Undersecretary Iseminger played off the joke when introducing a smattering of suggested editorial changes to several policies. "I don't want to gallop through all these final policy items, but why don't you say "hallelujah" when you want me to go on and "amen" when you want me to stop for discussion. Is that fair?" "Hear, hear," a delegate called out.

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VI. SULADS Story -- Safe in Danger Zone

by Jannery Bargayo, Taporog Literacy Center

"Why won't they allow us to pass?" Commander Bravo asked angrily.
Commander Bravo was accompanied by more than five hundred MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front) rebel soldiers in full combat gear, ready anytime for battle. They were on their way to a big meeting when they were stopped at a Military checkpoint. There was tension between the two groups and the elements were just waiting for final commands from their higher officers and in no time there would be a clash and exchange of bullets.

It so happened that my teammate and I were in the area. We were on our way to Iligan for our reporting in a church where we were scheduled to visit. We, too, were stranded with the MILF soldiers at the house of the Barangay (community) Captain. These were all Muslims and we could read between lines from their conversations that we were identified as Christians.

"Lord," I prayed silently, "you know how the Muslims hate the Christians and we are here in their midst. But I know that I am SAFE in this DANGER ZONE because You are here with us. May your will be done in our lives, Lord. Amen."

Lunch time came and the community leader invited us to eat. Others were wondering why on earth there are two Christians eating with them. I could feel the heated tension. But when we were about to start eating the community leader announced, "My brothers, you should not worry! These two SULADS teachers are not Christians, they are Seventh-day Adventists. These are our brothers. We are one and the same. As we believe in just one living God in heaven, Allah, they too believe in the same one God. They don't eat pork and the rest of the abominable things."

"Ah......... oh...........", I could hear their loud ahs and ohs of wonder.

As we ate and talked, we felt the warm camaraderie and the tension of feeling in the midst of enemies was gone. Everybody now became a friend as they learned that we were assigned in the very dangerous area to serve their own people.

After that the Military opened the checkpoint to allow us to pass. The MILF soldiers went to their meeting and us to our church appointment. It was an unforgettable experience. We know that where God is, we are SAFE even IN a DANGER ZONE.

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