I. Ralph Watts & Arlind Hackett Visit Vietnam

II. Karen Campmeeting in America (Part 1 of 4)

III. Thailand's Integrated Lifestyle Evangelism IV

SULADS Story--The Deaf 

Want To Hear ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

I. Ralph Watts & Arlind Hackett Visit Vietnam

(1st of several installments!)

Arlind Hackett <arlind.hackett@yahoo.com> June 27:

Wow! Yesterday was a long day! Got up at 4:30 AM, Sunday, to make my 

6:15 flight, and didn't get to my hotel in Ho Chi Minh City until 9:30 AM Portland time Monday. I figured who else is 

going to be going to San Francisco at 6:15 on a Sunday morning? Wrong! There were huge lines at all the United 

counters.

After getting in a line I glanced to my left and there was Bryce Pascoe in the line next to me. He was on his way to the 

Dakota Conference for a constituency meeting and campmeeting. He is serving as Ministerial Secretary on a stipend 

basis. So, my trip was off to a good start! (Of course I found out that there were people checking in for Denver, Paris, 

and probably other places.)

At the security checkpoint I had some more pleasant news: I was pre-approved by TSA to go through the express 

check line. There was only one person ahead of me, so went right through. Didn't even had to take off any clothes, and 

didn't even unpack my computer case. They called my flight about five minutes after I arrived at my gate, so didn't have 

long to wait there either.

Our flight arrived in San Francisco about 15 minutes early, so I had over 3 and a half hours until my next flight. The first 

thing was to locate my departure gate. I went upstairs to look for a monitor and discovered it was at Gate 102. I came in 

at gate 100 in the same terminal so that was a pleasant surprise. The next item on the schedule was to get some 

breakfast, since it was now 8:15 AM. Ordered a Mexican omelet, and it was excellent.

At my departure gate there was a long row of desks with outlets, so I went on my computer to get my emails. It only 
took me about an hour to figure out how to hook up with the free internet service, so I still had time to get my mail. I 

was pleased to find an email from Khoi Tran with his contact information in Vietnam, which I needed for my visa 

application.

Our flight to Narita (Tokyo) Airport left right on time at 11:40 AM. Had interesting seatmates on the flight, so made 
the time pass quicker. I had a window seat, and the guy next to me was an agnostic school teacher from Riverside, CA. 

The young lady on his right was a computer animator returning to Japan for a job. She was a Buddhist, so we had 

interesting discussions on religion! Didn't get a lot of time to read my book, Upcountry, that Melvin had suggested was a 

must read before arriving in Vietnam.

After our 10 and a half hour flight it was still only 2:00 o'clock Tokyo time when we arrived! It was very annoying that 

upon arrival at Narita we had to stand in line for a half hour to go through a security check! What were we going to 

acquire since our last security check? The poor guy ahead of me in line was informed by the security officer that after 

waiting for so long he was supposed to be in the line for domestic transfers. I wonder how long he had to wait in that 

line.

Our flight out of Narita was delayed, and we had to all board buses to take us out on the runway about a half a mile to 

board the plane. That flight was packed. My seat was like five rows from the back of the plane (46 out of 50 rows), and 
on my periodic "walkabouts" I didn't see any empty seats. The gentleman sitting next to me was an Asian man I 
calculated to be in his 80s. He was the last one seated, and about the last one to get off in Ho Chi Minh City, and since I 
was in the window seat you can imagine when I got off.

At the Saigon airport I had no problem finding the visa-issuing desk.
Unfortunately, the two people in line ahead of me had problems with their paperwork. So, by the time I got my visa, paid my $45.00 fee and got through immigration to get my luggage all but two of us had already picked up their luggage, so the carousel was deserted. I had no trouble going through customs. They just ran my luggage through a security device and I headed for the exit.

When I went through the door there were still hundreds of people waiting to meet arrivals. I made a quick look around the crowd, and since nobody seemed to be waiting for me I went back in and changed some money in the terminal. Guess what?! I'm a millionaire! Exchanged $100.00 and got 1,915,000 Dong! That figures out to an exchange rate of around Dong 20,000 to a US Dollar. How do you figure out what something costs?

When I went back outside I saw a guy holding up a Caravelle Hotel Sign. I checked with him, but he wasn't waiting for me. I asked if I could ride with him, but when I found out that his limo service cost $50.00 I decided to take a taxi, which only cost $10.00. Anyway, I had an exciting ride to the hotel. Even at 11:00 PM we still had to dodge motor scooters and other taxis. Upon arrival it was comforting to receive a message from Ralph Watts when I checked in. Up to that point, after 28 hours without sleep, I was questioning whether I was at the right hotel. And what a Hotel! Ralph has good taste. It has everything you need. To give you a couple of examples, there is a tin of Ricola Lemon Mint throat lozenges. And I have a choice of six pillows: Firm ball fiber, companion pillow, natural classic latex pillow, buckwheat pillow, contour pillow, luxury goose down pillow.

Anyway, it was nice to shower, and organize things a bit, and hit the sack. Just after midnight when I turned in and woke up at 7:45 this morning.

Thought that was pretty go for a jet-laguer!

Well, it is now 9:20, and I'm supposed to meet Ralph at 9:30 for breakfast. So, I guess I'd better wrap this up and go to the restaurant.

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II. Karen Campmeeting in America (Part 1 of 4)

Scott Griswold <scott.griswold@asapministries.org> July 17:

My name is Pastor Scott Griswold. Today I'm wearing a little different outfit than normal. Can you guess where it's from? This a Karen shirt that the men of that tribe wear in Burma, which many call Myanmar. Here is Karen dress given to my family. They make beautiful work using looms. It's all by hand. Amazing handicraft. I can't imagine the hours that go into it.

The reason I'm wearing it is to tell you about where I was last weekend.

I attended the first ever, nationwide Karen Family Convention held in the United States of America. It was like a camp meeting especially for Karen people who have moved here! We met together at Union Springs Academy in New York. People came from 14 different states plus Canada, Australia and even Norway! There were at least 500 attending, almost entirely Karen with a few others that really love these people.

I met a lot of people. I could speak English with most of them, but some needed a translator. A few were happy to talk Thai to me since they spent many years in the refugee camps in Thailand. That's really why most of them are here. They have fled their country because there has been a long-standing war between their tribe and ruling Burmese. It's really been awful.

Some of the adults at the camp meeting I could tell had been here for many years. They speak English really well. Most have come more recently. They would have been completely lost if the whole program was in English.

Much of it was in their Karen language and they just soaked up the inspiration!

When I looked around, I felt such a respect for them. They have gone through so much. Some have seen their villages burned completely to the ground. They have fled for their lives, lived years in refugee camps. Now they have crossed the huge ocean and made a life for themselves in entirely new environments. They've come from tropical jungle heat and have learned to cope in the sub-zero weather of snowy Minnesota among other places. They've come from tiny mountain village roads and bamboo huts in the camps and learned how to navigate the concrete jungles of Chicago and live in apartment complexes. And they've gone from rice and curry and chicken to, well rice, curry and chicken, with some pizza and spaghetti thrown in I'm sure. We ate a lot of rice this weekend.

So they are a special people. Each person has a special story to tell.

The young people are so vibrant. Many of them have just come to America in the last five years. They've already learned English amazingly well. The memories of the camps and the poverty are so fresh in their minds. This gives them
a huge appreciation for their opportunities here. They study hard. They really excel at school. Many are working as well as going to school. They have to support their families. It’s really tough to make it in a very expensive world, especially at the beginning when their English skills are limited.

There are definitely clashes that come between the generations. Parents aren't learning English as fast and don’t understand many things their children are getting into. Old, important values seem to evaporate under the bright lights of American culture. Television, music, and friends at high school move in to replace the influence of the elders.

That’s why I so enjoyed the two seminars I did. I had prepared to talk to adults about how to witness to Buddhists, Muslims and anyone from a non-Christian background. The day before I felt impressed to pray more than to put more preparation into my talks. I asked God to send the Holy Spirit to do what I could not do—truly make a difference in the hearts of the people who would attend. (end of Part 1 of 4) ~~~~~~~~~ III. Thailand’s Integrated Lifestyle Evangelism from June’s "Shining Light in Thailand"
by President Chanchai Kiatyangyong
"The work entered Thailand over a century ago. We have established a university, schools, and hospitals to enhance the work of the Church, but it seems that the work is moving onward at a very slow pace. We think that our church members believe that the work of reaching people for God's Kingdom is in the hands of the pastors.

"Just at the beginning of this year, the General Conference, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, and the Southeast Asia Union Mission introduced Integrated Lifestyle Evangelism (ILE) to all the workers during the yearly worker’s meetings. After this seminar and training was completed, the Thailand Adventist Mission (TAM) officers and department heads joined together in prayer for the Holy Spirit to guide us. We realized that now is the time to educate our church members with the ILE approach which means that all the church members need to integrate their faith into their daily lives through a Care Group. The TAM then set up four Care Groups at the headquarters in which the leaders are the Mission Officers and the Ministerial Secretary. We meet every Wednesday from 4:30 to 5 pm just to learn how to take care of each member in the group using the 'Win Wellness’ booklet.

"From the headquarters we organized the department heads into 3 teams. Each team will go to a specific region in Thailand to train the pastors and church elders to be Care Group leaders. Our vision this year is that each local church establishes 3 new Care Groups. These prayer groups have the responsibility to build up relationships with the Care Group members, taking care of their spiritual needs and providing activities within the Care Groups to bring new members to join in.

"Each Care Group will organize activities that will provide spiritual growth for the group members so they will be able to reach out to others. Each region in Thailand is divided into zones with zone leaders and secretaries to coordinate the Care Groups in the local churches within the zones. By using this system we can reach out to every village in each region.

"We pray that through this methodology and with the Holy Spirit to guide us closely, we can build up Care Groups throughout Thailand and make the Church strong in evangelism. This is a new program in TAM and a challenge to the city churches. . ."
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IV. SULADS Story--The Deaf Want To Hear
by Sarah A. Famisaran, Director, SULADS School for the Deaf

The coming of Pastor Jeff Jordan, a deaf minister from Tennessee, USA, drew a crowd of Deaf people in Cagayan de Oro City in Mindanao South Philippines. We posted a tarpaulin of announcement of the five day Revelation Seminar. One morning a small group of Deaf came by during their morning exercise and saw our poster "HOPE for the DEAF" with Speaker Pastor Jeff Jordan. They came that afternoon with their families.

"WOW!" they said in their fast talking hands in sign language. "This is our first time to hear this. This is HOPE for the Deaf indeed!" They loved the messages so much that they regretted not seeing the poster until the last two days of the series.

We visited Divisoria a plaza section in the heart of the city one evening. Many Deaf masseurs go there to massage people who come every night for the soothing touch. Pastor Jeff came with us and he had himself massaged. That drew more Deaf and they had a good talk. We invited them to the series for the last two remaining nights. Many came to hear the good news of "HOPE for the DEAF".

That Sabbath, the last day of the series, some fifty came. This was the biggest crowd of the series. One of the group was Juliet who sat quietly in her seat in a corner, observing. She caught my attention as she behaved differently from
the others and seemed so awed by the messages. She responded as Pastor Jeff pounded home the new truths she seemed to have just discovered.

During the break, she came to Sunny, our Deaf lay worker who had invited her to the meetings. She asked if she could be given time to talk in front.
"Why not? Go ahead," Sunny agreed. She then started her non-stop talk in hand signs so fast that I could hardly understand in my slow pace. I still feel handicapped in signing.

Lychel, my teammate in the Deaf work, who is a good interpreter, helped me understand every word of her message. She said, "There are so many church groups who have invited me in the past to join their church but I didn't. Some even bribed me with money so that there would be more to join their Deaf group. But this caused me to resist joining their church even more. I felt there should be no need to bribe but to join a church should be a freewill choice when the heart is converted according to conscience.

"In coming today to your church," she continued, "Sunny, my friend, did not bribe me but he just invited me. But there seemed to be a force that was pulling me to come even though I had a very important appointment somewhere else. But listening to Pastor Jeff, I am so thankful now that I came because I discovered that this is far more important than my appointment. I regret that I have just heard these golden truths just now. I want more of this. I'm hungry for more. It's sad to know that Pastor Jeff is leaving so soon when my deaf brothers and sister and I have just tasted a bit of these wonderful messages which I have heard for the first time.

"Modesty aside, I am the president of the Deaf Association in Caraga Region. This is a combined four provinces of the Northeastern part of Mindanao. I am proposing and asking Pastor Jeff Jordan to come again next year at this time for a series of this Revelation Seminar. I don't know what I can do about finances but we will just pray. Let me be in-charge of contacting all Deaf people in my region to attend these meetings. I believe with all my heart that God sent Pastor Jeff here for us with a special message in these end times. I further request that an interpreter be available in an SDA church in Butuan because there are two SDA Deaf there. Then I could start attending the SDA church there with them."

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