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I. Ralph Watts & Arlind Hackett Visit Vietnam

(7th of 9 installments)

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

Travel Report No. 7: Part 2 of 2

     Last night the four of us ate together in the dining room, and we had pizza and spaghetti. It was kind of a nice break from rice and vegetables!

     This morning we all ate at the breakfast buffet, which was very adequate.

     At 8:00 our van came to take us to our morning appointments. In Danang we picked up the Vietnamese missionary pastor who is helping build churches in the area, and is supported by his family in the U. S. The first stop was at a nice little church that was built on land donated by the lay pastor. He gave up the land that his house was occupying, and they built a church on the land. He has been renting the structure next to the church for a place to live, and to operate the little store to supplement their meager stipend from the mission. The lease on that property is almost up, so they will probably have to live for a while in the one room structure attached to the back of the church. The pastoral couple seemed so pleased to have us visit, and especially to see Pastor Giao! They invited us to stay and eat with them, but after having prayer with them we had to be on our way.

     The road conditions were pretty unbearable. After we left the main highway, the road was intermittently under construction. I was amazed, because, except for some major backhoes, and an occasional road compactor, most of the work was being done by hand. The road is being made of cement, and they were using the old-fashioned cement mixers where you shoveled the ingredients in by hand and mixed them with a little gas motor. The cement is then wheeled into the forms in a wheelbarrow and leveled by hand. They do one side of the road at a time, so the remaining lane is one-way traffic.

     Fortunately, the traffic was light, so we didn't have to back up very often.

     The next stop was another "house church" where the land had been donated by the lay pastor and his wife. Because sufficient money had been donated to build this church the Mission was able to give the pastor money to renovate and improve his home which is on the rear of the church property.

     This was a very nice church which I estimated would comfortably seat a hundred people. They said there is an attendance of about fifty each Sabbath. The lay pastor just graduated a week ago from Khoi's lay pastor training program. The program is quite intensive and lasts for three month.

     The pastors stay in the structure that was built behind the Central Church in Ho Chi Minh City. The family has three sons, and all the family members are handsome people. The oldest son is 21 and wants to study to become a lay pastor also. It is a very humbling experience to meet with these people.

     When I see the sacrifices they make to work for the Lord, I see how little I have given up for His work!

     After another prayer of dedication we went back down the road about a half mile where the mission has suggested we build another clinic. The existing clinic is on a large plot of ground and the building is built of cement block, so it is pretty sturdy. However, it is very rundown and could use some refurbishing. There was only one medical person there when we visited. He told us that they treat 40 or 50 people a day, but I think that was an evangelistic estimate, because he was the only person there. The building is two stories, and could be probably a ten or 12 bed facility, but he said they mainly treat minor illnesses where they can give the patients medicine and send them home. Also, they give emergency first aid, but maternity care and deliveries are done at a larger clinic about 18 kilometers away. This clinic could be
refurbished and the equipment upgraded to better serve the community, but we aren't sure the government would provide more competent medical professionals to staff it. What the person said was that they really want another structure built adjacent to the current facility that could be used for herbal and natural remedies, and then the other facility would be strictly used for Western medicine. At this point we haven't made a decision about what to do.

After that appointment we jounced our way back to Danang for lunch. Today we had some special wide noodles in a broth with mint and other kinds of leaves. It was a change from our normal menu, and tasted quite good. We got back to our resort about 2:30 and are meeting for supper at 6:00 PM. We plan to go to the Hyatt Regency to check it out. Ralph is scouting out a place for the Columbia Union Delegation to stay when they come a year or so from now.

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II. Conference on Adventism in China
   Edward Allen <sprallen@aol.com> Sept. 24:
   Request for Insights and Wisdom
   I am returning to Hong Kong next month to give a presentation to the Conference on Adventism in China to be held October 30-31.
   I am preparing a paper on the impact of the SDA work in China on the SDA work around the world. I will be suggesting that there were four areas of impact which I summarize as follows:
   1. The work of Abram LaRue and the earliest missionaries to China helped open the eyes of North American SDA to work among non-Christian peoples.
   2. Harry Miller and missionaries in the 20's and 30's in China built institutions in a way that was not only modeled on North American institutions but also became a model for mission work around the world.
   3. The experience of David Lin, his critique of institutionalism, along with his persecution and incarceration influenced the church to value people more than institutions.
   4. The presence and ministry of ordained women in China has influenced the debate about ordination around the world.
   I am interested in anyone's reaction to these idea. Perhaps there have been other ways that the work in China has impacted the world church. I invite your readers to respond to these concept, correct my impressions, and add their own thoughts. They can contact me, Edward Allen, at <edallen@college.edu>.

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III. White Estate Branch Office Opens at AIIAS
   Adventist World Review, Sept. 2015
   "A branch office of the Ellen G. White Estate was opened at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIIAS) in the Philippines, the second such facility to be established outside the U.S.
   "The branch office contains copies of Ellen White documents and other historical materials from the main office at the world church's General Conference headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, United States, and will provide AIIAS seminary students as well as local Adventists alike with opportunities to study the church's heritage, Adventist officials said.
   ""What we are doing is acknowledging what you already know -- that international students come to AIIAS to prepare to work for the Lord's cause." James Nix, director for the E. G. White Estate in Maryland, said at an inauguration ceremony on Sabbath, June 28.
   "The Ellen G. White Estate was created by the last will and testament of church founder Ellen White, and has a mandate to act as her agent in the custody of her writings and the handling of her property.
   "Reul Almocera, director of the new branch office, said the branch office as part of its new role would also reach out to Adventists by establishing mini-research centers, developing portable exhibits, and providing fun activities such as trivia games for church programs". -- Guy Deles, writing from Cavite, Philippines.

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IV. Paul Emerson & Builders In Indonesian Project
   Paul Emerson <emersonopa@gmail.com> September 26:
   We have a team of 7 builders preparing to go to the village of Hilina'a, about half way down the East side of the remote island of Nias, off the Northwest coast of North Sumatra, Indonesia. We will build a much needed pastors home by a large church, they pack 700 people in every time they hold evangelistic meetings there. We built this church
following the tsunami. There is a middle school here with over 500 students located near the church. Please pray for us as we take on this challenge.

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V. Laboring Woman loses Baby

Wendy Harris <wrguptill@gmail.com> September 23:

Just one of many stories is of a Palawano friend of ours who was giving birth the other day in the mountains and the missionary nurse found that the umbilical cord was coming out first (a dangerous situation)! She gently pushed it back in and they carried the lady out on the 3 hour, slippery trail, and drove her to the hospital. Not surprisingly, the baby did not make it on the long journey, but thankfully, the mom survived. This unnecessary death (and trial for all involved) might have been spared had we been able to evacuate her in a 10-minute flight from door-to-door. Unfortunately, this is not an uncommon story, as these types of emergencies happen on a regular basis.

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VI. Pray for Young Laos Worker-To-Be

--from current ASAP Ministries newsletter

"Saving Kong Vang"

"One day in Laos a young boy named Kong Vang made a very important decision. He would follow Jesus even if everyone else in the village followed the spirits. His father was not happy at all. In fact, he was even more angry when Kong Vang’s younger brother determinedly joined him. He expelled them both from his clan and his home. They had nowhere to go.

"A Seventh-day Adventist lay pastor took them in and raised them as his own. Later they moved to Vientiane and slept on mats on the floor of the church just so they could study in a good high school. After graduating and before Kong Vang was about to go to the Philippines to study for the ministry, a vicious brain infection called Japanese Encephalitis attacked him. He went completely unconscious and had to be admitted to ICU."

"It looked like Kong Vang would not make it. The treatment and care was terribly expensive at $100 a day--nothing by American standards--but way beyond what friends and church members could do."

"A pastor who helps with the work in Laos sent out appeals for help.

Caring church members around the world sent up many prayers and gave money to help pay the hospital bill.

Kong Vang is now sitting up. Now he can tell his legs to move forward and walk with some support and can now smile naturally. The doctors want to know why he is making such a speedy recovery. The pastor says, 'It's nothing short of a miracle.' made possible by a daily battle won by prayer.

"Please pray for Kong Vang’s full recovery and the ability to study and serve God. Pray for his father, his village, and the country of Laos where millions live under he fear of spirits and without a knowledge of the living, compassionate Healer."

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VII. SULADS Story: That Simple Dipper

by Jovel Pagapong, Punduhan Literacy Center

It was just a SIMPLE DIPPER! Not like the one with a handle. It was just a simple plastic bottle of a four litre soy sauce container cut into halves.

A piece of wood was nailed across the brim for a handle, and a nylon string is tied on the handle. This is what we use to get seawater from underneath our house for any washing purpose.

Ina, (our next door "mother in the village" neighbour.) was kind enough to bring us goodies such as some fruits, etc. Each time she would remind me to return the containers to her. Each time also I would forget as I see these simple plastic bags as worthless. But Ina told me that these things may seem worthless to me but they are so useful and important to her. Yes, I understood as I observe that these sea gypsies make use of whatever they can scavenge from the sea. They make those things that seem worthless to us, precious for them.

I have observed that anything the people throw away out through their windows, plastics, paper, etc. are carried away by the strong current. They are seen now and after a little while they are gone forever carried away by the current.

I went out on a small boat one day to fish. As I paddled my boat past Ina's house she shouted from her window, "You will need something to bail water out of the boat. Here, use this." She threw out to me a homemade improvised DIPPER. "Be sure to return that to me when you get home," she reminded.

"Yes, Ina. I will!" I assured her.
I enjoyed the hot day. My catch was small but it was more than enough for our need for the day. But fishing becomes so enjoyable especially when you have a good catch every now and then. As I enjoy each catch I would want to catch more, I didn’t notice that dark clouds were gathering above.

Noticing the few first drops of drizzle, I headed for home. I paddled, and paddled hard racing with the coming strong wind.

As I paddled hard over the waves which were then getting bigger, I noticed that the water was rising inside the boat as broken waves splashed and were scooped by the boat. "Where's the DIPPER?" I looked around, but there was no DIPPER. "Alas! Lord," I prayed, "What will Ina say again?"

I would be so embarrassed to go home without THAT SIMPLE DIPPER. Yes it was just a SIMPLE DIPPER but it was so precious to Ina. I checked around again but there was no DIPPER in that little boat. Oh! How can I find that in this vast ocean? "Seen now and gone forever" because of the current.

I reached home before sunset and I was glad Ina did not notice me home.

That evening I prayed with my teammate during our worship. "Lord," I whispered, "Please send back THAT SIMPLE DIPPER to our front yard tomorrow. This is so important to Ina, Lord. Please grant my request. Hear my prayer, oh Lord. Amen."

"What? What did you say in your prayer?" my teammate asked pulling me from my knees. "Where can you find a piece of something floating over the waves carried away by strong current come back again to answer your simple request?" My teammate seemed to say "Are you crazy?" Yes, this was so simple a request and it seemed so impossible to happen. But I prayed so sincerely from my heart for the sake of Ina.

That night before bed I prayed again for THAT SIMPLE DIPPER to come back in the morning so I could return it to Ina.

That early morning during worship I prayed again for THAT SIMPLE DIPPER to come back.

I was preparing to cook that morning in the kitchen when Keong, my teammate, who was looking out through the window cried, "Here comes your DIPPER! HERE COMES YOUR DIPPER!"

I couldn’t believe my ears! When I looked, there indeed was the DIPPER dancing above the tiny waves! I looked at Keong, he looked at me, "YOUR DIPPER INDEED IS BACK!" he said.

This may seem impossible as even garbage thrown into the sea are here now and gone forever. But my Lord, who is the Master of the wind and waves and current of the sea, is my faithful Friend and Father who makes it possible to answer a sincere prayer of His SULADS Missionary.

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