I. Korean Woman Earns Doctorial Degree

--Adventist Review, June issue
"Legally blind but a Vision for Service
"The Seventh-day Adventist church's flagship university in South Korea had to be convinced to change its policy to accept Miriam Summer Yun-Welch into its Graduate School of Theology.
"The problem wasn't the fact that Yun-Welch was legally blind. Nor was it that her health was fragile or that she had attempted suicide three times years earlier. It was that she was a woman--and no woman had ever received a doctorate from Sahmyook University's Graduate School of Theology.

Yun-Welch made history in February by graduating with a Doctor of Ministry degree, a milestone that she hopes will encourage other Asian women to pursue ministry-oriented doctorates that prepare them for leadership roles.

"It is my prayer that as the first woman to graduate in any doctoral area of theology at Sahmyook University I will help open the door for more female leaders in the Adventist work in South Korea and Asia,' she said.

"Even more important than leadership, she wants Korean women to become actively engaged in church work in a male-dominated culture that traditionally has treated women as a second class.

"Yun-Welch, 49, is not seeking to become a pastor but to combine her new education with 33 years of health experience to become more effective in sharing Jesus, particularly within the framework the Seventh-day Adventist Church's comprehensive health ministry. . . ."

II. Helicopter Speeds SULADS Missionary Deployment

Dwayne Harris <wrguptill@gmail.com> July 8:

Over the last two years we have been working toward restoring an old airstrip at Mountain View College (MVC) in Mindanao, Philippines for the purpose of supporting the work of the SULADS. The SULADS had their beginning years ago as a student missions program of MVC. It is now officially a separate entity but is still mostly composed of college students and graduates of MVC. They have multiple mission schools and projects scattered all throughout the very remote mountains and islands of Mindanao as well as other areas of the Philippines. When God provided the R44 helicopter last March I wanted to visit Mindanao with it one time to help raise awareness of the need for a helicopter for that area. The SULADS missionaries annual training (of new and returning missionaries) ended the last week of May, so we decided to time our trip at that time so we could help deploy the missionaries. We headed to MVC the 1st of June
with the helicopter and arrived at the newly restored airstrip just in time for a dedication ceremony for the airstrip. The mayor of Valencia attended with many SULADS missionaries and staff from MVC.

Four months ago during the dry season God moved the mayor to supply the graders and equipment for the reconstruction of the airstrip at no charge.

All we provided was diesel to keep them running. So we felt it only right to give her a ride in the helicopter back to Valencia after the dedication ceremony. It was a four minute flight vs. 30 to 45 minute drive.

We immediately started making plans and arrangements for the deployment of the missionaries. Over the next week we dropped off 35 missionaries at their mission schools. The nearest school is about a 3+ hour hike and the farthest is more than a 2 days walk. We also helped them make courtesy visits to the nearby government officials of each area. The results were a huge boost in the morale of the missionaries, and a renewed interest in the work of the SULADS at the highest levels in the church and government. Part of this was simply because they had a helicopter supporting them. Our time there with the helicopter also made us see even more the huge need of aircraft in Mindanao for supporting the work in the remote areas.

When we returned to Palawan I turned around and went back to Mindanao in the twin Comanche airplane a couple days later to pick up a new missionary family to be deployed to our remote mission school in Kabulnukan. A few days later we dropped them off at the trail head to hike into the mountains with their four children. Then a few hours later, about the time they arrived, we flew in all their personal supplies, food and school supplies. They are experienced, former SULADS missionaries so they are used to hiking, but they were very delighted to have their supplies carried in them this time.

The flight is only 5-6 minutes long to Kabulnukan. Every couple days or so we end up making flights for this village as well as the AFM project and several other similar villages where many are suffering from Malaria and other outbreaks. There are especially a lot of sicknesses right now with the monsoon rains starting again. We always coordinate the flights so that needed supplies and medicines are going in while more severe patients or missionaries are coming out. What a difference a helicopter makes to the missionary work! We continue to praise God daily for this great tool he has provided to speed the spread of the gospel to the people of Palawan. Thank you for your continued prayers and support!

~~~

III. Church Planting in Thailand
from Adventist Frontier July Magazine
--Christopher Sorensen

"Our team just had a two-week training session here in Khon Kaen, Thailand in which AFM's Laurence Burn and Marc Coleman shared information and principles that by God's grace, will help us better facilitate a church-planting movement among our people. With several other AFM teams from the Philippines, Cambodia, and Papua New Guinea present, there was invaluable cross-pollination of ideas and experiences. During the two Sabbaths that these teams joined our local group for worship, sharing their special music and testimonies, our Thai church members were also delighted and greatly blessed. With so many foreign guests combined with our regular attendees, our spacious worship room felt delightfully small,

"The Sabbath after our visitors left promised to have only a small turnout, as several of our violin players and their parents would be attending a church in Bangkok and playing with the Siam Youth Violin Ensemble. Sure enough, as we began our worship service, there were only about 20 people present. But soon a few more people arrived, and then more, and later more. By the time Danielle stood up to preach there were more than 60 people present—even more than we'd had the week before! At least a third of these present were visitors with backgrounds in Buddhism, New Age, Catholicism and other Protestant churches. It was so exciting to see our members and regular attendees enthusiastically inviting their friends and families to church!"

~~~

IV. SULADS Story: "Do Missions Really Pay?"
--By Pastor John Blake, GO Regional Director for Deaf Ministry

Today I would like to tell you about a missions program in the southern Philippine Island of Mindanao that is really paying - for eternity! No, it is not paying money, for it is receiving all it can find, and frankly, that is not really enough to properly carry on their expanding program!
What if you had a school with students, from 11 to 47 years old, who came to the school, but who could not talk, read or write, yet wanted to be educated like others of their age? Students who had often either been abused, neglected, misunderstood, or mistreated because they were deaf!

Well, that school is the SULADS Comprehensive School for the Deaf. The government has some classes now in Mindanao for the Deaf - in city situations, but you have to find and pay for your own accommodation and food to attend the government school. If you come from the mountainous areas, your family may not be able to move to the city, and they probably don’t have the funding necessary to pay for your independent living costs in the city.

As you may already know, the SULADS student missionary movement has many small church/school projects up with the mountain people in Mindanao. Daryl and Sarah Famisaran had worked with this program for years. They began to get the conviction that the Deaf in their area also needed a school because they were now being neglected.

So, they set their sights on starting a class right near Mountain View College, the home of the SULADS movement. At first, students coming during the week to that school were to bring their own food, but often this food was not enough. The Famisarans dreamed of a school in the country where the students could not only learn to read and write, like at the other SULAD schools, but could learn a language for communication, "Sign Language" and help grow their own food.

That school is now built and operating!

When I was there a few weeks ago, a girl had just recently arrived without a name or the ability to communicate. She had come from a mountain village. Later, a former SULADS student volunteer remembered who she was so she now has a name, but is still very shy and reserved.

Usually when students come, whether 11 or anywhere up to their 40's, they have little or no proper sign language, so the first thing is to teach them a structured sign language. You can then teach them to read and write and do math. And, most important, you can teach them about Jesus, the plan of salvation, and our hope for Heaven and the New Earth.

Soon, they are signing and learning with the others and even going out to surrounding churches to sing in sign language about the love of God!

Yes, I watched them sign, and some were also trying to sing. Truly, it sounded like "holy cacophony" to me - why? The signing was beautiful and their attempts at vocal singing were 'holy' to God's ear, but the sounds were dissonant to my ear. Yet, this was their praise to God, and thus it was really wonderful to see and hear!

Unfortunately, this deaf school has no church or conference specifically underwriting them, though they are an official part of the SULADS movement which is legally a part of the South Philippine Union Mission of SDA. Last year they had seven students, but this year things have mushroomed and they have 24. As I sat with the Famisarans, and their seven basically unpaid sacrificial volunteer helpers, I wondered aloud if maybe they should for now put a cap on new students coming. But, Daryl looked straight at me, (knowing I knew the extremely needy condition of these students when they come) and asked "What would you do? I answered, "I don't know!" He can't seem to bring himself to say "no" when these students want to come.

So, the school is starting to build a new dorm/kitchen, but they only have $6,000 to start and they need $40,000 to complete. They need a cost effective system for electricity as they are far from the electrical grid and need to be able to operate electrical equipment, computers, projectors, fans for cooling, and so many other things. I was told that they could put in a simple hydro-electric system to serve all their basic needs for about $8,000. In the mean time, we are helping them get a small 6,000 watt gas generator, but that is only a temporary help for right now.

The school needs regular funding for paying the volunteer teachers and helpers. It should not be left to our initial two official GO workers, to have to help feed the others at the school from their meager stipends, and depend on miscellaneous donations. There are only three students paying a tuition which is only about $75 between the three. Perhaps through GO in the USA we could first help them with their $8,000 electrical system. A sister agency in Canada, "A Better World", has been helping some with funneling a few Canadian donations raised to help build the school and provide Canadian receipts. But much, much more is needed. If you would like to help, please contact our office and explain that you also want to be involved!

Seldom have I ever seen a mission project that is so worthy and so extremely needy - going ahead on faith. Few schools face the challenge of taking most students with no language base, and as far as this world is concerned, have little future, and without reading or hearing, virtually no opportunity ever to learn about Heaven - even if someone came to their village.

While we were there in February, 13 of the students were baptized adding to the four students already members of the SDA church. Do missions pay when well over half of the students have now taken an outright stand for Jesus through baptism?
I believe that until the Deaf also get a chance to hear the gospel in some way through reading or signing, our commission will not be finished, and Jesus will not come! . . .

To remove your name from the mailing list of this newsletter, simply reply to this e-mail and put "REMOVE" in the Subject line.