

First Missions – Vietnam

First Missions – Pioneering Workers – Vietnam

Vietnam

August 7, 2023

The Way of God Came to Vietnam

Only hold fast to what you have until I come
Revelation 2:25

Dear ones in the name of Jesus Christ,

By chance, I get to know Cherie Kropp, a lady who owns the website "Telling The Truth" (TTT). She also asks me some questions concerning the way of God in Vietnam. Truly to say, if these questions came to me 50 years ago, I would have been so happy to write, not now! After praying, thinking some months, I felt that I need to write, because this is the time, there are many people in Vietnam and in other countries misunderstand in many ways about God's way in Vietnam.

Signed: Nguyen Huu Bau

Click Here to read full Account of the Vietnam Division compiled by Cherie Kropp from statements made during the years 2013 and 2014 by Nguyễn Huu Bau and his wife who were the first couple to profess in VN, his daughter Nguyễn Thị Minh Thanh and her husband Nguyễn Xuân Hoàn, who all reside in Saigon/HCMC; and Nguyễn Thanh Hoa, first person to profess and first native Brother Worker, who is no relation to the others.

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When did the workers first arrive in Vietnam? In 1957

Who were the first brother workers to arrive? Where were they from?

In 1957, Fred Allen from Queensland, Australia and Maurice Archer from New Zealand came to Saigon.

In 1959, Maurice Archer returned to New Zealand due to his health and George Pillay from Singapore arrived.

In 1961 Edwin Allen came to be with Fred Allen and George Pillay returned to Singapore.

Who were the first sister workers to arrive? Where were they from?

Phyllis Munn (Idaho) and Bonnie Dahlin (Washington) from USA in late 1959.

Who were the first native workers to go in the work and when?

First native brother workers: Nguyen Thanh Hoa and Vu Ngoc Chau in 1967.

First native sister worker: Ho Thu Anh in 1973-1982

Who were the first to profess, what year and where?

Nguyen Thanh Hoa and Vu Ngoc Chau in June 1961 in Saigon; both 21 years old.

Who were the first married couple to profess?

Mr. & Mrs. Nguyen Huu Bau in late 1961.

When & where was the first Gospel meeting held?

At 123 Ba Huyen Thanh Quan Str., District 3, Saigon in 1958.

When & Where was the first Sunday fellowship meeting held?

At the brothers' batch at 378D Dien Bien Phu Str, District 3, Saigon in 1961 from June to November because there were a few friends with 4 workers. The fellowship meeting began at 8:00 a.m. and the gospel meeting at 9:30 a.m. After their baptism, the fellowship and Bible study meetings were held in the house of Mr. & Mrs. Bau.

How many Sunday fellowship meetings are there now (2013)?

In Saigon/HCMC, there are 6 meetings total, but the meetings are divided into 2 groups. Five meetings who accept all workers—except brother worker Hoa; and one meeting which only accepts Hoa, which is held in Mr. & Mrs. Nguyen Huu Bau's home. There are other meetings in Vietnam such as Hanoi, Huế, Di Linh, Da Lat and Baria.

How many workers are there now (2013)?

There were and still are 22 workers in the field

Natives: (11 total) 1 brother, 9 sisters. (Hoa and Chau not included)

Foreigners (9 total): 5 from Canada; 2 from Philippines; 1 from Singapore and 1 from Korea

When & Where was the first baptism held?

In early 1962 at a pool in Saigon, about ten people were baptized.

When and Where was the first convention held?

The first was held in 1962 at the brothers' bach in Saigon. Four visiting workers were present. It continued there until 1982.

Convention was held at Youth Hostel in Dalat from 1963-1966.

In 1964, conventions were held in both Saigon and Dalat.

Where the convention now held? No conventions since 1977, when the government would not allow large gatherings. Since 1977, Special Meetings have been held twice a year. Since 2006, Friends & Workers travel to conventions in Singapore and/or Port Dickson & Penang, Malaysia.

What is the registered name of the church in Vietnam? Fred Allen registered the church in Vietnam in 1967 as Christian Mission VN. (the name translated into Vietnamese is "Sứ Mạng Các Thánh Đấng"). Right after Liberation Day (April 30, 1975), Uncle Hoa made a declaration to the Government that Uncle Hoa & Châu continue the mission in VN. Uncle Châu and Uncle Hoa were leaders and now (2013) they are still leaders registered with government. Foreign workers are not allowed to preach to native Vietnamese—only to foreigners. One time when the authorities learned of the coming Special Meetings, they made Chau cancel them.

Who have the Overseers been? Fred Allen (from Queensland, Australia), Vu Ngoc Chau (from Saigon, Vietnam), Cliff Toane (from Canada and Hong Kong), Jim Chafee (from China/Hong Kong and South Dakota USA); Morris Grovum, Darrel Turner, Lyle Shultz all from Canada.

-1957 to 1975 Fred Allen (he had to leave Vietnam due to the communist occupied the South of Vietnam and handed the responsibility to Vu Ngoc Chau and Nguyen Thanh Hoa until 1992 when Cliff came...(a)

-1992 Cliff Toane from Canada came to visit, but couldn't stay in Vietnam. When Fred Allen could not stay in VN, Cliff assumed the overseership in VN and Châu and Hoa cooperated with him.

-1997 (?) Cliff couldn't continue due to his health and Jim Chafee became responsible for VN (from South Dakota, overseer of China/Hong Kong). When Jim left China/VN Morris Grovum (from Canada) took the oversight; which later passed to Darrel Turner (from Canada). (b)

-2011 Darrel handed the responsibility to Lyle Shultz from Canada until 2013.

In 2014, the Friends are divided into 3 groups: Originally, there were around 250 Friends in VN. Owing to the causes given above, the Friends and Workers are now divided into 3 groups. (1) Those who completely support the Canadian Overseers. (2) Those who are still in the fellowship but are not satisfied with the situation and choose to "wait and see" what will happen, waiting for a new future. (3) The Golden Friends who continue walk with God as before and do not fear what they will do, and are not under any rule of man.

Click Here to read Fred Allen's Account of early Days in Vietnam

Saigon

November 10, 2013

Dear ones,

My name is Bau, 84 years old, my wife 81. Both of us used to belong The Protestant way. By chance I met the Way of God, so both of us professed the same night in 1961. We were the first couple in The Way in Vietnam. Our home also was the first place for the fellowship meeting with bread and cup.

We had 7 children, 11 grand children and 6 great grand children. Four of my children opened their houses for fellowship meetings with bread and cup, too.

I had had great privileges to meet thousands of friends and hundreds of workers in 9 countries such as London, Paris, Australia and USA...I used to send letters, email to 50 ones within 18 countries each time. Especially we had a very good opportunity to welcome many workers and friends from abroad, particularly the American soldiers by the time the war in Vietnam. We did enjoy so much in God's Way. How wonderful it is!

But—how sad to say! These golden chapters couldn't continue as it should! Since 2000, the Canadian workers came and overseer appeared as you see in the map, many things were changed...we pray for any miracles to happen to change the situation but hopeless. So last three years until now we have our own meetings, we keep on much better. Our fellowship meetings now are so good, so sweet.

We learn that the solution for any cases and anywhere that keep the truth and go on. Reading the church in Revelation we see clearly a lot of trouble but one verse was a comfort to us: "only hold fast to what you have till I come" Rev 2:25.

Best wishes

Nguyen Huu Bau

Letter by Sister Worker Bonnie Dahlin

Post Falls, Idaho USA

June 18,1993

Dear Soldiers and Families,

Recently someone gave me a copy of the 1965-72 Army reunion book. My heart has been deeply touched as I read what you have written there, and I felt moved to write to some of you, especially those of you who were in Vietnam. Some of you would know that it was my privilege to labor there with Phyllis Munn from 1960-65 and 1971-75.

We very deeply appreciate your sacrifice and we wish you could know how much it means to your brethren in VN. They know they owe so much to all of you...and to all the US help. Gratitude is deeply felt, but hard to put into words.

When we arrived in Jan. '60, the war was lost. Many, including military and government officials, came to see us to just beg us that America would come to help them, saying that if America didn't help them no one would, they had no one else to look to. We would explain to them that our work had nothing to do with the govt., that we hoped America would help them, but we had nothing to say about it. They knew they couldn't win and they were so discouraged. When the US sent advisers, in about '62, it greatly improved their morale, and helped for awhile.

The first VN to get a revelation of God's way were Chau and Hoa, the two men who are in the work now. They made their choice in the same mtg. Others did, too, but never continued. Others made their choice later that year, and by '65 we had several open homes. If it had not been for America sending advisors, we likely wouldn't have been able to stay until these homes got open and meetings established.

We came for our home visit in '65 and that is the year some of you went there. The other sisters left shortly after we did, and it was not considered safe for sisters to be there, so we didn't return until '71. We are grateful that the brothers were able to remain all those years. During the 10 years that US Service men were there, some went into the work and got established in the work...both brothers and sisters. This could never have happened if the US hadn't been there. They, and we feel deeply grateful.

In the years since '75 Chau and Hoa have been able to remain active, though very quietly, and some have decided every year. They recently had a yearly gathering with about 100 present...after the gathering they went to visit the ones who couldn't make it. Two sisters continue to keep their lives free for the work, they are limited in what they can do, but they do what they can. The work has prospered since '75, we know that your efforts there, and your prayers for that little land have added much to the work there. It is wonderful that our prayers can go where we can't go.

You would have wondered, as we did, why it fell in '75. I couldn't understand and as we left, only had peace in knowing that above all, God is working out a purpose that we can't see. We can trust and I didn't want to fight against God, but to accept it. A few years ago, Chau went to the North for the first time. He is a northerner, and could return to visit relatives and old friends. Since then, he has gone every year, some other northerners always go with him. Hoa is a southerner, so he couldn't go. Now, we have some brothers and sisters in different parts of the north. This could never have happened if the line was still there as it is in Korea, and would have been if it hadn't fallen.

We are so grateful that some of you were able to meet your VN brethren there and have a little different feeling for the situation as a result. We wish you all could. We think of God looking down from Heaven to see if any are beginning to understand and seek Him. (Ps. 53:2) In 1960 He would see a whole nation on the road to hell, among them He saw some whose hearts were turned toward Him, longing for light and peace. God never overlooks a seeking soul...and no price is too great for their salvation. This life for all of us is very short and for all of us it ends in death. Life looks so different when viewed from the standpoint of eternity. Those who die in their youth, not knowing God, have less to regret than if they had lived to be old.

It is very sobering to see the pictures of those five faithful young men who were lost in VN and to see the next page of eight men and one wife who lost their lives since, mostly in accidents...and we know that there were always more killed on the highways at home than in the VN war. When we die and how we die is not so important as what we do with the time we have here. May we all so live that the memory of our lives will inspire others to press on and live for things that outlast this life.

It is my hope that these few lines may help you to understand better how much your time in VN has helped the work of God there and how much it will mean for many for eternity, and to help any of you who may have had a hard time coping with memories of days there. There are many things in life that we can't fully understand and Satan would like to keep us meditating on these things until it robs us of our joy and our usefulness in the present. I love Duet. 2:3 "Ye have compassed this mountain long enough, turn you northward" Sometimes I have found myself fretting over things of the past so much that I was missing the guiding of God for the present and it was necessary just to let the past sink into the past, in order to get on with what the Lord wanted to lead me into today. I long to know better how to just humbly let the lord lead today and to trust that He will guide us into blessing as we humbly follow.

It was my privilege to labor in Sarawak, Malaysia, on the Island of Borneo from '76 to '88. They have a time limit there, so I couldn't stay any longer. I'm enjoying my time on the Washington staff now and am content here. If VN ever opens up again, I would count it a priv. to return, however, I doubt it will open up in the near future.

We have just finished conv. at Bonners Ferry, Idaho. It will be my priv. to attend Boyden, Iowa conv. this fall. If any of you happen to be there, I would love to meet you.

Now, I must let this be all for today, this doesn't require an answer but if you do write, I'll be pleased to hear.

Your sister in Christ,
Bonnie Dahlin

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