

# Outlook

SPECIAL ISSUE NO. 1 2015

SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION



**Vibrant  
Vietnam**

# Outlook

SPECIAL ISSUE NO. 1 2015

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FEATURES



Photo: S. B.

# The Test of Time

The dragon slowly undulates across my view as I peer into the pre-dawn shadows. I try to gauge its massive size but it's too large. As our ship floats past, I can see that the grayish-black sections of its back protruding from the water are more than three, maybe four, times the height of our little ship. No wonder the people of Vietnam long ago were just as awed as the reportedly 5.5 million annual modern-day visitors<sup>1</sup> like me who come to mysterious Ha Long Bay or Bay of the Descending Dragons as some call it.

As the sun rises, its light reveals the shadowy dragon for what it really is: one of many geological formations called karst. In modern-day reality, there are no dragons making their home here. However, Ha Long Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage site in northeastern Vietnam, is home to a treasured dragon legend from Vietnam's rich history.<sup>2</sup>

The legend claims that after Vietnam was formed, the people were threatened by invaders coming across the sea. The emperor called for help and dragons descended from the sky. Jewels and precious stones such as pearls and jade fell from their mouths to the water and formed the almost 2,000 islets that populate the bay now. The invaders supposedly perished as they crashed into the unexpected landforms. When all was peaceful, the dragons decided to

stay in the bay and stretched out upon the land.

Thus, according to one version of the legend, the ridges, and humps of their backs form the impressive karst landscape for which Ha Long Bay is known. In the scientific realm, a karst landscape develops when water erodes a softer rock<sup>3</sup> such as the limestone in Halong Bay over time. This erosion developed the impressive pinnacle karsts (large towers of limestone whittled down by rainwater reacting with the atmosphere over time) as well as the magnificent subterranean caves created by rain and/or ground water eroding through the limestone to hollow them out.<sup>4</sup>

In the midst of this karst landscape, I thought about Vietnam and transformation. Our travels first took us through Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi whose streets filled and sometimes overflowed onto the sidewalks with motorcycles. With a reported 43 million motorcycles in Ho Chi Minh (Saigon)<sup>5</sup>

alone, it feels metal outnumbers man.

Crossing the street is an intricate dance of dash-and-dodge between those on two wheels and those on two feet. As someone on the outside looking in, it symbolizes the combination of relentless modernization and rich tradition. This contrast can be seen from the neon-lit city streets to the rice paddies and family burial grounds of rural Vietnam.

This juxtaposition of fast-slow, the obvious versus that which requires more time to yield its treasures, is also true among the Adventist work in Vietnam. It's a transitory time for our members and churches. Perhaps unnoticeable to those outside its borders, steadfast believers persevered in their faith and this presence has grown over the years on a constant but different timetable – one set and seen by God.

But now the external transformation is being seen glimpse by glimpse in health initiatives and community

# MESSAGE FROM VIETNAM ADVENTIST MISSION

outreach. Of late, it's most vibrantly seen in our young people as they invite their friends of all faiths or none at all to join them in bringing hope to people in practical ways. You'll read about these activities and experiences in this issue. Indeed, it's an exciting time – a time of transformation in this time-less land.

Similarly, even when we don't see an obvious change, we are being continually transformed whether we realize it or not. Society is either wearing away our values or we are allowing God to carefully erode and polish away those parts of our character that need softening. So if we so choose, little by little those quirks, tendencies or ingrained habits can be daily bathed in the Water of Life and quietly we will change. That which blocks our spiritual growth is hollowed out and worn away by the Holy Spirit. That which we would fight to hold onto if it were quickly taken from us, we release willingly day by day. And so the landscape of us is transformed into an inner place of stillness and peace.

Will we allow this to happen? Will we daily choose this gentle transformation in the midst of our frantic schedules? The test of time will reveal our choices, the inner workings of our hearts. Ultimately, may we stand like karst pillars in the grace and surety of God's transforming power.

- Teresa Costello, Editor

Greetings to you from the beautiful land of Vietnam!

As the psalmist has said, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2); and so we here in the Vietnam Adventist Mission (VAM) have many reasons to say thanks to our God.

Summer has just ended here in VAM and we are told that more than 5,000 children joined our VBS programs this year. For decades, our tribal members have worshiped in temporary places, dreaming that one day they would have a separate place to call their church. Since 2013 God has helped us to build four large churches for them. And right now, the R'Chai church with an 800-seat capacity is being built. These are just a few of the reasons why we are joining with the psalmist in praising God.

Having been in the Christian walk for many years, I believe not only in personal prayers but also in united prayers. We would like to invite you to join us to seek the Lord in prayer with these

two specific requests:

1. A Bible seminary: VAM is in great need of a training center where we can train our Bible workers and send them to the great fields across the country. At the moment, we are working to get the permit to open a seminary in Ho Chi Minh.

2. A center of influence [COI] in Hanoi: Although Hanoi is the capital of the country, it was not until 2009, with the support of Global Mission, that we were able to send our pioneers to start the work there. We are praying that Hanoi will soon have a COI. Through it, we can expand the work in greater ways.

Signs are happening everywhere. We don't have much time left! So, while we still have the opportunity, let us give our best to reach out to the lost souls. And may God find each and every one of us faithful on that great day!

In Christ's love,

Tran Thanh Truyen,  
Acting President  
Vietnam Mission of SDA

1. Mary O'Brien, "Vietnam's Beauty Trap," *Traveller*, August 18, 2012, <http://www.traveller.com.au/vietnams-beauty-trap-24apd>, paragraph 3.
2. Wikipedia, "Ha Long Bay," [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%E1%BA%A1\\_Long\\_Bay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%E1%BA%A1_Long_Bay), paragraph 6.
3. National Geographic Society, "Karst," <http://education.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/karst/>, paragraph 1.
4. Encyclopædia Britannica, "Karst," <https://www.britannica.com/science/karst-geology>.
5. Hung Le, "Number of registered bikes exceeds 2020 vision," *The Saigon Times*, February 6, 2015, <http://english.thesaigontimes.vn/39463/Number-of-registered-bikes-exceeds-2020-vision.html>.

## Feature

# HISTORY

Originally organized in 1929, the ensuing years with Communism, struggles for independence, and war brought many challenges to our faithful church members in Vietnam. In 1975 more than 80% of Adventist church buildings were closed. Thankfully, ADRA has always had a strong presence. The church's evangelistic work, though limited at the time, focused on nurturing church members. Also, there were many Sabbath-keeping Adventists whose names were not on church records but continued to absorb the messages received through the Adventist World Radio (AWR).

However, new developments have brought renewed hope in recent years. In 2009, the government officially recognized the Adventist church after 33 years of prayer and repeated applications for recognition. This has opened up new opportunities for publishing, community involvement, literature distribution and church expansion.

Health and children programs are attracting attention for their positive contributions to society. The One-Year-in-Mission (OYIM) youth program is vibrant and growing with many community projects. Its young leaders reach out to other youth of all faith and backgrounds by inviting them to join in compassion activities and fellowship. These programs are enhanced by the work of many dedicated members who share their positive attitudes and lifestyles in a myriad of ways in their communities.

Currently, there are 15 Adventist churches with over 11,000 members in Vietnam.

[SSD Archives/ Communication Department]



Map: SSD

# TREASURE

Inspiration from the SS

## GOOD SUCCESS IN S

by John Bernet, Publishing Secretary, Southeast

The Gulf of Tonkin bombings had barely passed, when we went to Vietnam to attend their annual colporteur meetings. When the Pan Am 707 landed at Saigon airport and we stepped out, our Vietnamese believers said they were surprised that we dared come. Jet fighters screamed overhead; tanks and armored cars rumbled through the streets. Everywhere we could see school children and others digging bomb shelters as they expected open war any time.

God's work is going forward with strength in Vietnam in spite of all this. Two wonderful literature evangelist conventions were held during August 9-19. The opening meeting was conducted in the Saigon SDA church. As Pastor John T. Mason, assistant publishing secretary of the Far Eastern Division, gave the opening address, several bombs and big guns went off just outside the city gates that shook the church to its very foundations. We folks from Singapore cringed and wondered when one might hit the church, but we were surprised to see that the colporteurs were undis-

# ES THROUGH TIME

D Archives

## PITE OF HARDSHIPS

Asia Union

*Editor's Note: This article from our archives not only gives some historical context but exemplifies the steadfast faith of our pioneers.*

turbed. They have grown accustomed to such things.

The second meeting was held at Danang for the colporteurs of Central Vietnam. Altogether nearly one hundred colporteurs were in attendance at both meetings. Publishing secretary, Do Binh, and his three assistants, Le Von Huong, Pham Cuu, and Tran Ngoc Dai, had the meetings well organized. There is much trouble in this country, but the faces of the literature ministers radiate peace and happiness.

Many inspiring stories were told by the heroic colporteurs. Following are a few of them.

Brother Pham So, a literature evangelist for eleven years, was thrown in jail for six months for carrying the gospel.



"A group of lady literature evangelists who are working in South Vietnam. These courageous ladies are carrying our books and magazines into all areas of the mission." Caption and photo: SSD Archives (FED Outlook, October 1964).

Vo Dai Dnh worked for four years, and won five souls. Then he was kidnapped last November. After being held for 53 days he was released, and is carrying on his literature ministry with greater enthusiasm than ever.

One literature evangelist was travelling in a bus toward a small town. The bus ran over a mound of dirt on the road. A few seconds after the bus passed over the mound of dirt, there was an explosion. However, the bus was not harmed in any way. It seems a miracle the land mine did not explode until the bus had gotten clear of it.

Another worker was travelling in a bus, which was

overtaken and passed by another bus. After the passing bus had gone down the road a short distance, it was blown to pieces by a land mine. Had this bus not passed the one in which the colporteur was travelling, he along with others travelling in the bus would have been the ones killed by this land mine.

Land mines, hand grenades, bullets, and ambush cannot dampen the spirits of the 98 Vietnamese literature evangelists, and four publishing secretaries.

*Reprinted from Far Eastern Division Outlook, October 1964, pp. 6-7.*

## News

# SSD PRESIDENT CALLS FOR REVIVAL AMONG CHURCH MEMBERS



During executive meetings in early January, Alberto Gulfan Jr, president of the Adventist church's southern Asia-pacific region (SSD), reemphasized personal revival for every church member and a more widespread implementation of SSD's unique program, the Integrated Evangelism Lifestyle (IEL), by church leaders. Gulfan strongly believes that each department of the church has to work together to reach souls.

IEL takes a family approach to evangelism and progresses in three phases over the course of a year. While a traditional family was the original focus, any Adventist member can invite other Adventists in their social circle to join together to make a family group. Young professionals, single parents and their children, couples

caring for aging parents, singles, and others can create a family group based on similar or diverse backgrounds.

First, an Adventist family or family group focuses on personal revival. As a result, they choose a family or family group in their area to befriend and begin praying for them as they become more acquainted.

As friendships grow, the Adventist family or family group shares practical information through weekly gatherings with the chosen family or family group. Together, they find simple ways to meet needs in their community. Periodically, the Adventist family or family group invites the chosen family or family group to church-sponsored events. These events complement the practical information already

shared by the Adventist family or family group.

In the final phase, Bible studies are offered for those interested. The family or family group is invited to an evangelistic series held at the church at the end of the four-month period. However, the emphasis is not on baptism but relationship-building.

Throughout the year, the Adventist family or family group remains in caring contact with the chosen family or family group. This family connection ideally leads to a family connection with the Adventist church. Sharing truth and a life in Jesus becomes a collaborative work of the church family with membership nurturing and retention as natural byproducts.

[SSD AND/Communication]

## LAOS ADVENTIST YOUTH HOSTEL COSTRUCTED



As a very young mission field, Laos Attached Field (LAF) is concentrating on building two foundations: infrastructure and human resources. We need more buildings/structures and more Adventists trained for the workforce.

As of now, many of our members and young people are from rural

areas. In order to get a good education, they need to come to Vientiane but there is no place for them to stay. Currently, 12 young people at the most can stay at the back of the Vientiane Church building. We cannot accept more than that. There is simply not enough room for more. Yet, more still want to come.

Thus, we began the new year with plans to construct a two-story youth hostel capable of accommodating up to 40 young people. We were able to begin the construction thanks to the generous contributions of the members of

the Darwin Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia.

This new youth hostel will provide much-needed accommodation for our youth to come to study in Vientiane. It is being built just a block away from major educational institutions such as a teachers' college, agricultural college, and business college. Looking to the future, we may see these 40 people become church pastors, teachers, nurses, accountants, and gospel workers. Just imagine what this youth hostel can do to the work of God in Laos. - LAF



## LAOS ADVENTISTS HOST FRIENDSHIP DAYS

Laos Attached Field (LAF) leaders and church members organized a two-day community health assessment and a friendship sports activity at the Hua Kua Seventh-day Adventist Church on January 17-18.

On Sabbath morning, scores of locals came quite early waiting to listen to the health lecture given by Pastor Singkham Phouliphan, LAF health director. Meanwhile, the children enjoyed a lively program with stories and activities just for them.

On the next day, free health assessments and a youth sports event were offered. The older people received health assessments and learned to live a healthier life. At the same time, the Adventist youth had their chance of reaching out to their peers.

Here in Laos, it is easy to make friends—you eat with them or play with them. And Lao people value friendship very much.

When you are friends, you can talk about religious beliefs. Before friendship is established, it is not advisable to discuss religion. The youth program centered on friendly sports games and the youth seemed to especially enjoy the energetic football (soccer) games.

Hua Kua-Na Ngern Village is just 60 km from the capital city of Vientiane. The village sits on a bypass road that joins the southern and northern highways and is one of the fastest growing suburbs of Vientiane. The government is currently making a six lane road heading towards this suburb.

Several years ago, when the land was still cheap, LAF acquired a 5.8 hectares property here. It started the Adventist work in the area and eventually a group of believers was raised.

Members here worshiped in homes until 2012 when a church, pastoral house, water tower and toilet facility were



Photo: LAF

completed with the help of the Darwin Seventh-day Adventist Church in Northern Territory, Australia. We are thankful for the involvement and support of our friends in Darwin.

It is hoped that this place can become a center of influence and eventually open a school to enrich the lives of the children in the area. Until that day, LAF leaders and members will continue to develop events like this one that reach out to all people – the old, the youth, and the very young.

[LAF]

## MYANMAR CITY EVANGELISM REAPS ENCOURAGING RESULTS



Elder Tjak, Pastor Johnny Lubis, and translator Michael Paul conducted presentations in three languages. Photo: Morris Chit

A ten-day evangelism series was held in Hpa-an, a capital city in the Kayin state of Myanmar, from April 1-11, 2015. The South East Mission in Myanmar Union Mission (MYUM) organized the series which included national and international speakers.

Johnny Lubis, Southern Asia-Pacific Division vice president, Pastor Min Lwin, MYUM secretary, Dr. Conally Hla, Myanmar University Adventist Seminary president, and Elder Tjak, an Indonesian lay preacher, and his wife were among the

## News

Continued from page 9

participants. Dr. Conally Hla was the main speaker for the first half of the meeting and Elder Tjak presented for the second half.

Around 150 people attended the nightly meetings. This type of city evangelism is one of the many big ministerial activities planned by the South East Mission this year. Hpa-an church members and elders participated actively in the evangelistic effort and worked together to overcome the challenges,

one of which was language translation. The international presentations involved three languages and two translators. Pastor Lubis translated from Indonesian to English and Dr. Conally Hla and Saya Michael Paul translated from English to Burmese.

Church members and visitors were impressed by the daily inspired messages shared during the meetings. At the end of the series, 59 people accepted Jesus as their personal Savior and

were baptized. "I am very satisfied and spiritually [fed] by the nightly meetings. The sermons touched our hearts," said one of the active church members. "The Lord [was] with us as we tried and serve our best during the effort days. It was a great and wonderful work of God and the Holy Spirit," said Pastor Nay Win, the Hpa-an church pastor.

Morris Chit, South East Mission, MYUM

## Bangladesh Adventists host *World No Tobacco Day* rally

The Bangladesh Adventist Union Mission (BAUM) Health Department headed by Mahuya Roy organized an awareness parade on May 31 to observe the World No Tobacco Day. Approximately sixty people including BAUM officers, directors, and other employees as well as some Dhaka SDA Church members participated in the event which started at the BAUM Campus at around 9:00 a.m.

It was hot and sunny but people joined the three-kilometer parade in spite of the scorching heat. As they



Photo: BAUM

walked, participants held banners and wore caps with messages such as, "Quit smoking," "Say NO to Tobacco," etc. Some participants distributed anti-tobacco leaflets to the onlookers, especially to those who were smoking to make them aware that smoking is bad for

their health. The bystanders' positive response encouraged the participants to distribute all their literature and even give away the caps that they were wearing so the bystanders could also share the message for increased awareness.

[Benjamin Raksham]

# Remembering Pastor Tran Cong Tan, Vietnam Adventist Mission president

Pastor Tran Cong Tan, president of the Vietnam Adventist Mission, passed away at his home after a long battle with cancer on June 22, 2015. He served the church in Vietnam for approximately 40 years as a pastor and mission administrator.

Born into a large family, Pastor Tran was the fifth of six children. After his father's early passing, his mother worked very hard to feed her children and provide for their education. Her faith in God as Savior of her life enabled her to persevere and her example inspired Pastor Tran to also believe in God. The family attended the local Seventh-day Adventist church together until he began attending the Vietnam Adventist Training Center (Seventh-day Adventist seminary) in 1966. He graduated in 1969.

While studying Theology, he met Ms. Tran Thi De, an Adventist nursing student. She became a nurse in the nearby Adventist hospital and in 1971, she became his wife.

He was a local church pastor for 10 years beginning in 1970. He served as the VAM Executive Secretary for 23 years from 1984 to 2007. In 2008 he was elected president of VAM, a position



Photo: Vietnam Adventist Mission

he held until his passing. In addition, while holding administrative positions at VAM for 30 years, he concurrently served as a church pastor for the Phu Nhuan Seventh-day Adventist Church.

To VAM, he was a great leader whose dream was to expand God's work through 63 provinces and cities all over Vietnam. He was able to see 2/3 of that dream come true.

To our churches, he was a respected and thoughtful pastor who sermons inspired and encouraged the people. His visits to church members and their friends will long be remembered.

To his friends, he was an honest and respectful neighbor.

To his family, he was a beloved husband and father, a man rich in a tremendous faith in the Savior Jesus Christ.

Pastor Tran Cong Tan is among those described in 2 Timothy 4:7 who have "have fought the good fight,...have finished the race,...have kept the faith" and now rest in God, wait for the Coming of Jesus Christ to meet Him in the eternal kingdom where no sorrow, worry, sickness or death exists.

[Vietnam Adventist Mission]

## Treasure Chest

# Enough LOVE to give away

One day, Mom read an interesting post on Facebook. It was news about the Christmas project of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Ho Chi Minh. The post was, "Please donate your used clothes and toys. We will give them to the ethnic children in Lam Dong and Dak Lak province this coming Christmas." Mom thought, "Hmmm.. this is a very nice idea, to give to those who don't have much at all. I'll tell Tran."

Mom called her daughter Tran to come to her. Tran was a kind-hearted girl who liked to help. She ran to Mom and asked with a smile, "Do you need something, Mom?"

"Tran, do you see this?" Mom said as she pointed to the screen. "See these photos of these children. They need our help to have even just one present at Christmas."

Tran's eyes got big and she asked, "They might not have ANY presents at Christmas?"

Mom shook her head and said, "Not if people don't help by sharing with them. What do you think? Do we have some things we can share?"

Tran thought for a little while and then said, "Yes, we do. I will give some of my toys to them."

She went to the place where she kept her toys and took them all out. She decided she would make "Keep" and "Give" piles. Then she picked up a toy and looked carefully at it. She remembered who had given it to her and the fun she had playing with it. It made her feel very loved to have such a nice gift. So she put it in the "Keep" pile.

She picked up another toy and again, the longer she looked at it, the more she remembered the one who had given it, the fun she had with it and how much she was loved. She put this toy in the "Keep" pile, too. No matter which toy she looked at, the same thing happened so it took her a long time to go through her toys.

She frowned as she looked at the big "Keep" pile and the empty "Give" pile. She sighed and then quickly put all the toys away.

Just then Mom came into the room and asked, "Where are the things you are going to give to the children?"

Tran took out her most favorite doll. She patted her doll with the long, pretty hair and gave it a hug. Finally, she said quietly, "I looked and looked but I don't want to give up any of my toys. They remind me of how much people love me."

"I can understand that but..." Mom said slowly. "When you heard about the children, you seemed eager to help them, remember?"

Tran nodded. She remembered that she had felt very sorry for them. They were the same age as she was, but they didn't have a good life that she did. They had to live in a big fam-



Photo: Adobe Stock

ily with six or seven brothers and sisters. The older brothers and sisters didn't go to school because they helped the parents and worked in the fields to earn a living. The younger ones didn't even have a place to play like a park.

She felt like she was in the tug-of-war game she and her cousins played sometimes. She wanted to help but she wanted to keep the toys that meant love and fun to her. She wondered how she could explain this to Mom. She couldn't think

of what to say so she didn't say anything.

Mom turned to Tran with an encouraging smile and said, "I will go through our clothes and find some for them. We can all help in some way." Before she left the room, she looked kindly at Tran and said, "Please go through your things again. I will be back in a few minutes to see what you have to share."

When Mom came back, she was carrying a big pile of clothes and Tran was sitting on the

bed wearing a frown. "Let's see what you have found to give the children," she said with a smile. Tran pointed to the pile on her bed. Her mother picked up a book with torn pages and then a puzzle with three pieces missing. She wasn't smiling anymore. She put them down and picked up a game with a broken part.

"Look at me, please," Mom softly said as she sat down next to Tran on the bed. Slowly, Tran raised her head and looked at her mom.

# Treasure Chest

Continued from page 13

"If you had no toys, would you like to get these things from someone?" asked Mom.

"No, I wouldn't," mumbled Tran as she looked down at the floor.

Mom picked up one of the broken toys and asked, "If you were given this, would you feel very loved?"

Suddenly Tran was ashamed of the raggedy, messy-looking objects. She had thought she couldn't part with anything better.

"You said your nice toys remind you of how loved you are. Don't you think that one of your nice toys might make another child feel loved, too?" Mom asked as she put her arm around Tran. Tran kept her head down but thought and thought.

"There is a story you know about someone who gave up His best to help others know they were loved. It's one of my favorite stories even though it makes me cry sometimes," whispered Mom as she hugged Tran close to her. Tran tried to

remember that story but just as she was going to ask her mother, she had an idea.

"It's about Jesus," Tran softly said. "About how he chose to give up His nice home and life in Heaven and live here on earth to love us, right?" whispered Tran with a funny feeling in her heart. "And gave us the gift of salvation even though it cost him everything," added Mom. The funny feeling grew and grew until Tran felt like she couldn't breathe.

"That is a lot of love to share, isn't it?" commented Mom. Tran felt like crying just a bit and her chest hurt with that funny feeling. Now it seemed like the things she wanted to keep weren't so important after all.

"That is a lot of love," answered Tran. She frowned and thought out loud, "I guess when you have a lot of love, you always have enough to give away." She rubbed the place over her heart that was hurting.

She thought some more and remembered more of the Bible stories about Jesus that she so loved. He always seemed to be giving, and happy to be giving it seemed – whether it was his time, or food, or friendship.

She sighed and quietly said, "I think I need to go through my piles again."

"I'll help you," encouraged

Tran's mother as she patted Tran's back. And the funny feeling in Tran's heart began to fade. She didn't feel like crying anymore. Instead, she wanted to hurry and find some nice things to share.

Together, they went through Tran's toys, books and games. They talked and laughed. Soon they had made two piles, one of torn and broken things to throw away and one of things in good condition for the children.

As they were packing everything into a box, Tran thought for a few minutes and she hugged her mom tightly. "I am so sorry that I did that. I forgot that when God gives us His love, there is more than enough for everyone, even for children I don't know."

With shiny eyes, Mom hugged her back and said, "Yes, and as loved as you are, I'd say you'll never, ever run out of giving."

Tran wiggled out of her mother's arms and ran back to her toy chest for her beautiful doll. Smoothing its long hair and giving it one last hug, Tran patted the doll's heart and put it on top of the box for the children.

With a smile, she imagined the happy face of the girl who would receive her doll. Together, she and Mom prayed that the girl would also know the love of God that came with it.

(Based on a story by Virginia Brosseit; adapted by Tran Quoc Khoi/AND)



Photo: Adobe Stock

## Youth Link

# Commitment and Compassion in Ho Chi Minh City

Rich in history, Vietnam's charming city of Ho Chi Minh was once a fishing village that eventually turned into a French colonial hub. You can still see the French influence in the architecture and food, but nostalgia is being crowded out by today's popular culture. The everyday swarms of motorcycles, Western advertising, and fusion beats pulsing from smart phones are creating a new world for the younger generation. In the middle of this modernized blare is a group of Adventist youth who believe that compassion is never outdated.

## A youth's commitment

Keiko learned about Jesus through her mother who heard it from friends. After facing a difficult time in their family, Keiko accepted the call to serve as a missionary under the One-Year-in-Mission (OYIM) program. Initiated by the Adventist church, the program offers young people an organized way to share Christ's compassion in an urbanized setting. The training helps them understand the city environment and most importantly, the city dwellers. Keiko, along with two other youth, is assigned to coordinate OYIM activities in the countries of Southeast Asia such as Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia and Vietnam for the Adventist church. After joining short-term OYIM programs in



Photo: Compassion in Vietnam Club

Kuala Lumpur and Sabah, Keiko is back in her country carrying the same message of compassion.

## A Unique Missionary experience

Like Keiko, many of our Adventist youth in Vietnam study in government high schools and universities and are thus exposed to secular culture. "I was the only Adventist student in my school and I remember going home crying because they would intentionally make me feel different," relates Keiko.

Experiences like that motivate her to reach out to those who feel different or left out such as the industry workers who make up a large portion of the city population. Most of these laborers are usually far from their immediate families. "Life is difficult for them which is why we opened the doors of our church for these people to have a place where they feel welcomed," Keiko asserts. With support from Adventist church leaders, church members and Adventist peers, Keiko organized a youth compassion campaign that



Photos (Left to right): Club members regularly prepare meals-to-go to distribute in the community. Photo: Truc Truong; Members visit hospital patients and share encouragement and gifts. Photo: ThaoVyLY; Club coordinator/OYIM-Vietnam leader Keiko Le shares a Bible message with her trademark enthusiasm and joy. Photo: Compassion in Vietnam Club.

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has grown beyond its humble beginnings.

Today the Compassion in Vietnam Club, as it's known in Vietnam, hosts community projects such as one-day health clinics, free haircuts, no-charge motorcycle washes, programs for orphanages and disadvantaged children as well as youth-oriented social events like free guitar lessons. Through innovative ad campaigns, social media and word

of mouth, greater numbers of non-Adventist youth want to get involved in the Compassion in Vietnam Club.

It all started with the dream of creating a welcoming place and opportunities to be included. With willing hearts, these young people in Vietnam are spreading compassion throughout their city and contributing to a new chapter of their history.

Vietnam has a population of over 90 million people. Keiko's

church is one of the 15 Adventist churches in Vietnam and her 10 Adventist youth friends in Ho Chi Minh are among Vietnam Adventist church's over 11,000 members.

*[Gay Deles]*



Photos (Left to right): Keiko Le accepts a local governmental award for the club's community involvement. Photo: Compassion in Vietnam Club; A youth care group of mostly non-Adventists meets weekly for fellowship and discussion as part of the club. Photo: Hong Dieu; Club members gather to work on special community projects such as providing bags of supplies for underprivileged children. Photo: Compassion in Vietnam Club.





## Recipes

# A TASTE OF VIETNAM

Recipes courtesy of the April 2014 Southeast Asia Union Mission VegeCapable group

### *Thit Kho Tieu (vegetarian)*

#### **Ingredients:**

250 gms turnip – cut into 2-inch strip  
 250 gms carrots – cut into 2-inch strip  
 250 gms chayote – cut into 2-inch strip  
 250 gms French beans – cut into 2-inch strip  
 325 gms cabbage – cut into bite size  
 500 gms tofu – cut into cubes  
 150 gms vegetarian ham – cut into cubes\*  
 125 gms fresh mushrooms  
 20 gms garlic – minced  
 10 gms bird eye chili – chopped  
 ½ Tbsp sugar  
 1 Tbsp soy sauce  
 Mushroom seasoning to taste  
 Black pepper to taste  
 Spring onions – for garnishing  
 ½ cup water



Photo: SSD

#### **Procedure:**

Boil a pot of water and add a little salt. When the water boils, add the turnip, carrots, and chayote. Boil for 5 minutes. Then add French beans and boil another 3 minutes. Then remove vegetables from the boiling water. Run vegetables under tap water to cool. Add cabbage to the boiling water and boil for 1 minute. Drain and run cabbage under tap water to cool it. Arrange on a platter.

Melt sugar in a pan and then add 2 Tbsp. water. Bring to a boil and set aside. Brown the vegetarian ham and tofu cubes and set aside. Fry garlic until fragrant. Add vegetarian ham, tofu, soya sauce to taste, and ½ cup of water. Stir fry together for 1 minute and add mushroom seasoning, sugar water, and fresh mushrooms. Cook for 3 minutes. Add chopped chili. Mix together and place on serving plate. Sprinkle with black pepper and garnish with spring onions.

\*Tofu amount can be doubled if this ingredient is not locally available or desired.

Editor's note: Vegetables of your choice can be substituted as shown in the above photo.

# Recipes

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## *Sweet and Sour Vegetables (Vietnamese)*

### *\*Sauce Ingredients:*

- 1 Tbsp oil
- 10 gms chopped or minced garlic
- 160 gms tomato – chopped
- ¼ cup water
- 170 gms tomato paste plus ¼ cup water to mix well
- Mushroom seasoning to taste
- 1 Tbsp cornstarch with ¼ water – mix well

### *Main Ingredients:*

- 1 Tbsp oil
- 15 gms garlic – chopped
- 190 gms button mushrooms – cut into quarters
- 265 gms red capsicum – cut to bite size
- 265 gms green capsicum – cut to bite size

### *To make the sauce:*

*Heat pan with oil and sauté garlic until fragrant. Add the chopped tomatoes and water. Bring to boil for 1 minute. Add the tomato paste and the mushroom seasoning. Boil for 1 minute. Add cornstarch to thicken. Set aside.*

- 420 gms fresh corn – remove from cob and boil for about 5 minutes
- ¼ cup vegetable stock
- 80 gms fresh mushroom
- 100 gm golden mushrooms
- Soya sauce and sugar to taste
- Parsley to garnish

### *Procedure:*

Heat 1 Tbsp oil and add garlic. Sauté until fragrant. Then add button mushrooms and fry for 2 minutes. Add red and green capsicum, boiled corn and vegetable stock. Cook for 2 minutes. Add the fresh and golden mushrooms, soy sauce, and sugar. Cook for another 2 minutes.

Transfer to serving plate and garnish with parsley.

\*NOTE: Sauce can be added before serving or it can be served on the side so everyone can add the amount they wish.



# Two Golden Days

*We are blessed to have almost 100 years of wonderful stories, poems, and devotionals from our Outlook archives dating back to the early years of the 20th century. For this issue, we offer a devotional reprinted from the August 1931 issue of the Far Eastern Division Outlook magazine as it was known then. Note: The grammar and style are representative of that era.*

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There are two golden days in the week upon which and about which I never worry – two care-free days, kept sacredly free from fear and apprehension. One of these days is Yesterday. Yesterday, with its cares and frets; and all its pains and aches; all its faults, its mistakes and blunders, has passed forever beyond my recall. I cannot undo an act that I wrought, I cannot unsay a word that I said. All that it holds of my life, of wrong, regret and sorrow, is in the hands of the Mighty love that can bring honey out of the rock, and sweetest waters out of the bitterest desert. Save for the beautiful memories, sweet and tender, that linger like the perfume of roses in the heart of the day that is gone, I have nothing to do with Yesterday. It was mine – it is God's!

And the other day I do not worry about is Tomorrow. Tomorrow with all its possible adversities, its burdens, its perils, its large promises and poor performance. It is a day of God's. Its sun will rise in roseate splendor, or beyond a mask of weeping clouds – but it will rise. Until then, the same love and patience that held Yesterday, holds



Tomorrow. Save for the Star of Hope that gleams forever on the brow of Tomorrow, shining with tender promise into the heart of Today, I have no possession in that unborn day of grace. All else is in the safe keeping of the Infinite Love that is higher than the stars, wider than the skies, deeper than the seas. Tomorrow is God's day. It will be mine.

There is left for myself, then, but One Day in the week – Today! Any man can fight the battles of Today. Any woman can carry the burden of just One Day. Any man can resist the temptations of Today. O friends,

it is only when we willingly add the burden of those two awful eternities – Yesterday and Tomorrow – such burdens as only the Mighty God can sustain - that we break down. It isn't the experience of Today that drives men mad. It is the remorse for something that happened Yesterday, and dread of what Tomorrow may disclose.

These are God's Days. Leave them with Him!

- Bennie Walker

# Attending the 2015 General Conference Session?



Visit the SSD booth #B215  
at the exhibit hall!

