

TO: ARNI SHARESKI

FROM: J.S.SAWIN

TOPIC: A Summary of Vietnamese Language Bible Translation

DATE: April 5, 1982

1. The Vietnamese language had already been reduced to Romanized script (Quoc Ngu) by the time our missionaries arrived in Vietnam, - 1911.

2. A literacy program has not been necessary for the Vietnamese people. The Vietnamese language is quite phonemic and most Vietnamese learn to read. The orthography of present Vietnamese writing is known as "Quoc Ngu."

3. When our missionaries first arrived in Da-nang - (Paul Hosler, August, 1911; Frank Soderberg, January 1912; Elizabeth Carothers-Hosler, October 1912; Grace Hazenberg Cadman, October 1913;) - the agent of the British Foreign Bible Society, Mr. Bonnet, was selling Bibles plus Gospel and Scripture portions in Chinese (Wenli). At the time Vietnamese scholars used for writing a form of Chinese character known as "Chu Nom." Paul Hosler, previously a missionary in South China, began to translate the Gospel of Mark into "Chu Nom" and published it. He was learning the "Quoc Ngu," but already knew Chinese. World War I interrupted his efforts and his German name caused him to leave the field and eventually resign, - 1916. Grace Hazenberg (Cadman) also began to translate Scripture portions, but in "Quoc Ngu" orthography.

In 1918 John D. Olsen arrived in Vietnam and was stationed in Saigon. In 1920 he also began some translation work. The Cadmans lived in Hanoi. She majored in translation work and he operated the mission printing press. Grace Hazenberg Cadman held an M.A. degree in classical languages. John Olsen was born in Norway, learned English in New York and before coming to Vietnam studied Chinese a couple of years in Wuchow, S. China. He became an expert in the Vietnamese language and even dreamed audibly in Vietnamese.

#### 4. Procedures and Persons Involved

Mrs. Grace Cadman and John Olsen were the principal missionary translators. At some point, 1920 or 1921, two Vietnamese, highly respected literary scholars joined them. They were Mr. Pham Khoi and Mr. Tran van Dong, neither of whom were Christian. The British Foreign Bible Society underwrote the cost of the project. Mr. Cadman and his staff of workers did the printing of the Bible in Hanoi.

In the translating process John Olsen used as a guide and

basis for his work the French Synodal Version and the Roman Catholic diglot version (French and Vietnamese.) The Cadmans used the Catholic Version and the Louis Segond French Version. In their final revision they sought to conform the Vietnamese translation to the American Standard Version.

As various books of the Bible were translated copies were sent to several missionaries for their evaluation and comments. The Cadmans and John Olsen also exchanged manuscripts as they were completed.

5. The following is the result of their individual and combined translation efforts into "Quoc Ngu" orthography, the current official Vietnamese writing.

The Gospel of Mark was finished in December 1916 and published in May, 1917.

The Gospel of John, published in November 1918.

Luke, Romans and Genesis were ready for publication at the same time.

(The above work was obviously that of Grace Cadman and presumably was corrected and improved prior to inclusion in the N.T. and O.T.)

There was continual pressure at the annual Field Conferences to hurry the Bible translation work and missionaries were encouraged to do some translation work with their teachers while studying the Vietnamese language. Many converts and the desire to train a national clergy required a Bible as quickly as possible.

Field Conference and Executive Committee Minutes indicate the progress as follows:

(It should be understood that the two Vietnamese translators mentioned in No. 4 above were working with the missionaries named below.)

In 1921 John Olsen was translating the Pentateuch, Joshua and Psalms.  
The Cadmans were continuing work in the N.T. books.

In 1922 John Olsen completed the above O.T. books and Exodus was to be printed.

In 1923 John Olsen finished the O.T. through II Kings plus Job through Ecclesiastes.

The Cadmans: The N.T. was published in mid-summer. Also they finished the first draft of the major prophets and were working on the minor prophets.

In 1924 John Olsen was working on the revision of the O.T. while on furlough.

D.I. Jeffrey and E.F. Irwin presented copies of the N.T. to the King of Vietnam and the French Resident Superior in Hue.

In 1925 May, the translation work on the whole Bible was completed and the type-setting had begun.

In 1926 prior to the May Field Conference, the Bible was published and dedicated during the Conference. A first copy was inscribed and hand carried by the Cadmans to the N.Y. Board of the C. & M. A. A copy of the inscription is appended to this summary. This copy of the Bible is now a part of the A. B. Simpson Historical Library at Nyack Alliance Headquarters.

## 6. An Evaluation

Probably the translation and publication of the Vietnamese Bible ranks number one for the least time expended. Counting Mrs. Cadman's initial work, ten years would be the maximum time spent. The work of John Olsen and the two Vietnamese translators didn't begin until at least 1920. This would cut the time down to about seven years. Not only in speed, but in quality this Bible ranks high. There are those who consider it akin to Luther's German translation of the Bible both in quality and influence. It also is a 'first' in the Alliance in that the Mission did both the translation and the printing. Thousands of copies were printed in Hanoi prior to World War II. After the war more copies were printed in Hong Kong. More recently, 1981, another edition was printed in East Germany and shipped to Haiphong. Individual gospels and Scripture portions have been printed by the hundred of thousands.

In the late 1940s and early 50s a revision of the N.T. was undertaken by John Olsen and some of the teaching staff at the Bible School at Da Nang. It was published at Saigon by the British Foreign Bible Society in 1954. There may be improved accuracy of translation, but it has not been warmly or widely accepted as the original publication of 1926. The original translation remains as the classic Bible, loved and revered by the Vietnamese people.

NOTE:

Appended are three pages, 381, 382 and 392 from the History of Alliance Missions in Vietnam by J.S.Sawin.

## THE CREATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

"The Lord gave the Word; great was the company of those that published it".  
(Psm. 68:11)

The first step toward the creation of Christian literature is a revelation from God of the tremendous significance of the Word He has given. When this comes to the soul it is like a burning fire shut up in our bones. There will be a continual burden and sense of urgency upon us until that Word has been delivered, not only to those within the sound of our voice, but to the greatest number of people in the shortest possible time. This can only be accomplished through the printed page.

The great company of those who are publishing the Word today includes not only those actively engaged in preaching and teaching, or those who are occupied with the preparing, printing and distribution of gospel literature, but also the great host of God's hidden ones who are giving of their means that this vital ministry of publishing the Word may continue to increase and abound.

## I. Publishing the Word in Vietnam

Foremost on the list of illustrious heroes of the Faith who have given their lives to publishing the Word in Southeast Asia is the name of R. A. Jaffray. His commentaries on several of the Old and New Testament books and his book on the "Second Coming of Christ" were among the very first of our Vietnamese Christian Publications. Together with Dr. Jaffray are the names of four of our Vietnam missionaries: Rev. and Mrs. Cadman, Rev. John D. Olsen and Mrs. Homer-Dixon. Besides translating the Bible into Vietnamese, Mr. Olsen and Mr. and Mrs. Cadman also gave unstintedly of their time and strength to other literary work. The Cadmans opened the Hanoi Gospel Press in 1918 and continued the oversight of this work until they were interned by the Japanese in 1943. Their editorial work in connection with the Bible Magazine from 1931-43 was a most valuable contribution to the growth of the Church. Mrs. Homer-Dixon, a gifted Bible teacher, compiled and printed at her own expense a number of very helpful books which have long been out of print. Many have been asking for the reprint of her books. We praise God that Mr. Olsen's Bible Study material, compiled over years of teaching the Word, has now been published in permanent form.

Working hand in hand with the missionaries have been capable translators and writers. Pastor Quoc, our first Christian translator, joined the staff of the Hanoi Press in 1922. He has been a faithful contributor to the Bible Magazine through the years, and is currently a member of the editorial staff. Mr. Do-duc-Tri, after two years study in the Tourane Bible Institute, started working with the Hanoi Press in 1929 at the age of 18. Most of the manuscripts which have been published were translated by Mr. Tri, who continues to give valuable service on a part-time basis. Pastor Ong-van-Huyen, Dean of the Tourane Bible Institute, has been editor of the Bible Magazine since 1950. Rev. Pham-xuan-Tin, editor of the Tribes Missionary Magazine, has managed to produce a tremendous amount of literary <sup>work</sup> along with his missionary ministries to the Tribes. Mr. Nguyen-van-Van is editor of Hung-Dong, a popular-type Christian periodical for both Christians and non-Christians.

## II. Influence of Publishing Work on the Growth of the Church

The purpose of Christian Publications is not to take the place of the Bible, but rather to create a hunger in the heart of the reader for a deeper study of the Book of books. Biographies and challenging articles in Christian periodicals are a stimulus to faith, a goad to consecration and an incentive to press on in the way of the Cross. Commentaries and other books may furnish the key which unlocks the hidden treasure in the Word of God. One day in 1950, I recall hearing Mr. Olsen express amazement over meeting a group of Christians in one of our country churches who were so well-taught in the Word. I was particularly interested to note that that was the church where both the pastor and the people had been the most enthusiastic and cooperative in purchasing and studying Dr. Simpson's books and the other mimeographed material which we had been sending out to the churches since 1947.

A few months ago, Pastor De of the Nhatrang Church, came across the little booklet "From Darkness to Light" (the story of John Tauler's conversion). It was such a blessing to him that he shared parts of it with his congregation the following Sunday morning, and then at the close of the service he handed a copy of the booklet to each one present. Just recently, after reading Mrs. Nuzum's book on the "Life of Faith", Mr. De told his people of the blessing the book had been to him and urged them to get a copy for themselves that they might read and ponder its deeply spiritual and challenging message. Fifteen responded and sent in their orders.

Pastor To of the Quanggai church writes: "In the early years of the Work we had the Bible Magazine and Mrs. Homer-Dixon's books which were a source of rich blessing to us. Then during the war there was an interval when all publications were suspended. What a joy it was in 1947 to receive mimeographed copies of Dr. Simpson's books, "By My Spirit", Hung-Dong and inspiring biographies of pioneer missionaries and other heroes of the Cross. It was like a refreshing shower and a spring of water to a thirsty traveler in a hot and sandy desert. A thousand prisoners here in Quanggai receive the literature you sent from time to time. Over five hundred have professed faith in Christ."

A little seven year old lad, the son of the secretary of the Phan Rang church, takes each issue of Hung-Dong to school with him to read the most exciting stories to his class. Both the teacher and pupils are eager to borrow his copy to take home with them. His Dad says Vinh is the most popular child in the school. From Dalat, a second generation Christian in the army writes: "I had stumbled from looking at people instead of at my Lord who has suffered so much for me, and was in a dangerously backslidden condition when God spoke to me through the messages in Hung-Dong, and brought me back to Himself and filled my heart with His love." Another Christian lad in the army tells of how two of his unsaved buddies were convicted of sin and their need of a Saviour through reading a message by Dr. O.J. Smith in Hung-Dong. They are now attending the local church with their Christian friend.

Deacon Chan of the Vinhlong church testifies to how God has used the Sunday School lessons down through the years to cause him to grow in Grace and in the knowledge of His Word. Another says it was Pilgrim's Progress and Hung-Dong which have been a special blessing in his life, and that no pen could ever express what God has done for him. (This man was marvelously delivered from insanity a few years ago). Mr. Tho, who is known to some of us as the radiant

Christian, tells how that during the difficult war years when he and his family were isolated from church and Christian friends, God revived his heart through the reading of "Dobbie of Malta" and "By My Spirit". Today Mr. Tho says: "Next to the Bible, my most precious Book, I get rich spiritual refreshing from reading the "Daily Light and "Shade in the Desert" each morning before going to work". A deacon from the Phu Xuan church has been an enthusiastic champion of Christian literature ever since his conversion 25 years ago through reading the pamphlet "From Error to Truth". He writes that this past year he would have been crushed by the severe trial through which he was passing if it had not been for the daily readings in "Shade in the Desert". The messages in Hung-Dong and the Bible Magazine were also used to comfort his heart and strengthen his faith in God.

From Caolanh comes this encouraging testimony which is representative of the many received during the past weeks: "All the Press literature from the very beginning has been very precious to the Caolanh Christians. God has used it to feed our souls and to deepen us in Him. Our subscriptions to the Bible Magazine are steadily increasing. Hung-Dong is having a very special ministry among both Christians and non-Christians. Mr. Olsen's books are full of valuable material for believers. We are most grateful for all that has been done to enable us to spread the Gospel far and wide through the printed page, and have bought over 14,000 piasters worth of literature during 1957. May God greatly enlarge the Publication Department of the Vietnam Church, making available a continual supply of fresh literature for the strengthening and up-building of believers and the salvation of the lost."

### III. Distribution of Literature and Expansion of Publishing Program

The Sudan Interior Mission has recently launched a new literature project called "Duba Dai" or "Look". In a nutshell this is the Gospel story around a picture. I believe a similar project for Vietnam and all our Alliance fields would enable us to reach not only the children for Christ, but their parents also. With the most wonderful message in the world to proclaim, and with millions still unreached, how can we be satisfied with anything less than the very best in Multi-coloured Illustrated Publications? But we must act quickly!.. False cults and "others" are already far ahead of us both in the quality and quantity of their productions as well as in their well-organized programs for distribution. We submit the following recommendations as ways and means promoting the rapid expansion of our publishing and distribution program by:

1. The appointment of a qualified writer and translator as full-time worker in the publication department.
2. The appointment of at least one missionary, in addition to the one in charge of publications, for full-time literary work, as a member of the publications department.
3. The publishing of Hung-Dong as a project of the publication department. Mrs. Jeffrey to be responsible for funds for the free distribution of this magazine among officials, school teachers and in various prisons, hospitals and military camps.
4. The publishing of multicoloured illustrated leaflets for an all-out distribution campaign among the schools of Vietnam.
5. The publishing of more Bible Reference books and other "helps" for busy preachers.

6. The opening of a well-equipped Gospel Bookstore in a central location in Saigon. An adequate assortment of all the best in English and French Christian publications should be on sale for the public at the most reasonable prices possible. At the same time Vietnam Christian publications for the average reader, both Christian and non-Christian, and for children as well as young people and adults, should be speeded up.
7. The whole-hearted cooperation of pastors, missionaries and individual Christians in a field-wide distribution and follow-up program. We can help reach this objective:
  - a. By an urgent appeal for voluntary colporters and follow-up workers from every church. These distributors of Gospel literature must be a dedicated people. They must have sampled and proved their "wares" before they can convince others of their inestimable value. Our recent increase in attractive booklets published for non-Christians, has resulted in an increase in some areas in voluntary colporters. Where this is taking place there is also an increase in conversions. This is true of Rachgia, especially. Teams of earnest, Spirit-filled Christians for follow-up work is a must in every vital publishing program, for without them much of the initial ground-work of printing and distribution would be lost. These teams could travel by bicycle from village to village, seeking out those who had believed on Christ, and organizing them into Bible Study groups. The Navigator's Memory and Bible Correspondance Courses are excellent for this work.
  - b. By both pastors and missionaries reading, as far as possible, each new publication as it appears. You will then want to recommend it to others.
  - c. By missionaries taking samples of our publications with them every time they visit a church. Pastors will be happy to give you an opportunity to present your "wares" at the close of the service.
  - d. By every missionary keeping a bookcase, with at least a sample of everything in stock, in a prominent place in their home. Visitors may thus not only be made acquainted with our publications, they may also be urged to buy and share with others.
  - e. By having a well-stocked bookcase in every church. Instead of leaving valuable books locked up in missionaries' cupboards and dark storerooms for white ants to "steal", let us place the books where they will be constantly on display and within easy access of every Christian. The cost of the bookcase may be met by each local church, but the initial supply of literature should be furnished by the Publication Department. Each church will then be able to keep a revolving fund for the continued maintenance of their stock of books.
  - f. By printing in our Church publications (Thanh Kinh Bao and Hung Dong) outstanding testimonies from those who have been spiritually enriched from the reading of certain books.

"Launch out into the Deep" applies to Publication work as well as to every other ministry in the Alliance, both at home and abroad. There must be not only a launching out in prayer for trained, spiritually-equipped and dedicated personnel, but also a launching out in faith for the continual supply of the funds needed for an every-increasing expansion of our Publication Program. Our committees' decisions are too often influenced by the limitations of the budget rather than by the fact that the eternal destiny of souls is at stake. "Where there is no vision the people perish". "The Lord gave the Word; great was the company of those that published it."



HANOI PRESS PUBLICATIONS

1918--44

The Second Coming of Christ	R.A. Jaffray	Translated from the Chinese
Genesis	" " "	" " " "
Leviticus	" " "	" " " "
Daniel	" " "	" " " "
Romans	" " "	" " " "
The Heart Tract		" " " "
From Error to Truth		" " " "
The Work of the Holy Spirit		" " " "
The Genealogy of Christ		" " " "
Wholly Sanctified	A.B. Simpson	
Surrender to Conquer	" " "	
Practical and Perplexing Questions Answered	R.A. Torrey	
Power Through Prayer	E.N. Bounds	
Gospels		
Acts		
Exodus		
Genesis		
Catechism		
Hymns		
Ce Qui Vous Attend (Prophecy)		
Daily Light		
The Bible Magazine	Wm. C. Cadman	
Sunday School Lessons	Mrs. E.F. Irwin, Huynh-minh-Y	
	Mrs. H.C. Smith and others	
A Brief Summary of the Gospel	Hoang-trong-Thua	
Revelation	James McConkey	
D. L. Moody	Translated by Bui-hoanh-Thu	
George Muller	" " Pham-xuan-Tin	
Ancient Customs of Bible Lands	G.M. Mackie	
The Work of the Holy Spirit	Mrs. Homer-Dixon	
God and the Bible	" " "	
All Things	" " "	
Law and Grace	" " "	
A Bible Summary (444 pages)	" " "	
The Jewish Race	" " "	
How to Teach Music	" " "	

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Romans	" " "
Acts	" " "
Psalms	" " "
Power from on High - 2 volumes	" " "
I & II Corinthians	" " "
James	" " "
I & II Peter	" " "
By My Spirit	Jonathan Goforth
Prophecy	H.L. Turner
C. T. Studd	Norman Grubb
Dobbie of Malta	S. Maxwell Coder
Ann of Ava (Mrs. Adoniram Judson)	
Y-Tit (Raday evangelist)	Pham-xuan-Tin
Sammy Morris	Dang-dinh-Cu
Hung-Dong (20 issues)	Do-duc-Tri, R. Jeffrey
The Life of Christ	R. Jeffrey
The Gospel Torch (12 issues)	" "
Questions & Answers Through the Bible	Pham-xuan-Tin, R. Jeffrey
The Way of Salvation	D. I. Jeffrey
The Master's Indwelling (printed)	A. Murray
Tracts	

PRINTED - 1954--57

		<u>Copies</u>
From Darkness to Light	Mrs. F. Bevan	10,000
Sunshine Country	Kristin Royovej	10,000
The Traveller's Guide		10,000
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TRACTS

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Illustrated leaflets from Standard Publishing Company

## DALAT-SAIGON PRESS PUBLICATIONS--1949-57

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Tin Lanh (The Gospel)			
Short Stories for Children	Mrs. R.M. Jackson		
Stories Jesus Told	Mrs. Gertrude Hollis		
Weighed and Found Wanting	D. L. Moody		
Wholly Sanctified (reprint)	A. B. Simpson		
John the Baptist	Phan-xuan-Tin		
The Story of Joseph	Pham-xuan-Tin		
I, II, III John and Jude	A.B. Simpson		
The Bible Magazine (monthly)	Ong-van-Huyen		
Sunday School Lessons, Adult, Children and Teacher's Quarterly	John McNeil		
Filled With the Spirit	J. D. Olsen		
Topical Text Book			
Vietnamese Church Constitution			
The Call of the Jungle	Pham-xuan-Tin		
Life or Death	O. J. Smith		
Missionary Magazine	Pham-xuan Tin		
Call of Vietnam			
Bible Dictionary (mimeographed)	Wm. C. Cadman	500 Copies	
Catechism		10,000	"
Preacher's Manual	J.D. Olsen	1,000	"
Romans	" " "	1,000	"
Hebrews	" " "	1,000	"
I Corinthians	" " "	3,000	"
Revelation	" " "	1,000	"
Daniel	" " "	1,000	"
Church History - Vol. 1,2	" " "	1,000	"
Church History " 3	" " "	3,000	"
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