

Republic of Korea(ROK) Christian Vietnam Veterans' Reconciliation ministries to Vietnam

I am so pleased and thankful to God for having this opportunity concerning the ROK Christian Vietnam Veterans' reconciliation ministry to you.

As you may know, quite a many ROK soldiers fought against Viet Kong about 30 years ago and inflicted unintended atrocities and pains to the soldiers of communist Peoples' Army of Vietnam. Thus many ROK Christian Vietnam Veterans have decided to conduct the Christian ministerial activities to Vietnamese for reconciling one another.

The contents of my presentation are as follows:

1. Overview of Vietnam
2. Republic of Korea's(ROK)participation in Vietnam War
3. ROK Christian Vietnam Veteran's Reconciliation Ministry Activities to Vietnamese
4. Initiation of Vietnam Mission Works
5. Outcoms of VMA's Ministry Programs
6. Summary of VMA ministry

Lastly, I am going to show you some pictures on the VMA ministries at the end of this presentation.

First of all, let's take a look at the overview of Vietnam. Vietnam is located in Southeast Asia and its area is about 332,000 square km. And the population of Vietnam is about 880 millions, its GDP is USD \$2,800 and it is currently a communist state. Religious distribution of Vietnamese is Protestants 1.2%, Buddhist 65%, Catholic 8%, Muslim, and others. Vietnamese ethnic distribution is Kinh(Viet) 90% and other groups take up about 10%.

The history of Vietnam has been hurt with wars.

From 16th to 18th centuries, internal conflicts have continued to arise between North and South Vietnam.

- From 1858 to 1954, the conquest of vietnam by France occurred in 1858 was initiated by the murder of France missionary and then France has continued to rule Vietnam by 1954.
- From 1954 to 1964, Vietnam was divided into the Communist North and anti-Communist South.
- From 1964 to 1975, Vietnam experienced severe losses from the war against US and the Vietnam war was triggered by Tong-king bay conflict. In the meantime, total loss

to US militaries were that 58,200 soldiers died.

Since the communist regime was established on April 30, 1975, 704 churches were shut down and the pastors and leaders of those churches had been arrested and detained under the flag of reeducation for 3 to 9 years. However, since the adoption of both Vietnam's "doi moi" (renovation) policy and market capitalism in 1986, the Republic of Korea normalized its diplomatic relation with Vietnam.

Now let us take a look at some data on ROK military's participation to Vietnam war. From September of 1964 to March of 1973, two infantry divisions and their support units were deployed and total 312,853 soldiers went to war. As a result, 4,960 soldiers of ROK military died and 10,962 soldiers were injured. On the other hand, total loss to the Vietnam were that 1.1 million soldiers died.

On Jan 16, 1990, ROK Christian veterans to Vietnam war made up their mind to do Christian ministries for reconciliation purposes. As a result, Vietnam Mission Association (VMA) was organized and "Let's go to Vietnam with gospel message instead of rifle and sword" was selected as VMA's slogan.

Major programs of VMA were as follows ;

- First, Giving help for reconstruction of destructed churches of the battlefield.
- Second, Opening seminary schools to educate and commission the clergy.
- Third, Building and operating hospitals to do medical ministries.
- Fourth, Evangelizing the vietnamese living in Korea. Fifth, mutual exchanges and cooperation, etc.

One fundamental strategy of performing VMA's programs was to help the vietnamese do missionary works for the vietnamese.

ROK Vietnam veterans' mission work to Vietnam was commenced by professor Cho, Jaehyun's(ROK'foreign language university) participation to an academic conference on 1989 at Hanoi where he happened to meet a Vietnamese pastor, Bui Hoanh Thu, and heard from pastor Bui Hoanh Thu the realities of Christian activities in Vietnam. Pastor Bui Hoanh Thu was the only person who could evangelize the people without any restriction due to his personal friendly relation to Prime minister Ho Chi Minh. So Pastor Bui Hoanh Thu was invited to Korea and gave a great help to establish the strategies for VMA's reconciliation ministry to Vietnam.

From April 21, 1993 to April 28, 1993, pastor Bui Hoanh Thu invited VMA's 6 executive officers to Vietnam to help them meet the minister of health of Vietnam government. Their meeting agenda are as follows: donating medicines to Vietnam and discussing ways to

construct and operate AGAPE hospital in the province of Nam Dinh.

Now let us take a look at the results through VMA's ministries:

1. Building and reconstructing the churches of Vietnam : Some churches newly built by VMA ministry were located in the battlefield of Vietnam war. But other churches were mostly reconstructed after they had been shut down. In sum, 92 church buildings completed as of September, 2009. Financial assistance per church was about USD \$50,000 to \$100,000. This amount took up 20% to 80% of total costs for building or reconstructing the churches. The remaining portion of costs was raised up by individual church.
2. Educating the clergy by supporting the construction of seminary schools:
 - Total estimated costs for building the southern seminary school was about \$1.6 million. VMA donated \$300,000 out of \$1.6 million and 80% of construction work completed so far. And currently 389 missionary students (2nd classmates 100, 3rd classmates 114, 4th classmates 175) are studying in the near church building and VMA has been giving the scholarship of \$20,000 annually.
 - 120 seminary students (1st classmate 60, 2nd classmate 60) have been studying at the northern seminary school. VMA has been donating an annual scholarship of \$9,000 to those seminary students.
3. Medical missionary activities by building and operating the AGAPE hospital. The AGAPE hospital with 100 beds for patients had been constructed from Nov 14, 1994 to Aug 27, 1997 and it costed about half million dollars. Since then not only an annual operation fee of \$12,000 has been being supported to help the poor get the medical assistance, also an additional donation of \$15,000 has been being sent to have the disabled children to undergo orthopedic treatments.
4. Evangelizing the Vietnamese living in Korea. In Saemoonan Church located in Seoul, Pastor Lee, Yoonwoo who speaks the Vietnamese fluently has been giving services to the Lord with the Vietnamese workers, students, and immigrants of marriage living in Korea. And their total numbers varies from 100 to 50 people weekly. Some of those who went back to Vietnam have been operating 5 prayer houses to which a monthly donation of \$100 has been being remitted, respectively.
5. Mutual exchanges and cooperation: To promote and increase the friendly relations among the christian leaders of two countries, Christian leaders, AGAPE hospital officials, and government employees of department of health of Vietnam have been invited to Korea as needed.

As a result, the outcomes out of VMA's ministries to Vietnam for the last twenty years can be summarized as follows:

Firstly, many churches of Vietnam expanded significantly. Specifically, not only members of the churches that VMA has supported increased 5 times more since they began to be supported, but also the number of churches in Vietnam increased from 298 in 1989 year to 2,244 in 2008 year. The Christian population of Vietnam went up from 0.8% to 1.2% for the same period.

Secondly, two seminary schools that used to be destructed are restored. One, the northern seminary school, is located in Hanoi city, the other, the southern seminary school, is located in Ho Chi Minh city.

Thirdly, it is considered that the Vietnamese have more favorable opinion about Koreans than ever before.

However, Vietnam MCF (Military Christian Fellowship) is not established yet since Vietnam government, by law, prohibits any religious group from being organized in its military services. If revealed, the people who attempts to organize any religious group or meeting are required to be punished. Therefore, it is necessary for us to pray for the establishment of Vietnam MCF in the future.

Some of pictures for rebuilt churches are chosen out of 92 churches.

- SaDec Church was built with the support from Central Military Chapel,
- Quang Hoa Church was built with the support from VMA,
- Tan Hiep Church was built with the support from elder Seo, Junghan and his wife,
- Binh Gia Church was built with the support from elder Kim, Yongchul,
- Phu Cuong Church was built with the support from elder Lee, Hongju living in LA,
- this picture is a bird's eye view of southern seminary school and about 80% of construction work completed so far.
- this picture shows delivering financial gifts for building Vietnam southern seminary school.
- this picture shows the ground-breaking ceremony for Vietnam southern seminary school.
- this picture shows bestowing scholarships to the students of seminary school.
- this picture shows worship service in commemoration of graduation of students of seminary school.
- this picture shows the class of southern seminary school.
- this picture shows the class of northern seminary school.
- this picture shows the opening ceremony of AGAPE hospital.

- this picture shows delivering financial assistance for operating the AGAPE hospital.
- this picture shows delivering ambulance to AGAPE hospital.
- this picture shows delivering some medical equipments to AGAPE hospital.
- this picture shows delivering some medicines to AGAPE hospital.
- this picture shows delivering medical services to the patients of AGAPE hospital. Korean medical physicians performed operations for the disabled.
- this picture shows evangelic activities to the Vietnamese living in Korea. In Sae-moon-an Church located in Seoul, Pastor Lee, Yoonwoo speaking the Vietnamese fluently has been performing services and Bible study with the Vietnamese workers, students, and immigrants of marriage living in Korea.

This completes my presentation. Thank you !