

VISIT TO STUDENTS IN VIETNAM

By Dale Sewall, UUC President

A leadership team of the Vietnamese School of Theology visited students and staff in Vietnam in May for a variety of purposes.



Dale Sewall, President & Tu Truong, Dean of Vietnamese School speak to students

In Danang we met with staff and then drove four hours to the Kontum area in the mountains to meet with students of our diploma program. Hosted by Pastor A Heo, who pastors a church of several thousand and is one of our diploma students, we brought devotions and encouraging words to our students. As President of UUC, it was a privilege for me to meet these students, most of whom are poor and work hard to sustain their families while serving the church. Many of these students have previously been deprived of public education because they are Christians.

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Many of our students serve large congregations and are gifted pastors, but are eager for more education so they can serve their people better.

110 students came to the event to meet us and have lunch together.

Pastor Heo welcomed us and spoke of how important the diploma program is to students who cannot afford educational fees and cannot leave their families and communities to study. Pastor Xuan Khac Nguyen also greeted us on behalf of



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GRADUATION SERVICE 2014

The graduation service for UUC and Union College graduates will be held on June 21, 2014 at 3:00 PM at the UUC campus in Westminster, CA. The Rev. Dr. Fletcher Tink, our Vice President of Academic Affairs, will be the commencement speaker. We invite you to attend.

Visit to Students in Vietnam (continued)

the pastors' group. Dr. Son and I both shared some of our personal witness, our appreciation for the important work of the students, and UUC's commitment to the program. We brought greetings on behalf of the individuals and groups in the U.S. who are praying for and financially supporting the diploma students. Later Dr. Son and I talked with the UUC staff in Vietnam about how we could help the diploma students to become more self-sustaining through a repopulation of water buffalo in the mountain area.



Seminar for Master Students in Ho Chi Minh City, VN

In Saigon we conducted a three day seminar attended by 38 students and taught by Dr. Kim Lien, Dr. Tu and Dr. Khanh. Dr. Son, Dr. Khanh and I both led devotions for the students each morning.

On the last afternoon of the seminar, we held a graduation ceremony for 14 students who cannot attend our commencement service in California in June. Dr. Kim Lien also helped organize a UUC Student Government Organization and a UUC Alumni Association for students and graduates in Vietnam.

We concluded our time with Saigon area students, faculty, staff and alumni with a reunion dinner. This was the first reunion in our history and was a celebratory event, with speeches, singing, food and conversation. I had the privilege of telling a little of the story of how the Lord healed me of brain cancer and called me to serve as UUC president. 108 students, alumni, staff and faculty attended.

The last two days of our time in Vietnam was a staff overnight retreat in Vung Tau. In addition to rest and relaxation, we talked about a vision for the future of UUC; and I led devotions on the importance of welcoming the whole family of Jesus into our community (see the devotional in this newsletter).

It was an honor for me to spend time with our students in Vietnam, to understand better the current circumstances in which they minister and study, and to pray and think on site in Vietnam about the needs of our students. I was deeply convicted again about how central and important our Vietnamese School of Theology is to the very core of our ministry.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

What's New about Love?

"A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

John 13:34

Why does Jesus call this a new commandment? We already have the commandments to love God with all our hearts, to love our neighbors as our selves, to love our enemies, to love the foreigner within our community. He has already taught that *in everything*, we should do to others as we would want them to do to us, "for this is the law and the prophets" he says. Yet on the night of his arrest, Jesus tells his disciples he is giving

them a new commandment. And the commandment is to love each other.

What's new about love?

The newness is the higher standard that Jesus sets for love. *His* disciples are to love each other *as he has loved them*. In the next 24 hours, Jesus will go to the cross and the grave because "God so loved the world that he gave his only son." Jesus says over and over in the last chapters of John that he is one with the Father, and the Father is one with him. The Father's love and his love are the same. Jesus so loves the world that he gave himself, spent himself, poured himself out, gave his life for the life of the world. His love was new. It set a higher standard.

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Message from the President (continued)

His disciples are to love each other with that standard of love.

The result will be “Everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

A few chapters later, in John 17, Jesus prays several times that “they (his disciples) may be one as I and the Father are one.” When this happens, Jesus says, the world will know that God has sent Jesus into the world, and that Jesus has loved us as the Father loves him.

The world is still waiting to see the church be one as the Father and the Son are one; still waiting to see his disciples love each other as he has loved us. Because it doesn’t see these things, much of the world remains unconvinced that God has sent Jesus into the world for the life of the world; or that Jesus is anyone special; or that the way to life is through Jesus. Because it sees instead denominational rivalries, disputes over doctrinal disagreements, the quickness of church people to condemn each other, and like-minded people gathering into like-minded groups to exclude others not like them...because it sees these things among the followers of Jesus instead of oneness and love for one another, the world sees nothing special about the church and pays little attention to the church’s message of love in Jesus Christ.

What if instead the world saw the church loving each other across denominational lines, affirming our oneness though we are Pentecostal or Baptist or non-denominational or Lutheran or Methodist or Holiness or Vineyard, or Congregational? What if people who follow Jesus gathered together in genuine friendship and love no matter what nationality or ethnicity or skin color or language or place in society or rich or poor or influential or powerless? What if the immigrant was embraced as fully as the one born a citizen? What if the refugee was welcomed with rejoicing? What if the church was comfortable with the “otherness” of people not like them, but who loved and followed Jesus?

What if, finally, the world saw the “whole family of Jesus” respecting and loving one another, rather than

just the white family of Jesus, or the Asian family of Jesus, or the black or Latin family?

Jesus once said that everyone who does the will of his Father is his family (Matthew 12:34-35). If the world saw all of us who follow him acting like family, they would be seeing something new, something convincing. If the followers of Jesus act this way, then it must be true that God sent Jesus. If these people, with all their differences, all their “otherness” welcomed and embraced within their community, are unified as one people, then what they say about the love of Jesus must be true. Otherwise how could they love each other so well?

At Union University of California, we seek to act for the good of the whole church. We seek to provide opportunity for church leaders of many nationalities, languages and circumstances to take the gift of good and practical education, and use it for the benefit of the whole church. And ultimately for the benefit of the world that God loves so much that God sent Jesus into the world.

As UUC grows and offers our educational opportunity to more and more students of different languages and in different areas of the world, our effort is not only about education. It is also about love. It is about being the whole family of Jesus together. It is about loving one another as Christ has loved us, so that the whole world will know we are his disciples.

The “normal” behavior of human beings is to be suspicious of and on guard against people who are different from them and not from their group. It is not to be so among the disciples of Jesus.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

May the love of Christ abound in us for all the followers of Jesus as we do our ministry in the world.

Dale Sewall
UUC President

UNION UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA

14200 GOLDENWEST STREET
WESTMINSTER, CA 92683

714.903.2762

info@uuc.edu

UUC
DAY OF PRAYER

UUC's
Board of Directors
invites UUC students,
faculty and friends
to join them
in prayer for UUC on
the first Monday
of the month.



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UUC SEMINAR

Cross-Cultural Communication

A seminar on *Cross-Cultural Communication* will be held at UUC's campus from 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM on June 18-20, 2014 and is open to the public. The seminar will be led by the Rev. Dr. Michael J. Oleksa, rector of St. Alexis Toth Orthodox Church in Anchorage, Alaska and adjunct faculty at Alaska Pacific University. Dr. Oleksa received his Ph.D. at the Orthodox Theological Faculty in Presov, Slovakia, and is an expert in communicating across cultures. He is author of four books on the Orthodox Church in Alaska, the Russian period in Alaska, and native cultures of Alaska.



Dr. Oleksa will bring his cross-cultural communication experience of more than 30 years as a missionary to the native Alaskan into his lecture topics: What is Culture, Cultures as "The Game of Life," The Global Literate Culture, Traditional Local Cultures, The Clash of Worlds, Getting Along/Making Peace... To register, please contact info@uuc.edu.

THANKSGIVINGS AND PRAYER REQUESTS

- Thank God for a safe and successful trip to Vietnam for Dale Sewall, *President*; Son Nguyen, *Vice President*; Philip Trinh, *Board Member*.
- Thank God for the faithfulness of Christians in the Central Highlands of Vietnam through many persecutions and challenges. Please continue for them and for their leaders as many continue their studies in the Diploma of Ministry program at Union College.
- Please pray that the government of Vietnam will become more open to freedom of religion.
- Please pray for the French school, that God will use this school to train leaders to reach out to Muslims in Europe and Africa.
- Please continue to pray for the Indonesian school.

SUPPORT UUC

Union University of California is able to provide scholarships to our underserved students primarily through the love and generosity of individuals like you. We welcome all levels of support, whether it is a one-time gift, a monthly donation, or a full scholarship for one of our students in need. You can contribute by sending a check or money order to:

UNION UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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WESTMINSTER, CA 92683