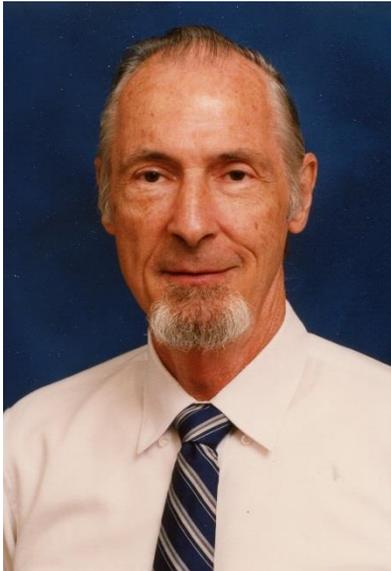


T. Bennett (Ben) Dickerson, ABFMS Thailand alumnus, goes home



T. Bennett (Ben) Dickerson, American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) alumnus passed away at the age of 91 on February 22, 2018 at Landis Homes in Lititz, Pennsylvania. Ben was born on November 23, 1926 in West Chester, Pennsylvania to John N. and Blanche R. (Davis) Dickerson. Ben was an only child.

When Ben was twelve or thirteen he accepted Jesus as his Savior as the invitation was given in his Sunday school class at the Great Valley Presbyterian Church. Since his parents were previously Baptists before moving to the area, Ben was not baptized until he was ready to join the church the following Easter. He attended many summer Bible conferences that helped him grow spiritually. At a Keswick conference in the summer of 1943, Ben recalled being challenged with the call to full time service on the mission field. He did not at that time feel called to full time service, but was willing to go if it became clear that this was the will of God.

Ben served in the U.S. Coast Guard. During this time he was active in churches and barrack prayer meeting wherever he was sent. Especially meaningful for Ben was the months when he was based in Atlantic City and attended a Baptist church which had a program geared to service men. He was called upon to testify and speak with other fellows about their personal relationship to Jesus Christ. Upon discharge from the U.S. Coast Guard, Ben spent the summer of 1946 as a counselor at a Bible conference. This experience helped him to see the needs of young people for Christ. At this time Ben met several missionary couples on furlough who were working in Central or South America. They interested him in the needs of Latin America.

While studying at Penn State, Ben was active in Interservice Christian Fellowship. The group sponsored dinners and Bible studies for the Chinese students in the graduate schools. This experience began to call to his mind the needs and problems of other areas around the world. Another experience, which was especially meaningful to Ben, was the Sunday morning prison service held periodically in the State Penitentiary. During college he attended an Interservice Christian Fellowship gathering and again heard the need to fulfill the great commission to carry the Gospel of the love of Christ around the world. The following summer, Ben felt a definite leading of the Holy Spirit that forestry, his college major, was not his vocation. After a night of prayer and struggle Ben felt sure that Christ wanted him to serve Him in a foreign country; South America he thought, since he was acquainted with its needs.

While home for Thanksgiving in 1947, Ben attended the ordination of a missionary at Great Valley Presbyterian Church near Philadelphia. It was here, that Ben was introduced to Doris Harvey, by her Aunt Myrtle. Ben and Doris were married on July 5, 1952, at the end of his first year of study at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary

On May 24, 1954 Ben and Doris were appointed missionaries by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS) designated to serve in Thailand. Ben and Doris arrived in Thailand in 1955 and began work with the ethnic Karens. Their ministry helped to produce tremendous growth in the Christian community of Thailand. They supervised the construction of several village school buildings and built

church run hostels in which students in the school could be cared for by Christian houseparents. Ben and Doris also taught Bible and Christian education at the Center for the Uplift of Hill Tribes and frequently acted as counselors in their home. Among his projects, Ben directed the successful relocation of the Kwai River Christian Mission and built a water system for a whole village. Ben also worked with a Karen pastor and a Karen evangelist couple in reaching the remote Talekon, a religious group of Karen.

Ben and Doris retired in late 1993 having served with ABFMS in Thailand for almost 40 years. At the time of retirement Ben and Doris thanked God for the privilege of serving the Karen and Thailand. "God has more than kept his promises to be present to us in all situations," said Doris. Ben and Doris made their home in Malvern, Pennsylvania but returned to Thailand for several years for visits and volunteer service – once for nine months.

In retirement number two, at Landis Homes in Lititz, PA (Lancaster County), they were amazed to meet Burmese Karen from the refugee camps along the Thai border. This gave many more opportunities for service in new relationships, translation and encouraging church mentors in cross-cultural problems.

Ben is survived by his wife of 65 years, Doris; three daughters, Judith Dickerson, wife of Steven Harder of Mountain Lake Minnesota, Marcia Dickerson of West Chester, Pennsylvania and Deborah Dickerson Sanders of Thailand; and five grandchildren.

Memorial services will be held at on April 21, 2018 at Landis Homes West Bethany Chapel in Lititz, Pennsylvania. Visitation is at 1:00pm, service at 2:00pm and reception at 3:00pm.