

Ira Rice: Capacity Unlimited

SINGAPORE

WE STEPPED from our creaking, crowded train into a city controlled by the British but dominated by the Chinese and Malays. Here were two and a half million people of over thirty nationalities in one of the world's two free trade ports where taxable goods are cheap and living expenses high.

Excitement and intrigue seemed in the air. It takes a while to get used to the way of life in Singapore; because in Singapore there is no way of life. Each nationality follows its own customs and each works together for commerce.

Our luggage was passed through the train windows. Waiting to meet us were Chinese and Malayan newspapermen, all grinning broadly and equipped with pencils and cameras. Then from the confusion burst a tall American with a big smile.

"Hi there!" His greeting boomed down the station platform, and each of us received a hearty handshake. It felt like home. For our beaming host was Ira Rice, Jr., '44journ, transplanted from Norman, where the senior Rices still live.

Rice piled all of the boys in our group on to a half-ton open flat truck, along with the luggage. We girls were slid into the little red Volkswagen station wagon which read from either side, "Singapore Churches of Christ." A sign inside the car read, "Capacity, 8 passengers." (Never once during our stay did the "little red wagon" contain less than 12 persons, and sometimes as many as 16 piled into it.)

Rice is a missionary of the Church of Christ in Singapore, where he and his family have been since February, 1955, and will remain until 1959. Like all missionaries of his church, he is supported by pledges and offerings from a single church and from his friends. The single church in this instance is the Hampton Place Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas.

Soon we arrived at a house, the six large rooms of which are very plainly and simply furnished. This is the Rice home—and church. The kitchen and shower are sep-

arated from the main part of the house by a large double garage, used now for storage and clothesline area. The kitchen, by the way, has both a conventional stove and a great stone oven. The long living room doubles as a classroom for Rice's Wednesday night Bible classes and as a sanctuary for the two Sunday services which he supervises.

Bars on the windows are to keep out the frequent late night prowlers. Rice warned us, however, not to leave anything of value near these windows; thieves can reach in with long wire hooks and drag valuables out without ever entering the house.

The combination of preacher-newspaperman—which is exactly what Rice is—seems likely in a city as treacherous as Singapore. He told us that it would be possible to be beaten to death without the crowd of on-lookers ever raising a hand to help him. One such incident occurred two years ago, when Gene Symonds of United Press died at the hands of a Singapore mob. Rice's newspaper experience served him well at that time. When he heard that Symonds had been assaulted and was unconscious, Rice decided to volunteer his services to the news bureau. He was able, through the help of one of his church members, to secure an eyewitness account of the beating, and his story was the one sent to and used in the United States. Formerly a correspondent for the *Norman Transcript* and *Oklahoma News*, as well as two Texas newspapers, Rice knows the ropes of journalism.

He confessed that, during the riots when occidentals were being seized and beaten, he was glad for his home's window bars; they assured the safety of his family.

Vada Rice is the comfortable sort of person who makes one feel right at home. She is easy to talk to and a good hostess. She prepared our first meal in Singapore. It consisted of roast pheasant (about the cheapest meat available, said Mrs. Rice) and an especially delicious variety of banana.

The four young Rices are Ramona, 8;

Lynette, 6; Renee, 4, and Ira III, 3. They are full of energy and were completely uninhibited by the 13 strangers from Oklahoma who invaded their home.

Ramona and Lynette are enrolled in the British school system, but, of course, their classmates are of every nationality. They are assured of an excellent background on which to build a foundation for understanding. Both of the two older children speak a little Mandarin, and all the children have lovely singing voices. We were surprised when Ramona began to sing "God Save the King"; Rice let her finish it and then suggested that she sing our own national anthem.

Mrs. Rice said that one of her major problems has been to secure milk for the children; good fresh milk is simply not available in South East Asia. The children have become very fond of a soy bean milk-like product called Bea-nectar, but the boxes of powdered chocolate milk from the States last only a short time, the Rices said.

In only a year the winning friendliness of this family has built a congregation from two to fifty members. In addition, Rice has been helping to organize other Churches of Christ in Singapore and Malaya, a task which often necessitates trips through dense jungle areas infiltrated by communist guerillas.

Rice said that at the entrances to forbidden or unsafe areas are the "most emphatic signs" he has seen. They read: "DANGER! THIS IS A DANGER AREA. DO NOT ENTER. ANY PERSON FOUND BEYOND THIS POINT IS LIABLE TO BE SHOT WITHOUT WARNING." The signs, printed in four different languages, are made even more emphatic by displaying the picture of a man being shot.

Rice preaches in English, but several of his congregation now are trained to deliver the messages in Mandarin and Hokkien, which are the dialects of the area. Also, many of Rice's own sermons are translated, for later use, into the two dialects.

Members of the Rice congregation are

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graduate school of journalism at Columbia University, New York. While at O. U. he worked in the Sports Publicity department.

Ensign Thomas C. Perkins, '56bus, Oklahoma City, has graduated from the Naval pre-flight school in Pensacola, Florida. He now is assigned to Saufley Field, Pensacola, for primary flight training.

Charles E. Plant, '56geol, Corpus Christi, Texas, has been employed as a geologist by Sunray Mid-Continent Oil Company.

MARRIAGES: Miss Martha Kay Malone, '56, and Lieut. Charles T. Ray were married October 7 in Claremore. He is with the Air Force.

Miss Juanita Frances Caldwell, '56ed, Norman, and Gorman Byrd were married August 24 and are now living in Texico, New Mexico. Mrs. Byrd is a fourth grade teacher.

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mostly middle class people who live in duplexes, housing developments or apartments much like those in any large American city. Indeed, these people are much like Americans, except that they have so little idea of what America or Americans actu-

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ally are like. They have had almost no contact with American ideas other than those presented them by communists and by way of a press not altogether sympathetic with America. Rice, by his own good example, has promoted Americanism as well as Christianity, and his congregation seems to have a better feeling toward the United States than do most residents of Singapore.

Every Sunday morning the "little red wagon" makes a journey through the narrow, one-car-wide, tightly winding streets of China town. Children come running out of their homes to see the car go past; others, when the car pauses at various apartment houses, clamber into it and ride to church. Riding along, one sees wash strung on bamboo poles hanging from all the windows up to two, three, and four stories on both sides of the street, almost forming a canopy. Tiny shops are squeezed together;

the ideological subversion which threatens to undermine the free-thinking of the western world, cannot help but sound a penetrating note.

KETA-TV is currently operating four hours a day, five days a week. Marc Fuller, the capable producer and director of the station's programs, explained that the proposed program calls for 40 hours per week from both KETA-TV and KOED-TV, adding this will become possible if the legislature implements the authority with sufficient funds.

The 20 hours now telecast, which one can obtain on Channel 13, will inform a person on everything from opera to French idioms. O. U. professors are quite active, with program directors Dr. Buchanan, Dr. Horace Bliss, Dr. Wardell, and Dr. John Morris staging two and one-half actual television hours during the early evening of four weeknights.

On Monday night Buchanan has a 30-minute show called "The Turning World"; Tuesday evening Dr. Bliss and Dr. Morris produce "Careers in Science"; Thursday night Dr. Wardell, Professor Charles Bush, Dr. E. E. Dale and Dr. Loren Brown furnish "Tepees to Towers"; and Thursday night is a doubleheader with Dr. Bliss returning with "Tomorrow's Scientists" and Dr. Morris' "Oklahoma, The Land We Belong To."

they sell everything from clothes and food to paper funeral and wedding decorations.

One sees the tight, bright surrealistic picture full of small figures, yellows, reds and grays in three dimensions. One hears the sound of Singapore, an orchestra in minor key, full of strings, cymbals, fast swaying flutes and staccato drums.

And one smells Singapore—the smells of incense and old Chinese women, the perfume of young women, the smell of spicy food and soy sauce being cooked on the open street, of fresh vegetables and others not so fresh, of human waste and motor oil.

This is the city where Ira Rice preaches and lives an ideal in which he believes strongly. It is a city of strange contrast between ancient and modern. Perhaps the city is typified by another favorite sign of Rice's which reads: "Unlimited Enterprises, Limited."

Education's New Frontier . . .

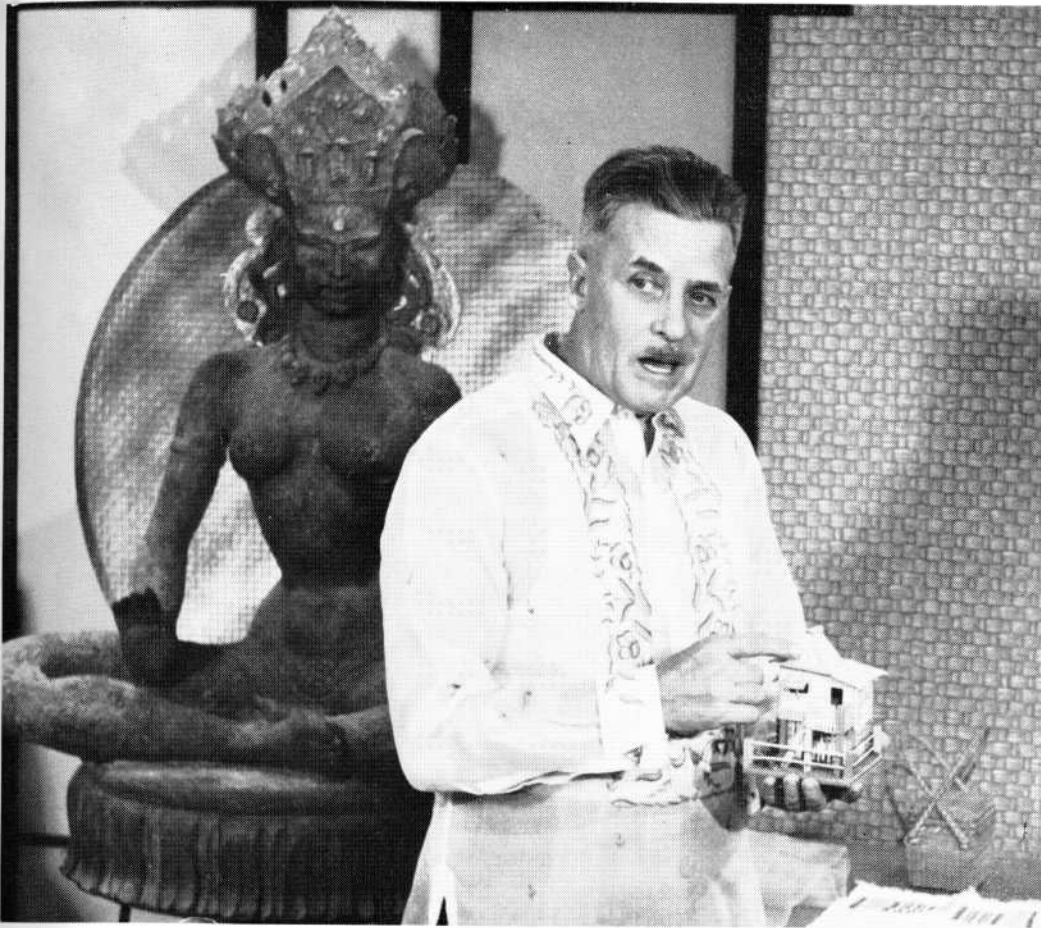
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Dr. Percy Buchanan, director of the University's Institute of Asiatic Affairs, is an example of the experts who can make apparently drab subjects literally come alive under the impact of trained mental powers. Buchanan, whose 15 years in the Orient have given him a many-sided personality, has a quick, incisive mind and interesting manner, which combine to make him an entertaining image.

Recently he presented a lecture which provided the viewer with a capsule history of the Philippines. His talk was interspersed with comments about his beautiful brocaded Philippine shirt made of pineapple fiber and such remarks as "The people of the Philippines are the happiest in the world. They really get a kick out of life." Such an approach makes his 30 minutes on the screen pleasurable to all levels and ages.

One of the most vital targets of the Authority's telecasts are high school and junior high students. Early in December nine students from Ada Junior High School appeared on the "Tomorrow's Scientists" program along with their teacher, C. L. Robberson and the moderator, Professor Thomas J. McKnight, of East Central State. The nine boys presented a program around knowledge gained in their theory of radio class.

It was impressive—crewcut boys, some

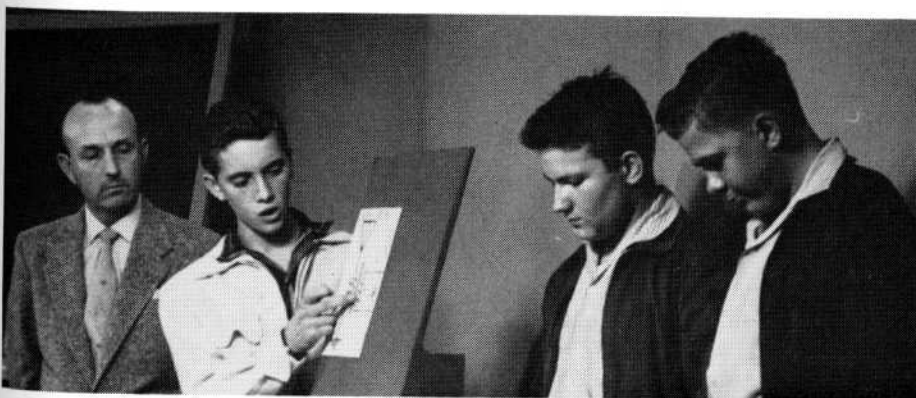


Dr. Percy Buchanan, O.U.'s expert on Asia, displays a miniature of a Philippine dwelling to TV scholars. He lived in Orient 15 years.

Below, Frank Morris shows where to write for information on Careers in Science. He's flanked by Civil Engineering panel members.

not yet over the five-foot level, handling complicated radio equipment and tossing words like "superheterodyne" around with dedicated fervor. Most schools in Oklahoma do not have the benefit of a radio theory class, so in this case those students in KETA-TV's range were able to get an important glimpse of a field which could be their life's work.

Three objectives have been stated for the state's educational television: 1) direct teaching of specific subjects, 2) general information programs aimed at increasing a viewer's overall knowledge, and 3) cultu-



Ada teacher C. L. Robberson and three members of his radio theory class appeared on the *Tomorrow's Scientists* program. The boys demonstrated and explained intricate equipment.

ral programs concerned with art, literature, music and drama.

Thus far the operation of the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority has been in comparative poverty. Rich with potential, but poor in facilities, the Authority's bold purpose depends on the demonstrated interest of its audience and the financial assistance of the State Legislature for a long and profitable life of service.

This television infant needs the parental assistance of state citizens to become a highly useful, mature instrument of education.