

Friends of Burma Annual Report 2006

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Friends of Burma has completed another great year, 2006, working in the Kingdom of God. Usually this report is sent out in January but six of FOB's Executive Committee (EC) were in Burma (Myanmar) meeting with the leaders and various institutions that we work with and getting their evaluation as to what FOB should do in the future. We thought it



best to delay the annual report so we *Executive Committee Meeting in Phoenix 2007* could include their observations and experiences. We had the second Annual Meeting of FOB in Phoenix, AZ with 13 out of the 16 members of the EC members present. Important matters were discussed and motions passed which we felt all supporters of FOB would want to know about.

In 2006 Friends of Burma continued the fifty some ministries carried on in the previous years.

Gifts received in the following ways:

- 177 Undesignated as FOB determines
- 125 Designated Buildings, vehicles, equipment
- 96 Designated Orphan support
- 61 Designated Student scholarships-seminary, medical & other
- 38 Designated Salary support for teachers/professors.
- 32 Designated Go Forward Press of the Karen Baptist Convention
- 25 Designated Retired Christian workers.
- 24 Designated Health care clinics.
- 17 Designated Humanitarian aid.
- 15 Designated Eye glasses
- 14 Designated Guitars
- 49 Designated Evangelism, printing books etc.
- 10 Designated Students studying outside of Burma.

This is much more than statistics and numbers because each line represents a very significant help to one or more individuals. We receive many letters as a result of your donations that show us their importance. We thank our many supporters for their generosity. A list of these ministries is on our website: friendsofburma.org

FOB made a grant from undesignated donations. It was used for relief for "Mala cyclone that destroyed eleven villages and 1210 households and flood that washed off 92 houses in the two villages—Pa-saw-law and Wah Baw".

From Saw Lay Dah at Mutraw Kayin Baptist Bible School, "I am the youngest in my family, my mother is widow, my elder siblings are married and cannot afford to support me. Through FOB I received financial assistance to attend C.T.S. Course... I pledge to devote my self to work for the furtherance of God's kingdom."

From Daw Htay Yee: “The money is a big help for my job working, helping, organizing and praying for the three Palaung regions.”

Dr. Honor Nyo, General Secretary of the Karen Baptist Convention said, “Many Christian ministers who have hearing problems...say (hearing aids are so) helpful when listening to message in the church, or in conversations, or at meetings.”

Dr. Simon P. K. En, Principal of MIT: “Many Ministers kids decline to join ministry (when they see) the struggle of their minister parents. We are very much happy, however, that 52 Ministers’ kids join Myanmar Institute of Theology to prepare themselves for full-time ministry.” (Made possible by Sowards Memorial Scholarships.)

Rev. Thang Kam (74 years-Retired): “After my wife died I manage for my family (which includes) 8 grandchildren orphans. My right leg is too weak, I cannot walk. But as years go by I’m receiving God’s blessing more.” (Received Retired Christian Worker’s grant of \$10.)

Six Executive Committee members of FOB went to Burma in January 2007. Their reports:

David Horton: I was thrilled to see the love and care given to the orphans supported through your generosity. Physical educational and spiritual nourishment is so essential. Please pray for the orphan you support. The Clinic renovation will enable the staff and volunteers to do a much better job of treating patients. New medical equipment is making a tremendous difference.

Judy Lundy: I had the most amazing experience to see the country from the "inside looking out" and to view firsthand, the important contributions of FOB. In particular, my focus of interest was in seeing again, the Daw Gyi Daw Nge orphanage in Taunggyi. This particular facility has been a personal interest of mine since having first visited the three sisters and the children several years ago and it was of importance for me to see what changes had taken place and to share my interest in this program with my travel companions. With the passing of Daw Pan Shwe, there have been some difficult challenges for the two remaining sisters who have assumed total responsibility for the running of the orphanage and the 140 children in attendance. With so many children and a shortage of space, it is a difficult time. More room is drastically needed for living purposes and on a daily basis, there are new children arriving all the time. To their credit, the sisters have held things together well. Everyone looked happy and healthy and a majority was enrolled in school. Packets of goodies were given to each child and a significant amount of money was left for the construction of a water storage tank, school fees and the refurbishing of the kitchen.

Orphans at Taunggyi Orphanage



David Horton cutting ribbon for fun fair



Tansy Kadoe: After living in Burma for 21 years and getting involved in many projects, I thought I have seen and understood poverty and the suffering of the Burmese people quite well. On my last visit when a Saw Ler Htoo took me to see some of the migrant workers, I was absolutely shocked. Hundreds of people came from all over Burma to work for factories in Yangon with the hope of a better future. Many do not know anyone in Yangon. Some young women got trafficked while others became homeless. Those that have houses live in absolute poverty; they make my relatives in a poor village look like millionaires. At least ten people eat, sleep, and live in a room the size of my bathroom. Since these houses are built on what used to be a paddy farm, stagnant water stays at the base of the house, making the living condition extremely unsanitary. The bad odor emanates from the swamp and mosquitoes and flies abound in thousands. The ridiculous part is that they pay 15,000 Kyats per month for this dump while making less than 10,000 Kyats a month. If they miss a day of work, one third of their pay is cut off so they have to go to work even if they are sick. After visiting this crummy place, we went on to a couple more places. We saw this volunteer teaching English to some young people. Then, we saw a few migrant workers helping the children do their homework and learn some bible verses and songs. Many of these children are non-believers. I was happy to see that some of the migrant workers who are in a relatively better position are helping out. The areas these workers live in have a high crime rate. I was quite uncomfortable with the looks I got. In this type of dismal place, only Jesus can bring hope and peace. As such, the role of the migrant mission plays a critical role to shine the light of our Savior. The migrant mission under the leadership of Saw Ler Htoo provides food, shelter, and finances to the workers; offers educational programs to workers and their children; finds places for the workers to worship and have a fellowship; helps them find better jobs; visits the sick; buries the dead; and searches for the lost and deceived girls. I have been praying for this mission. Please pray for them as well and think of ways that you could help. Thank you.

Adam Maung: By God's grace, I had the privilege to attend Friends of Myanmar Governing Board Quarterly meeting in Insein Seminary Hill. I was pleased with the diverse ethnic representation (Chin, Kachin, and Karen) as well as gender balance of the board members (5 males and 3 females). The discussion was spirited and democratic as views from different perspectives were openly and cordially presented.

Philip Htoon: Getting to know how one has to struggle, suffer and face all ranges of hardships, it is such a satisfaction to be able to help out. Having the opportunity to meet our associates and especially getting to see the results and outcome of the work that we all do, it sure does make one to want to do and help out more. I am just so glad to be a member of an organization that has done and is doing so many good things for the many needy people.

Nwe Nwe Win also went to Burma.

Annual Meeting: FOB accumulated about \$80,000 from some very large undesignated gifts from two large donors. The EC solicited grant requests from the Friends of Myanmar Governing Board (FOMGB) for projects. Requests for about \$160,000 were received, so many worthy projects had to go unfunded. There were many difficult decisions for the EC at the Annual Meeting. These are the grants for projects they decided were most needed and within the parameters of past FOB ministries.



Young mother at Clinic with baby.

1. Grant to Go Forward Press of the Karen Baptist Convention so they could print many religious materials in Karen language. \$6,950 has already been raised so this is in addition to that.\$6,000
2. To the Karen Baptist Convention Clinic for building renovation. (\$13,041 has already been raised).....\$20,000
3. Truck for ministry in Thailand by Sharon Porterfield who has worked for 20 years with the Karens along the border \$10,000



Karen Baptist Convention Clinic

4. To Internal Relief Committee of Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Convention for relief work among the IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons)
Duane Binkley, ABC missionary.....\$7,905
5. To Papun Karen Baptist Bible School, 50% of cost of a classroom building.....\$8,334
6. To Matthew 25 Love Clinic at Pathein for Nurses Residence.....\$10,000
7. To Agape Clinic, Hakha, Chin State (if not already funded).....\$5,000
8. To Dr. Chit Maung Memorial Library.....\$2,000
9. To Shan State Baptist Seminary for new building.....\$5,000
10. To Saw Daniel of Karen Baptist Convention for Inductive Bible Study.....\$2,000
11. Additional grant for translation and publishing “Where There Is No Dentist”.....\$500
12. To University Christian Fellowship at Pathein for Building.....\$1,000
13. Two digital cameras for feedback pictures.....\$600
14. For Ministry among the migrant workers in Burma.....\$600
15. Grant to sponsor one orphan from each of five orphanages to university if one is able to qualify. (Entry to university is bases on matriculation score)..... \$1,375

EC decided to offer scholarships to any young person in a KBC sponsored orphanage who qualifies for college. And it was decided if any Christian scored high enough to go to medical school or engineering school, FOB would try to find support for them.

Burmese Karen Refugees: In previous years few Karen refugees were admitted to the U.S. from refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. In 2006 this changed and 9,000 Burmese-Karen were admitted. In 2007 somewhere between 12,000 and 18,000 will be admitted and sent to eighteen cities. Duane and Marcia Binkley, veteran missionaries to Thailand who speak Karen, have been reassigned to work in the US and Thailand by International Ministries. They will work with American Baptist churches here to help these Karen refugees. This change is being done with the full cooperation of National Ministries and the Office of General Secretary of ABC-USA. In addition, Cooperative



Toy Making Workshop in Shwe Gyn

Baptist Fellowship has signed on as the jointly appointing partner so the Binkleys can assist with Karen coming to CBF churches as well. As part of their role, Duane will also visit the refugee camps twice a year trying to better prepare them for their new life in the States. FOB urges all donors to check

with refugee resettlement agencies in their city to see if Karens are coming and what their church can do to help resettle them. The Binkley's e-mail address is: dmbink@pobox.com

Neil taught two classes of Entrepreneurship at Mai La Karen Refugee Camp on the Thai-Burma Border for three weeks in October, 2006.

Burmese Christian Fellowship Tour: FOB will again offer a tour to Burma January 7th to 21st, 2008. It will be led by Phil Schock, the son of Burma missionaries, who was raised several years in Burma. The cost will be \$1,500 plus airfare. Participants will see all the sights of Burma and have fellowship with many wonderful Christian leaders. For comparison purposes, an EC couple spent 8 days in Mexico on a tour that cost \$1199 and got to know no native Mexicans except the guide. So our Burma tour has a very meaningful personal dimension as well as being a bargain. Contact Phil Schock at: rangoon1@aol.com

Donations can be made to Friends of Burma. More information is available on our website at: friendsofburma.org Chairpersons are Neil & Diana Sowards, 548 Home Ave, Fort Wayne, IN 46807 (260) 745-3658. E-mail: neildianasowards@juno.com All work in the U.S. is done by volunteers. Friends of Burma, Inc. is operating under the aegis of South Wayne Baptist Church, an American Baptist Church, so donations are tax deductible, as the church is a 501(c)(3) entity.



A Micro Credit Project—Making Candles.



Nursery School Graduation

Opportunities for Helping our Fellow Baptists in Burma (Myanmar).

1. Keyboards for Bible Schools: \$400.

2. Karen Baptist Convention Clinic. Wish list: 1. One Delivery table: \$810. 2. 1 Birthing table: \$370. 3. 2 Rotating chairs for surgeon: \$50 each. 4. One television: \$150. 5. Spot Light: \$1790.

3. 200 Copies of the book, “Where There is No Doctor” for pastors. Cost is \$2.20 per book. Requested by Tha Wah for Pathein Myaungmya pastors.

4. Scholarships for Life Committed Christians. \$150 will give a year’s education in a Bible School or Seminary. It takes 3-4 years depending upon school. We have a request for four scholarships at Waimaw Theological School way up in the Kachin Hills.

5. Motorcycle for Christian Worker at Shwe Gyin. She has to travel a lot in her work and cover great distances and a motorcycle would be of great help to her. Cost \$500.

6. Myanmar Institute of Theology. New class room building, \$270,000. Memorial rooms are \$5,000. Memorial equipping a room is \$500.

7. Christian Resource Books. Many Christians need religious resource books. We have permission to reprint some excellent books right there in Burma. They need capital to underwrite the printing. The books will be sold and the money recycled to print more books.

8. Entrepreneur Loans. After training and saving their match, a group of want-to-be businesspersons are given a loan to develop their business. Their repayment money is then loaned to others. But more seed money is needed as word spreads about the program and more want to participate. Cost is \$300 per project. Usually about thirty-six persons benefit in the first round.

9. Sponsor an Orphan. The cost to support a child is \$156 per year—all this money goes to the orphanage. This has been increased due to the extra things the children are getting, like tutoring, but also to help Naw Magnolia in getting photos and feedback.

10. Other worthy programs: Eye Examination and Glasses \$12.00, Aid a Retired Christian worker \$12.00, Hearing aids for Ministers. \$25.

Please make checks payable to **Friends of Burma, Inc.** South Wayne Baptist Church, 548 Home Ave., Fort Wayne, IN 46807. Phone: (260) 745-3658. neildianasowards@juno.com All donations are tax deductible. Our website is: www.friendsofburma.org All work in the U.S. is done by volunteers



Students of Hpu Mya San Bible School with glasses.

FRIENDS OF BURMA

South Wayne Baptist Church
548 Home Avenue
Fort Wayne, IN 46807

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

I want to help the people of Burma (Myanmar). Enclosed find check for \$_____ for the ministry indicated below. The amount in { } indicates the full sponsorship, but any amount will help and be deeply appreciated.

____ An Orphan {\$156 per year}

____ Retired Christian Worker {\$12 each}

____ Entrepreneur Group {\$300}

____ Eyeglasses for students {\$12 each}

____ Seminary Student {\$150 per year}

____ Hearing Aid of minister {\$25 each}

____ Evangelist {\$60 per year}

____ Sponsor a High School Student {\$50}

____ Sponsor an orphan to university (\$300)

____ Christian Clinic {Any amount}

____ Building Fund {Any amount}

____ Needed books {Average \$2.50 each}

____ As Needed {Any amount}

