

PRAY
FOR
BURMA



*Proverbs 28:28 (NIV) –
“When the wicked rise
to power, people go into
hiding; ...”*

The situation in Burma is the worst we have seen since 1985. When people write to us about the sky above Yangon filling with the smoke of the crematoriums, we bow our heads in prayer for our brothers and sisters in Burma. Not only are they in fear of the corona virus, but they are also in fear of the junta and its supporters who took power on Feb. 1, 2021. As of this writing, more than 900 innocent civilians have been cruelly murdered, but also 6000 plus people have been arrested and incarcerated in prisons. Please be aware of what is happening in Burma. Share with your churches and your friends. Please support Friends of Burma as we endeavor to meet the dire needs of the IDP's, the refugees, the sick, the wounded, and the children who are suffering.

Please pray for Burma!

*Neil and Diana Sowards
Founders
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KBC Hospital Faithfully Serving Amid Unprecedented Challenges

These days, KBC Hospital (KBCH) has to hold on to their motto, “We Treat, God Heals” tighter than ever before. Since most government hospitals are closed, private hospitals are struggling to care for patients. Although the hospital is a 50-bed hospital, it now must accommodate 60 to 75 patients regularly. In addition to providing healthcare services for patients with their medical needs, KBCH is also offering COVID-19



screening services and treating patients tested positive for COVID-19. Many rural inhabitants relying on the hospital for healthcare are facing a major predicament as the hospital cannot accommodate their attendants in the hospital or the patient's attendant house, but provides a rest area for them. Retaining hospital staff presents a daunting task. KBCH also has to maintain a relationship with the authorities in order to continue offering healthcare services. As people struggle with the pandemic, job losses, and political turmoil, many just simply cannot make payments, negatively impacting the hospital income. As if these problems are not bad enough, there is a crisis in acquiring medical equipment and supplies, which cost at least three times more than before. Encumbered by challenges related to COVID-19, financial distress, soaring expenses, medical supply shortages, relational burdens, human resources deficit, rising death rates, and many other issues, KBCH strives to offer the best care it can. But frankly, KBCH is like a ship weathering a tornado, hurricane, and tsunami at the same time, about to sink, but kept afloat by God's grace and your gifts. So, your support is needed more than ever before. On behalf of our friends at KBCHS laboring tirelessly, we would like to shout out, “PLEASE HELP! MAYDAY! S.O.S!”

Zoe and Hope Centers Empowering Women and Providing COVID Relief

Friends of Burma (FOB) partners with the Zoe and Hope Centers to provide 10,000 cloth masks, 1500 bottles of hand sanitizer, and to buy milk and eggs from self-help group members to deliver to the ill and elderly in various communities for nutritious intake. Sewing groups at these centers are designing and creating the masks. Trained migrant workers at the Hlaing Tharya Center and local leaders will distribute these much-needed items. Thank you for providing this health and nutrition assistance to mitigate Covid 19.



Karen Women Organization (KWO) Delivering Aid to Internally Displaced People (IDP)



Karen Women Organization focuses on promoting an awareness of Women's Rights and women's participation in the community decision-making and political processes. KWO is also in the forefront in taking on different roles with helping IDPs and those who came to take refuge from cities due to increased fighting along the border and unrest

in the country. They have been packing meals for IDPs, security forces protecting the IDPs and those who come from different cities. Friends of Burma assisted with the purchasing of vacuum sealers for meals.



Trust Meditation and Counseling Center (TMCC) Bringing Mental Health Help to Communities

Trust Meditation and Counseling Center (TMCC) was established in October of 2019 in response to the increased mental health needs of the communities. This non-profit organization provides a safe, confidential milieu with affordable mental health services, meditation, and other wellbeing activities. Their belief is that mental wellness contributes to a healthy community. TMCC provides counseling and self-empowerment training. During the trying time of COVID and the military coup, TMCC engages through online counseling, postings of mental health messages on the website, and church programs. Most of the 30 clients are aged 12-30 years old and female. Challenges include marital strife, parent/child relationships and communication.

Dear Friends of Burma,
We have received your donation to Trust Meditation and Counseling Centre (TMCC). We are very grateful for your kind support that would be greatly helpful to fulfill our vision to help those who are suffering from mental health problems and to offer empowerment training. You truly make the difference for us, and we are extremely grateful! We cannot thank you enough for your help."

Zelma Tial Cin, President
Ester Hle Khia, Secretary

Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT)

The MIT continues to be closed. Pending the political situation, it may resume classes in January 2022. In June, the students returned to their hometowns. Unfortunately, some students live along the conflict zones, which necessitates taking refuge in the jungle alongside thousands of people fleeing the military regime atrocities. Please lift up MIT students and the people of Burma in your prayers.

Below is a thank you letter from Reverend La Rip Marip, PhD, Dean of Students to FOB:

Dear Dr. Neil and Diana Sowards,

Warmest greetings to you from MIT! On behalf of the Crisis Response Committee, let me express our appreciation to you for your generous donation for the stranded students. Your donation is very helpful to our students who are stranded in Yangon during the lockdown period of Covid-19 pandemic. We helped the 68 stranded students by giving 15,000 Kyats in Cash, 6 *Pyis* of rice, and 1 *l/sss* of vegetable oil.

Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor." (Proverbs 22:9)

Helping Mandalay Fire Victims



Friends of Burma provide help to three pastors who were affected by a fire in Mandalay. They in turn shared the blessings they received with others. Below is the excerpt from their report.

- Pastor Than Aung divided his portion into two – one for 16 households and the other for the ward people. His care packs include 7 items – rice, cooking oil, bean, tea leaves, fried beans, chicken eggs, and face masks. After he shared the care packs with 16 most needy households, he bought vegetables and cooking oils and let the ward people come and get as needed.
- Pastor Silas bought 3 items – rice bags, cooking oils and chicken eggs with his portion of the gift, which he shared with 16 needy households too. He gave cooking oil and chicken eggs to 5 more families in addition.
- I (Pastor Philip Bo Aung Lin) bought 6 items with my gift – rice bags, cooking oil, bean, noodle, chicken eggs and sardines, which I shared with 8 needy households on my street.

The people we shared the care gifts with are mostly masons, stevedores, motorcycle taxi drivers, laundrymen, carpenters, widows, motorcycle washers, the paralyzed, etc. And they have been trying hard to survive since COVID lockdown. They sent their heartfelt gratitude to you for your love and concern for them as well. Thank you very much again.

The LORD bless you more abundantly in return! Philip



Providing Sustenance for Needy Families in Dalah Township

Greetings from Myanmar.

I am a pastor serving at Lai Baptist Church and a secretary of the Evangelism and Mission Department of the church. We have one mission field in Dalah township in Yangon. Many people in Dalah township left their villages and came to stay in Yangon for daily survival with their families and work as tricycle drivers, fishermen, canoe boat drivers, carriers, laborers and so on. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, most of them lost their jobs and were facing hardships for daily expenses. When I was asked to manage your donation, I chose fifteen families and gave your gifts to each family regardless of religion and race. Three of them could not pay for their rental houses for months. Most of them became jobless since last year. Two of them could not run their small shops for months. They were so happy to receive your kind donation and love. (I have attached the photos of them).

I am so sure that your kindness and empathy would be able to solve many of their problems and would motivate to stay stronger in hope and love in their daily lives. I am so honored and pleased to participate in your humanitarian aid program.

With much thanks,
ZELMA NGUN UK



Orphanage Care Shelters

Due to school closures, students in the orphanage care shelters participate in life training activities. The supervisors of the orphanages are diligently teaching handmade craft training, music lessons, basic English and Karen language skills, and cement block-making, along with ensuring their physical and mental health needs. During this pandemic, the care centers are planning Zoom conferences for those orphanages with internet. Despite all these efforts, children are going through a very traumatic time and children from two orphanages even had to flee for safety. The leaders of the orphanage care centers requests your fervent prayers to overcome this extremely challenging time.

Lightning for Learning Report



We thank all our generous sponsors for your loving support for the orphans' higher education in the Delta areas. School closures and food insecurity for all women and children exist due to the military coup, with the looming potential displacement of any childcare center or community. As a memorial to our mother and Ama Josephine Wu, and sister and aunt, Christina Wu Nasrawi, both Burmese natives, our team is matching all gifts from November 2020 to December 2021, to provide for the nutritional support for 12 orphanages sponsored by FOB. In June, \$24,000 was sent to the 12 childcare centers. Our second semester of giving will provide Christmas nutrition and support for these precious little brothers and sisters. Thank you for

your generosity! Our team ran a ½ marathon in Great Falls, MT in May. We will run the Duke City half marathon in Albuquerque, NM on October 17, with prayer and supplication, for the health, safety, and well-being of all orphans in Burma.

Thank you for **Running the Race of Life to Love** with us!
"I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you," John 4:18

Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School and College (KKBBSC)

After three people in Mae La refugee camp were infected by COVID-19, a lockdown ensued and classes in Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School and College had to be stopped. KKBBSC now has small group meetings, online classes, and in-person classes from time to time only. People are afraid that the virus will spread to the whole camp. They have to be very careful because they do not have a good health care system in the camp and all the houses in the camp are cramped with no proper walls. They are doing everything they can to prevent the spread of the virus, and at the same time continuing their ministries. They need your support and prayers.



Kawthoolei Hope Theological Seminary (KHTS)



Kawthoolei Hope Theological Seminary, located in the Thai-Burma border, held their very first commencement ceremony and celebrated the achievement of 12 students, who graduated with Master of Divinity (MDiv). KHTS now offers not only the MDiv program, but also Master of Arts in Socio-cultural and Political Transformation. Utilizing non-violent initiatives, the program aims at giving directions to issues such as ambiguous vision, indecisive strategy, not-up-to-par leadership, and poor governance. The program is designed to predispose a new generation of more creative and interdisciplinary leaders, able to provide new forms of structure that make

sense of present realities, envisage the future that is different, and bring about positive changes accordingly. Eleven students in the MA program and faculty members are seen in the picture above. COVID prevents full-time in-person classes. As a result, a hybrid of virtual and in-person classes is in place. Hope Seminary is determined to do its best care for their students and provide quality education. However, challenges are towering, and they need our prayers and support.



Updates on Internally Displaced People (IDPs)



Friends of Burma has been providing support for IDPs from many ethnic groups. Since 1975, the Karen people were hard hit by the "four cut" ethnic cleansing operation by the Burmese regime (cut food, funds, recruits, and information) and today's tyranny against the Karen continues unabated. All these result in widespread displacement. The IDPs are those trapped within the country in need of food, shelter, medical care, physical and mental security, and education help. One

of FOB's partners in supporting IDPs is Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Convention (KKBC). KKBC relief teams have been delivering dried food (rice, noodles, canned fish, dried fish, porridge packets), cooking oil, medicines, etc. into deep jungles where IDPs are hiding. They report that rice bags are now harder to deliver because of the Thai authority's restrictions. With rainy season come flooding, outbreak of diseases aggravating health conditions, travelling challenges, etc. The rainy season does curtail aerial bombing efforts, but on-foot militant activities against innocent civilians continue. The Karen people

are resilient in that they continue to offer education to their children. The children of IDPs need food, medicine, and basic school supplies. The status of the IDPs remains dismal, but every time help is delivered, hope is ignited. Let's not forget the IDPs and help generously!



WISH LIST

- ♥ Orphan support – \$360 per year for one child
- ♥ Higher education support for orphans (Lightning for Learning) – any amount
- ♥ Oxygen concentrators (KBC Hospital, Matthew 25 Clinic) – \$1,100 per oxygen concentrator
- ♥ KBC Hospital COVID support – any amount
- ♥ KBC Hospital Oxygen plant and generator – \$2 million
- ♥ Matthew 25 Clinic COVID support – any amount
- ♥ KKBBSC medicine, masks, PPEs – any amount
- ♥ KKBBSC evangelistic teams (13 teams) to go out on mission trip as soon as they can – \$150/team
- ♥ IDPs relief – any amount
- ♥ Education support for IDP children – any amount
- ♥ Hope Seminary faculty subsidy – \$200/month
- ♥ Hope Seminary student scholarship – \$400/year
- ♥ Hope Seminary copier machine – \$1,500
- ♥ Alternative Christmas gift given to a poor family – \$50
- ♥ Women's empowerment group – (1) raising goats - \$200; (2) raising chicken - \$100; (3) serger/overlocker sewing machine - \$150; Materials for masks to be made with the donated labor - \$100 for 100 masks
- ♥ Fund for emergency need requests – any amount

Do You Have A Will?

If not, consider the following risks associated with not having a will or estate plan.

- Your loved ones will have no control over the distribution of your assets once you are gone. The local court will decide how your assets should be divided.
- In the court decision, no religious, educational, charitable, or other philanthropic causes will be included. You will miss opportunities for charitable gift annuities and trusts that can benefit you during your life, as well as helping your favorite causes.
- Taxes, expenses, and fees could substantially reduce your estate.

If you already have a will, please consider Friends of Burma in your future plan to continue your favorite programs or projects. Please contact Neil or Diana at neildianasowards@juno.com for more information.

All the work of FOB is done by volunteers in the U. S. FOB has one paid staff member in Myanmar. Less than 2% of our income goes for overhead—most of which is for our one staff member in Myanmar and printing and distribution of our 3 annual newsletters.

This newsletter was written and compiled by Cynthia Wu and Tansy Kadoe. Please notify us if you wish to be on the email list instead of hard, mailed copy as this saves us money.

FOB, tax ID 20-5572384, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible.

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