

Friends of Burma (FOB) Spring 2006

Dear Friends,

Thirteen volunteers of Friends of Burma met in Scottsdale, AZ on Feb. 4, to develop a permanent organizational structure. They voted to form an Executive Committee of sixteen who will make decisions regarding new policies and programs. They also have the responsibility of filling vacancies. There was a positive spirit in the meeting, a lot was accomplished and good fellowship was enjoyed. A final draft of the Bylaws of FOB is being put together and is available to anyone who wishes to see it and make suggestions. All members of the Executive Committee serve without compensation or travel expenses as do all volunteers in the U. S.



Entrepreneur with her pigs.

Accomplishments:

- FOB has made a number of grants to start micro credit groups. Here is just one report from Myaungmya Women's Group: Naw Gree May, Shan-Chaung village, Myaungmya Township, Pig Raising. "I am serving as a mission worker of my church. I have very little income and I find difficulties in making ends meet. I always pray to God to help me getting aid from somewhere so that I can do something to make more money. A year ago I got some money from the "Women Fund Raising and Loan Association ". I bought a mother pig at a low price and I keep it for a year. I was blessed with two broods a little pigs. The first had seven and the second eight. I sold all of them and I got nearly (150000) Kyats (\$150) which was of great help to me. I fed the mother pig well for two months and I sold her away. With the money that I have saved from these pigs, I brought two smaller white she-pigs and kept them. I did as I had done with the first mother pig and I am now blessed with many pigs which will bring me a lot of money. I have an 82 years old mother to look after and I find I can give her good nourishing food to my satisfaction. I am more hospitable to all the guests who come to visit me. I can donate more to the church and to others too. I am quite satisfied and happy with my life now and I know the two she-pigs will also bring me more money in the days to come." (Edited)
- FOB gave sixty nine books to each of 16 schools. Feedback has been positive. *Lahtaw Jaw Seng with books for Waimaw Theological School.*



- The FOB website www.friendsofburma.org has been updated and expanded. Take a look! There is a list of resources, ministries, and reports that we can not afford to mail.
- FOB purchased 1,000 more mosquito nets because of a recent report in the Johns Hopkins Public Health Newsletter confirming the benefit of nets as malaria prevention.
- We received a \$2,000 gift which will be used to equip four rooms at Myanmar Institute of Theology as a memorial.
- An FOB supporter has donated the cost of printing 1,000 Bible Commentaries.
- He is raising money to buy 100 guitars at \$50 each for the various Bible schools and Seminaries.
- FOB granted aid to a man who brought 110 students from up country to Rangoon for tutoring. Seventy were able to pass their matriculation test. Without special tutoring there would be little hope any village student could pass the test.
- Pitch pipes or master keys are very much in demand in Burma. They cost about \$5 here. We were able to find an importer from China in Burma who supplied us with 1,000 for \$1.50 each.

Clinic Report by Tansy Kadoe: From Burma, “Your gifts made it possible to buy some new equipment for the clinic including two nitrous oxide cylinders, two oxygen cylinders, an air sup for oxygen, and instruments for ENT, orthopedic, and gynecological operations. The clinic works more effectively and efficiently with these new resources. In addition, we are eagerly awaiting the new ultrasound, which is a gift from the First Baptist Church of Saginaw, MI. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for making a difference in the lives of our staff and patients. “ With some NGOs leaving Burma, the clinic is even more important.

Orphan Report by David Horton: We thank over 50 individuals, churches and groups that provide support for 130 children in five Baptist sponsored orphanages. Recently one person sent us a check for ten (10) years support in honor and tribute to her daughter. Some individuals support (\$12 per month) as many as 10 orphans each month at \$12 each per month. We thank all who support and pray for these dear children and those who work with and provide care for them. I send out an annual letter requesting that supporters send an annual check (\$144) by the end of the year for the following year. Persons who no longer are able or interested in supporting an orphan should notify us. If you are interested in supporting a child in this way should contact Diana Sowards with your initial support check.



Agape orphans singing.

Library Report by Sue Dolbow. On my recent visit, I saw improvements to M.I.T., K.B.T.S., and Dr. Chit Maung libraries. The librarians and staff members work very hard to build their small collections. They are working against availability of materials, electricity fluctuations

creating havoc with computer automation, and even the tropical climate and termites that are unkind to books. Still they provide the best services that they can offer. They all have requested more books to be sent. I am sure financial support is also very much needed.

Daw Pan Shwe Orphanage Report:

Judy Lundy: The needs at Daw Gyi Daw Nge Orphanage, Taunggyi, continue to be great and with that in mind, the fund-raising efforts that are generated from committed friends and independent resources have been gathered to assist Daw Pan Shwe and her sisters with monies for a variety of necessities. The first and foremost focus has been in covering school fees and purchasing school supplies for each child and for the installation of a generator to allow the students to study at night once the electricity goes off.



Children with Christmas Sacks.

Christmas though was a different type of contribution and enough money was raised for the sisters to purchase presents and sweets for each child to have a "Christmas Sack". The celebration was something that was enjoyed by all and it is hoped that a major fund-raiser in the Scottsdale, AZ area will be initiated within the next several months to continue to support the efforts of Daw Pan Shwe and her staff.

Eye Glasses Program. This program grants \$10 for eye examination and glasses. A recent letter said, "After I got spectacles, I was free from eye dazzle and my dizziness is gone. Now I can read and study happily. Daniel Thawng Khan Lian." (Edited)

Recruiting next generation of help the Burmese. An effort is underway to recruit the younger generation to get involved in the leadership positions for the continuing ministries of Friends of Burma. Please pray for this effort and open your heart as to how you can help. There will be more information in the next newsletter. If you know of Burmese in America, please send us their addresses.

Burma Christian Fellowship Tour: David Horton. Four persons went on the January tour for fourteen days and all reports from the participants said it was a very meaningful experience. Dr. David Horton will be leading the next tour January 8 to 22, 2007 in Burma. He has been to Burma and been very involved in FOB.



Nursery School with FOB given mosquito nets

FOB encourages persons to go to Burma. Here are three reports.

From Sue Dolbow. I have just returned from my fourth trip to Burma. A very busy itinerary greeted me on arrival. I was scheduled to visit friends and libraries, to preach at three services, to attend a seminary graduation, and for the ever-present delicious meals offered by our Christian friends. So few Americans or other foreigners visit Burma that everyone wants to see and entertain the visitors. The people are most appreciative of the friendship and support for them that is given by a visit from us.

The people of Burma are known for their friendliness and hospitality. They compete well with our own southern region and their hospitality reputation. It is hard not to lose your heart to these wonderful Christian friends when you visit. The FOB January annual tour is the best place to be introduced to Burma for the first time. A complete and comfortable tour is managed by our tour guide, Robertson Bwa. It is not your usual sight-seeing tour, but an opportunity to create friendships with many Christians from all ethnic groups. You get “up close and personal.” The accommodations are very comfortable. You do need to carry a camera and plan on shooting lots of pictures and video. (The tour is in January, the coolest month and best time to visit.)

March is a very hot time to visit, but perhaps the perspiration loss helped me to combat gaining weight from those good meals. A “bouncing” car trip to Patheingyi also created a great “exercise” experience.

My favorite experience on this trip was attending the K.B.T.S. graduating senior’s drama and concert. Two plays were written and performed by the students: a village love story and the Biblical story of Joseph. My favorite actors were the two sheep in Joseph. The audience became so involved that when Potiphar’s wife was accusing Joseph, three young girls in the audience shouted, “She’s lying, she’s lying!” Bible training for children is alive and well in Burma!

Bottom line: forget Disneyworld or the French Riviera, visit Burma. It is a life-changing experience. Sue Dolbow, retired librarian.

From Lew Murdock. “After visiting the Philippines many years ago I saw the need for scholarships and books so teachers could adequately teach. Since my books to India and Philippines got through but some of my books to Burma got lost en route I stopped sending books there but had my bank take out money each month automatically for Burma scholarships. When I saw a newsletter from Friends of Burma, I was impressed with the needs, variety of concerns and opportunities, so I investigated and decided FOB was a reliable organization and began participating in some of their programs. I got so interested my daughter suggested I visit Myanmar. I thought of mosquitoes, soldiers and police, up-set stomachs from foods plus my 80 year old body. . . I went on my own and saw no mosquitoes, soldiers, or police and the hotels were cheap and comfortable, I liked the food and felt great. I visited several churches, Bible Colleges, an orphanage and Baptist hospital as well as a fabulous Buddhist shrine complex, a Hindu and Chinese temples. I met some outstanding Christian teachers, students and leaders. Would I like to go back? You bet. Do I recommend a visit for those interested? Yes. Am I pleased with the work FOB and others are doing there? Yes. Would I like to end my days believing I made a difference for good and God in the world and have help create Christian pastors, teachers, missionaries and other leaders? I can do it by sending designated money thru organizations like FOB and American Baptist International Ministries. That way I can feel I made a difference. And so can you.

Lew Murdock, (Chaplain, ret.) USA.”

From Jim & Lydia Tompkins. Our trip to Myanmar filled our hearts with awe. The country is filled with such beauty and wonders that we were always looking forward to the next stop. I am an adventurer at heart, but my wife is not. She was quite anxious about our trip. Yes, the food is different, the accommodations are not 4 star, but this trip is one we will never forget. The energy of the people, the inner beauty of the Christians we met has forever touched our hearts. The trip was an excellent blend of sight-seeing and visiting with the Christians of Burma. We got to know the needs of the Christians, and felt the pulse of the Lord in His work in Myanmar. The Christians we met are stellar examples of rejoicing and enduring in the face of adversity. The seminary students, the orphans, the children all touched our hearts with the sincerity of their love and joy in the face of hardship. There is no sense of doom or gloom at all. The political and economic climate is one that most Americans could not endure, yet the people we met are rejoicing and thriving. I had such a sense of joy during my visit. We were most impressed with the seminary students. They study hard, sing with joyful hearts, and promptly obey their teachers. Their heart is in their studies, and they have a real vision for witnessing and improving their country with the gospel of Christ. It would be great if American students could capture their zeal for learning and living.

Myanmar is a great place to visit. The ancient wonders, the temples, the village life are amazing to see. We witnessed great wonders that we could never see anywhere else. But most amazing of all is God's work among a people that have become abandoned by most of the world. Our visit greatly impacted our life, our ministry and our focus. We encourage everyone to go.

Jim & Lydia Tompkins, Pastor Edgerton Southern Baptist Church.

If you prefer, an e-mail version of this newsletter is available with the pictures in color.

All work in the U. S. is done by volunteers. Overhead is less than 1% of income. All donations are tax deductible and should be mailed to Friends of Burma, South Wayne Baptist Church, 548 Home Ave., Fort Wayne, IN 46807. E-mail: neildianasowards@juno.com
Phone: (260) 745-3658.



Orphans with musical instruments.

Friends of Burma works closely with International Ministries (IM) of American Baptist Churches (ABC) which helps the Myanmar Baptist Convention. FOB hopes that everyone will do everything they can to keep support flowing to IM of ABC.

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

1. Karen Baptist Convention Clinic. Wish list: 1. Operating table: \$1680. 2. 1 Delivery table: \$810. 3. 1 Birthing table: \$370. 3. 2 Rotating chairs for surgeon: \$50 each. 4. One television: \$150. 5. Spot Light: \$1790.

2. 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.

3. 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.

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

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Sponsor an Orphan. The Pathein Myaungmya Sgaw Karen Baptist Association has started an orphanage, Kwe Lwe and needs sponsors for 5 orphans. The cost to support a child is \$144 per year—all this money goes to the orphanage. Typical is Naw Beh Meh, Age 10, Grade 5, Ambitious, wants to be a nurse.

8. To repair tornado damage at Nyaungleben \$5,000.

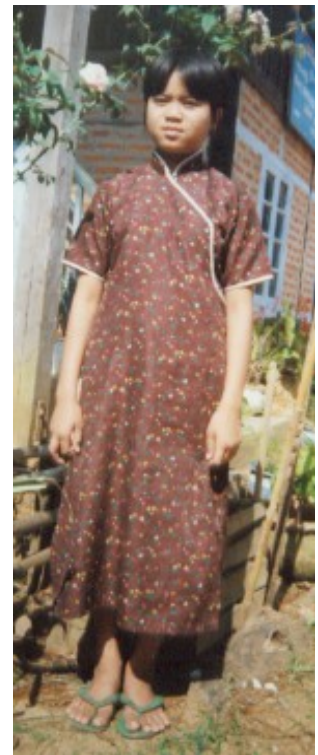
9. Go Forward Press for Karen Baptist Convention. Wish lists: (1) offset printing press \$12,000 (2) binding machine \$2,500 (3) cutter machine \$6,500 (4) computer \$500 (5) film machine \$600 (6) digital camera \$300 (7) graphic scanner \$250 (8) grinding machine \$350 (9) compact imaging system machine \$500.

10. Other worthy programs: Eye Glasses \$10.00, Aid a Retired

Christian worker \$10.00, Hearing aids for Ministers. \$50., Mosquito nets \$7 each.

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

www.friendsofburma.org



Naw Beh Meh