

# Friends Of Burma (FOB) Newsletter, Spring 2007

Dear FOB Friends,

2007 represents one of the most active and productive years since the inauguration of the Friends Of Burma organization. Seven FOB executive committee members traveled to Burma in January of 2007 on their own expense for the purpose of making an assessment of the fiscal and material donations provided by supporters of Friends Of Burma. Meetings were held with members of the various involved organizations. Discussions covered the writing of progress status reports and grant proposals. Recommendations on improvements for the various areas were shared and very well accepted by the counterpart staffs. Planned facility tours were also provided by the on-site personnel. These facility tours were informative and provided a greater operational insight to the visiting executive committee members.



The Friends OF Burma Annual Meeting was held at the West Dunlap Baptist Church in Peoria, Arizona, on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007. There were 12 executive committee members in attendance. The agenda of the meeting covered (a) Status report of Friends Of Burma application of the 501 (C) 3. (b) Status report of license from the Office of Foreign Asset Control license to send funds to Burma. (c) a review of the correspondence that was received throughout the year by FOB (d) voting on the received grant proposals and the final distribution of funds and (e) a review of the Summary for 2006 FOB Budget report.



Through the generosity of our many FOB friends and supporters, various project grants as well as scholarships have been awarded and the on-going progress can be observed as follows:

## Accomplishments:

- The FOB Annual Meeting was held with the greatest number of Board members participating.
- Grant proposals totalling \$80,000 were voted upon and awarded.
- FOB has received a renewal of the Office of Foreign Asset Control license to send money to Burma.
- FOB application for 501( C) (3)

document is completed and has been submitted.

- Approval was made to proceed with the purchase of mosquito nets.

## FOB Updates and News:

- A request was made to FOB by Tansy Kadoe for a matching grant for up to \$2000. This money is to support Naw Ler Blute Po from Karen Baptist Theological Seminary (KBTS) to attend graduate school at the Payap Christian University in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The needed funds were raised. We thank all donors for their generosity.
- An organization that sells Third World Craft items has voted to contribute \$1000 to KBC Healthcare Clinic, \$1000 to MIT scholarships and \$1000 for support to the faculty staff. They will also be assisting with the medical expenses for Kyu Kyu who is returning to teach at Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT).
- A nurse, who is a supporter of FOB, has extended a check for \$1000 which was followed by a \$3000 check to assist a student completing studies in the Philippines.
- Diana Sowards is doing volunteer work by helping out new arrived Karen refugees in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Each person has to be taken to a minimum of seven appointments for medical, dental needs and etc. If interested in helping the refugees in this way, please call Diana Sowards at 260-745-3658
- With at least 12,000 Karen refugees coming into the US this year, there is desperate need for Karen-English translators. This work can be done by telephone but usually needs to be done during the day when the doctors' and dentists' offices are open. If anyone interested and available during the day to assist with translation, please contact Diana Sowards at 260-745-3658
- On May 31<sup>st</sup> 2007, FOMGB held a very productive meeting. Sung presented to the meeting attendees, the CD tapes, reading materials, two digital cameras, battery charger and batteries donated by the FOB. The cameras were intended for pictorial feedback.
- A supporter of FOB, has generously donated Encarta 07 encyclopedia CDs, guitars and keyboards to various Bible Schools and seminaries.
- The professors at Myanmar Institute of Theology requested an overhead projector. Four professors regularly use it in the classroom. It is also used to make presentations about MIT to foreign visitors. It is helpful for the special summer session on "Doing Theology Under the Bo Tree". It has been used at ATEM, MBC, MCC, the Judson Research Programs for symposium, World Vision and Hope for the World for seminars, and workshops.
- Myanmar Institute of Theology offers a Summer Seminar: "Doing Theology Under the Bo Tree". It will be held July 9 to August 3, 2007 for foreign students. Please contact Neil Sowards for more information.
- Recently two churches from Dawei Myeik Association suffered destruction from a landslide and flooding. Also, a strong cyclone struck Chaungtha, Ohn Chaung, Wetthay, Kyudau, Polong, Gyin Chaung where many houses and churches were destroyed in addition to more than 20,000 coconut trees being uprooted. Please pray for them.
- Seven years ago, FOB granted money to make videos of the ten best preachers in Burma each preaching their best sermon. These were copied and distributed to 15 seminaries along with videos of American preachers. The video camera was also used on homiletic students so they could see themselves preaching.





- Inductive Bible study program started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2007. Two dorms and a meeting room were provided by KBC. Daniel Saw reported that there are sixteen students, two teaching staffs and three volunteers to help with the administrative tasks. Reported by Daniel Saw, [demupaw@gmail.com](mailto:demupaw@gmail.com).
- With the growing number of children being placed in the Child Enrichment Centers (orphanages), your prayers and financial support of \$13 a month, are desperately needed. Sponsors are asked to send in their support for next year by November. This year, it is \$156 due to the rising of costs and to give the children more medical care. If you have not supported a child in the past, please consider doing so by sending in a check to Diana Sowards. She will provide you with the name and background of the child. If preferred, please indicate your preference of either a boy or a girl.
- Dr. Maung Maung Tin, Director of the Peace Studies Center at the Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT) secured a visa to come to the United States in June 15 for 6 weeks. Dr. Tin will be speaking in various churches throughout the country in addition to participating in two peace conferences. He can be reached through Reverend Stan Murray of the International Ministries, ABC-USA 1-800-222-3872 ext. 2298.
- Reverend Ray Schooler, president of the Board of Directors of International Ministries, visited Burma last November.
- About 9,000 Karen refugees came from camps along the Thai-Burma border in 2006 and somewhere between 12,000 and 18,000 more are expected in 2007. Most are Baptist and are being sent to 18 different American cities. American Baptist International Ministries and National Ministries responded to this opportunity by appointing Duane and Marcia Binkley to work with these Karen refugees. The Binkleys have worked in Thailand for many years and Rev. Binkley speaks Sgaw Karen. He hopes to communicate them with the American Baptist churches in the United States until they can form their own church. He will also visit the refugee camps in Thailand twice a year. If you know of any Karen refugees, please contact him by e-mail at: [dmbink@pobox.com](mailto:dmbink@pobox.com)
- We were able to get a copy of a Karen English picture dictionary from Burma which shows about 2,000 objects in English and Karen. We made 150 copies of the picture dictionary which each cost \$5.37. They are available to any Karen family that may be in need of this dictionary.

## Clinic Report:

- A meeting to review the KBC Healthcare Clinic rebuilding project proposal was held on January, 2007. At the meeting, the budget, architectural design, construction plan and schedule were discussed between the KBC committee members and the building contractor. The transfer of fund for the project has been completed. Materials are being acquired so that the construction can begin according to schedule in October of 2007.

- Some essential medical supplies were delivered to the clinic.

- The two ceiling lights for the operation rooms broke down in late 2006. Since then, these lights have been repaired repeatedly. The last report from the technician was that these operation lights are no longer repairable. The doctors are operating under improperly working lights and it creates a very dangerous situation. The First Baptist Church in Saginaw, MI, is providing a grant for the purchase of one ceiling light. This church has been the most generous supporter of the KBC clinic's mission. The clinic is immensely grateful. The clinic is still in need of one more operation light, which costs \$7,000. Please pray for this need.



- An organization that sells third world craft items has voted to contribute \$1000 to the KBC Healthcare Clinic.



### **Daw Pan Shwe Orphanage Report:**

- A visit was made to the orphanage by the FOB executive committee members to see what accomplishments have been made by the founders and their staff. The findings from this visit have been shared and discussed to the FOB board of directors at the 2007 FOB Executive Committee Annual meeting.

### **Burma Christian Fellowship Tour:**

- Phil Schock, FOB EC member will be leading the tour to Burma in January of 2008. This will be the last tour sponsored by FOB since the Christian tour director is changing jobs and will not be available for a secular tour. Below is the tentative fellowship tour itinerary.

For those who are interested, they should contact Phil Shock at [Rangoon1@aol.com](mailto:Rangoon1@aol.com)

### **BURMA CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP TOUR** **January 7 to January 21, 2008** (tentative schedule)

Burma (Myanmar-52,000,000) is the country where the famous missionaries Ann & Adoniram Judson and their family labored for many years. Judson is looked upon as the person who started the American Protestant missionary movement. The work they started in 1812 was very difficult but prospered and grew. Today the church is vital, alive, dynamic and creative with dedicated leadership. These Christians are a source of great inspiration. Most of the Christian leaders speak English. Previous tour participants respond in the box below.

**Day 1. Monday, 07.01.08.** Arrive in Yangon and be met at the airport by the tour leader, Robertson Bwa will meet you and will arrange lodging at the Royal White Elephant Hotel. Lunch will be served at the hotel and guests are encouraged to unpack and rest for a couple of hours. Visit the compound of the Myanmar Baptist & Karen Baptist headquarters, meet some of the leaders and visit Memorial Hall to learn some of the history of the missionary movement.

**Day 2. Tuesday, 08.01.08.** Visit the large seminary campus in Insein and see the Myanmar Institute of Theology, the Karen Baptist Theological Institute, the Myanmar Institute of Christian Theology and the newly renovated KBCHC clinic. Lunch with Principal Simon P.K. En, with tour members pairing up with English speaking students and faculty. After lunch we will meet representatives of the various ethnic groups dressed in the costumes. We will fly to Heho later in the day and drive in a van to Taunggyi, the capital of Shan State and stay at the Muse Hotel.

**Day 3. Wednesday, 09.01.08.** Spend the whole day sight seeing in mountainous Taunggyi. Visit the local market with its various ethnic groups. After lunch we visit Lay Nyin Thit Library, open to the public and started by the Christians community. We will visit the Karen Baptist Church, Shan State Theological Seminary and enjoy a program of ethnic culture show with Christian songs. We will have dinner with the teachers at the seminary and spend the night at Muse Hotel.

**Day 4. Thursday, 10.01.08.** Drive to Inle Lake. Take a boat trip on Inle Lake and see the Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, the jumping cat's monastery traditional silk and cotton weaving, floating land and markets. Overnight at May Haw Nann Hotel, Nyaung Shwe.



**Day 5. Friday, 11.01.08.** Transfer drive to Heho airport for the afternoon flight to Tada Oo airport and transfer drive to Mandalay, the ancient capital of Myanmar. We will stay at the Mandalay Royal Hotel.

**Day 6. Saturday, 12.01.08.** Sight seeing all day in Mandalay, the center of craft, culture and Buddhism including: wood carving, stone (marble) and bronze casting, gold leaf making, tapestry work and the making marionette making. We hope to watch the sunset from Mandalay Hill. We may see the working water buffaloes on the riverbank. A Burmese puppet show is available to those interested. We will spend another night at the Mandalay Royal Hotel.

**Day 7. Sunday, 13.01.08.** We will worship at Aung Pin Lei, Judson Baptist Church and the memorial to the Judson's. We will visit a few more places after lunch before transfer drive to Tada Oo Airport for flight to Bagan where we will stay at Aung Mingalar Hotel .

**Day 8. Monday, 14.01.08.** Whole day of sightseeing in Bagan, a loose collection of villages. It is known as one of the seven wonders of the modern world because of over 2,000 remaining temples and pagodas built during the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is said that at one time there were over four million pagodas here. We will spend another night at Aung Mingalar Hotel.

**Day 9. Tuesday, 15.01.08.** In the morning we will visit with some of the minority Christians in Bagan, see the famous lacquered industry and do a little more shopping. After lunch we leave Bagan and fly back to Yangon for another night at the Royal White Elephant Hotel.

**Day 10. Wednesday, 16.01.08.** The whole day will be spent sightseeing in Yangon and environ including a short boat trip to Dala, traditional glass making and orphanages and spend the night back at the Royal White Elephant Hotel.

**Day 11. Thursday, 17.01.08.** Drive to Pathein in the western delta area of Myanmar. Visit the Pwo Karen Bible School meeting with teachers and students. We will overnight at La Pyit Wun Guest House .

**Day 12. Friday, 18.01.08.** The whole day sight seeing in Pathein, the capital of Ayarwady Division including: Ko Tha Pyu Seminary, Matthew 25 Love Clinic, Women's' Domestic School (teaches handicrafts) and the Baptist headquarters. Students will often do their ethnic dances. We will visit an umbrella shop and taste the famous rice candy. We will spend another night at the guest house.

**Day 13. Saturday, 19.01.08.** Drive back to Yangon after visiting the colorful umbrella making factory and enjoy the famous rice candy and pottery. After lunch we will visit the Women's Development Association and learn about their amazing economic development plan. Overnight at the Royal White Elephant Hotel.

**Day 14. Sunday, 20.01.08.** Worship is always in English at the Immanuel Baptist Church. We will enjoy lunch in a downtown restaurant. More sightseeing of the famous Shwedagon Pagoda and shopping at the famous Bogyoke Market (General Aung San Market) with over 2,000 shops. Some may choose to leave Myanmar on an evening flight. The rest of the group will spend the night at the Royal White Elephant Hotel.

**Day 15. Monday, 21.01.08.** Breakfast at the hotel and farewell to Robertson Bwa with transport to the airport for flights back to the United States. Ask about optional 4 days to cities of Paan, Viathrough Bago, Maulmine, Musareee, and Kyaikamee by the sea.

**Cost:** Air travel to Myanmar is your responsibility. There are a number of carriers to choose from. Roundtrip air travel between the US and Myanmar is \$1,000 to \$1,500 depending on the airlines and your place of departure. There is an airport tax of \$10. The ground tour in Myanmar is \$1,500 (14D/13N) per person that includes all entrance fees, hotels, meals, bus, train, and internal airlines fares. An optional tour of 19D/18N is \$1,850. We will travel in an air-conditioned 10-passenger van. You will need a passport and visa for Myanmar. It is highly recommend that each tour member take at least \$500 extra to give away to worthy schools and programs. Putting a \$10 bill into the hands of a Bible school teacher who makes \$5 per month will give you incredible joy. Additional days before or after the tour are \$35 - \$50 per day for hotel and meals.

We use the services of **Robertson Bwa**, (robertsonbwa@gmail.com) a very experienced Christian tour director resides at: 790, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Ward No.1 Yangon (95-1-653320).

**Phil Schock** is the coordinator for this trip and will be traveling with the group. He was born in Rangoon to American missionary parents. Phil left Burma with his parents in 1966 at the age of 8, and has since returned to Burma to visit three times. He has a BA in Sociology from Lewis and Clark College and a Masters in Management from Marylhurst College. He worked in management for Intel Corporation for 19 years in Oregon. Send a \$200 refundable deposit (check payable to Friends of Burma) to Phil at:

Phil Schock  
4214 SW Corbett Ave.  
Portland, OR 97239  
503-246-2304  
E-mail: rangoon1@aol.com



## **Library Report:**

- A meeting to review the grant proposals by the Dr. Chit Maung Library (DCML) staff.

Corrections and suggestion were made to meet the FOB proposal requirements.

- Tour of the facility was provided by the staff.

- Mawchi reports that the Lay Nyin Thit Library in Taunggyi is doing well. A plan is in place to send a qualified candidate to Yangon for the purpose of pursuing a library science diploma. The Loikaw branch library is reported to be very well organized and managed by interested and enthusiastic high school teachers and church elders.



## **Opportunities for Helping our Fellow Baptists in Burma:**

- Word has spread about the guitar and keyboard program. Many schools have requested to be part of the program. The cost is \$45 for a guitar with a case and \$400 for the keyboard.

- \$100 was donated for sixteen schools to copy books from their libraries. Since the U.S. Post Office has abolished M-Bags, so that we can no longer send books to Burma. However, several schools have requested to be part of this program. It is an appreciated program because they get to pick the book that is being copied. For \$100, 63 books can be supplied to a bible school or a seminary library.



Departure from Phoenix, Arizona to Rangoon, Burma. January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007