

Friends of Burma, Inc

Spring 2013. 548 Home Ave, Fort Wayne, IN 46807 Email: neildianasowards@juno.com Web: friendsofburma.org Phone: 260 745-3658. Compiled by Dr. May Pearl & Diana Sowards.

As Neil and I prepare for what may be our last “in person” trip to Burma in late November, we are trying to assess how we can best be of service to the country. We are a 501(C)(3) charity devoted to helping the Burmese people, mainly the people associated with the Myanmar Baptist Convention and their umbrella organizations.



One of the organizing principles of a charity is that it must dispense a public service rather than a private good. To do this we have tried to keep our projects small and directed by people in various groups in Burma (now called Myanmar). As you know, our executive board has been completely volunteer and we each pay our own expenses to the Annual Meeting and Burma.

Pictured is the group as we met in February, 2013 in Peoria, AZ. We are striving to attract people who have a real connection and concern for the people of Burma.

From time to time we would like you to read a paragraph from one of our board members about why he



Htaw and family

or she supports Friends of Burma. Here is a testimonial from our newest board member, HtawHtoo. “My name is HtawHtoo and I’m currently living in Indianapolis with my wife, Kelly and our three beautiful children. I’m grateful and honored to be invited to join Friends of Burma as a committee member. I have heard and read great things FOB has been doing, helping the people in Burma. During my four years in Thailand I visited war torn Karen State and saw brutality the people have to

face under the Burma Army. My heart especially cries for the children in the refugee camps. Without any promising future and good education they easily are exploited. I hope FOB invests more resources

in education and vocational training for the younger generation. I believe a good education is a key to a better future.” (This is edited from a longer letter. Htaw is now in Officer Training for 4 months and could not attend the board meeting)



Occasionally we receive thank you letters from students who have been aided by you donors. Here are a few of them:

Please accept my deep appreciation for your love and good deeds. It is a great pleasure for me to receive financial aid from you that has enabled me to study God’s words. I thank God and also I thank you and your organization for their help in enabling me to undergo L.Th. course (at Papun Karen Baptist Bible School).
Saw HtooHtoo Aye

From HpuMya San Bible School, Pathein (edited) We express our genuine thanks to all Friends of Myanmar for the love and



Some faculty from HpuMya San Bible School ,Pathein

concern and your constant contributions for messing (food), for scholarships to our Bible School. (they provide training for knitting, sewing machine, and handwork projects for the girls and agricultural training for the boys). This is a Pwo Karen school. They also mentioned that they shared a School Prayer Day in October with the larger Sgaw Karen Seminary, KoThaByu.

From Hpu Saw Bu Bible School,

Yedwinyegan comes: “We thankfully received one lakh kyats (\$ 116) for students who have problems in reading. We selected five students and gave each twenty-thousand kyats (\$23.00). We are glad to see their smiles when they receive your help. Please mention us, a poor Bible School, whenever you pray. We hope you all receive a big God Bless.” (They are referring to eyeglasses aid I imagine—as

you know that is one of our small projects, to provide eye tests and glasses to the needy).



From Hpu Ki Ku Memorial Bible School, Kyar Inn Village. “We use the gift for our library. Because we need many books to promote our library

standard. We sent you a photo of our librarian and the books we bought.”

From The Yangon Kayin Baptist Bible School (edited). “May God Bless you and keep you whatever you do and wherever you are. In our association we have Franc Hall building project to celebrate 200 years of Judson’s mission in Myanmar, 100 years of Karen Baptist Convention and Annual Meeting of Yangon K.B. Home Mission Churches Association. In this project our school has responsible (sic) to participate 600 Lakhs (\$68,000.00) of donation for this. So we use the contribution you sent for our Bible School in this project. We hope you would satisfy for that contribution. We have to finish this building in the end of October, 2013.

From Saw Blute Moo Taw “I was a lecturer at Karen Baptist Theological Institute. (This is the highest level among the Karen seminaries). By the grace of God I was accepted to the D.Min program at KBTTS. Thank you so much for your generous sponsorship for my D.Min studies.” (Both parents are active Christian teachers and administrators. His sister also is a teacher).

We think the above will give you an idea of the breadth of our assistance in education to the younger generation and I hope HtawHtoo will be pleased (and you donors) with our efforts.

Sponsoring Children. Another aspect of our service is the support of orphanages, or Child Care Centers, in the last 20 or so years. Many of you have sponsored children in need, but you rarely get reports on your individual children because we do not hire people to write the letters for the children as more well known organizations do. Here follows the story of Rev. and Mrs. David Horton. “My wife and I have been supporting orphans for the past 25 years. Some agencies provide a transcribed letter a couple of times a year with a somewhat stereotype format. In 1995 we started supporting orphans through Friends of Burma at \$12 per month. Initially we got an information sheet on Jenny Paw. She was only 4 years old and left at the door of a church operated orphanage at Loikaw, Myanmar. Attached to the sheet was the picture of a sad looking little girl, poorly dressed, thin and malnourished in a faded dress. Our hearts went out to her and we had her picture attached to the calendar on our kitchen wall. As the years passed by we saw her grow taller but still poorly dressed and undernourished. We decided to support 3 more children. When Jenny Paw was about 17 we received word that she had completed her schooling and left the orphanage. We took her picture down wondering where she was and what she was doing.

“In January 2013 a friend visited Myanmar and some of the church sponsored orphanages and Bible Schools. Because he was an American, a young woman approached him and asked if he knew David Horton. When he said he knew me and would see me at a board meeting in a couple of weeks Jenny



Paw rejoiced and quickly bought a traditional Karen shirt and sent it along with a note of thanks for our prayers and support over the years.

“This so much more than a coincidence; it was a blessing from God. Jenny is in her third year at the nearby Kayah Bible School and contemplates a life of Christian service. So, for the cost of a couple cups of coffee each week, a

child was nurtured in the Christian faith by loving staff in a very simple orphanage in far off Myanmar. What a blessing!”

From Agape Orphanage Project in Loikaw (edited) “After the exam, the children will have a long vacation until their school reopens in June. During the vacation, they will attend the various courses that will be opened by the church such as violin, music, youth trainings, special English proficiency course, Bible Study course, and Karen language course. They are all valuable training courses for them. The committee humbly begs you to continue helping the children as you have done in previous years. Without your kind help we cannot continue the good work.”

From DawGyiDawNge Orphanage and Old People’s Home.“By the grace of God all the children are very healthy. They eat, they drink and play. But they don’t learn very much. Most of the children are orphans, refugees, abandoned when soldiers marched into the villages. They killed, they raped, they burnt. So the villagers had to run away for their lives. All the children are very happy and pray for all the donors.” (We think there is most definitely psychological trauma here, expressed in the poor learning).



Dear Donors. The children are praying for YOU.

You may have read about the continuing strife and mayhem in various areas in Burma. There is still much fighting and dislocation in Kachin State and as undesigned donations come to us we endeavor to send help to Myitkyina to aid the

Baptist churches there. They are ministering to thousands of internal refugees, known as IDP’s. Recently there is new sectarian fighting which we think is perpetrated by political thugs (reminiscent of the Brown shirts in Germany). In Meiktila there were wholesale attacks on peaceful Muslims. The Myo Bible School in Sittwe took in 13 traumatized young people into their school compound in Rakhine State. I imagine it was a matter of survival for these children. Although this happened last year, things are still very tense in Sittwe. The seminary students shared from their own meager rations to give survival to these kids.

We’d like you to see a letter our good friend Rev. ErvillePorwy (named for Neil’s father) sent to us to show what Christians are facing. “As requested I would like to write about one Mrokhani pastor by the name of Rev. MaungNgeGyi. He was sent to Bassein in 1986 to attend grade 6 and middle and high school in Bassein and was sponsored by Kaw KawBwaKren Baptist Church. After his graduation from HS he joined MICT (Burmese seminary in Rangoon) for 4 years and returned to his home village—Min TharSeik as an evangelist. He worked there and evangelized his villagers not only in preaching, teaching the gospel, but also helping his villagers in education, health and holistic development. His selfless service and godly good example has motivated many of his villagers to accept Christ as their

Savior Lord. As many were converted to Christianity from Animism and Buddhism, he organized believers to construct a bigger place for worship services. After constructing his church, the local authorities came and issued an order to pull down and destroy his church, saying that this building had no permission to erect it. Rev. Mg Gyi argued and denied to pull down his church. He told the local authorities if they also destroyed their monastery which had no permission from the government but existed up to now, he would also destroy his church building. When the authorities heard this reply, they have strong argument among themselves and that issue was calmed down up to this day. Serving the Lord there for over 10 years, he married to a Mro young lady who was also a graduate of MICT and at the same year the Association gave him an ordination. Now we can say that the Min TharSeikMro Baptist Church which was led by Rev. Mg Gyi is the strongest and biggest church in the Mrokhams Baptist Churches Assn. He has 3 kids and over 150 church members. He was also elected as the Director of Christian Social Service and Development Dept. and he does some projects like cashew plantation, goat breeding, and paddy (rice) plantation.”

In the past we have let you know of some of the most pressing needs. Reading the above, we (May Pearl and Diana) hope you will pray for and support some of these needs. We’ll list some for you to think about.

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| 1. Aid to IDP’s in Myitkyina | \$1000.00 |
| 2. Myo evangelists who work under very difficult circumstances | 3000.00 |
| 3. Donation for the Bi Centenary of the Judsons’ work—to MBC | 2000.00 |
| (thousands will attend) | |
| 4. Eyeglasses project so “the students can smile” | 200.00+ or – |
| 5. Building of the Yangon Home Mission to be used for the | |
| BiCentenary | 1000.00 |
| 6. BagoYoma Projects | 1000.00 |
| 7. Baby &Childrens’ vitamins for us to carry in with us | money to buy or
Bottles of vitamins |
| 8. Theology books for the schools | Send to us and we will carry in |



9. A Big Thank You to two donors who sponsored in the past, or in the present—two medical students. Here is a photo of two successful graduate doctors in Pathein at the Matthew 25-Love Clinic.



We have reported on the work being done in the BagoYoma area by Saw Taw Lu, the evangelist who has done so much to bring medical help to remote villages that have no health care. At our board meeting, Phil Schock, who had just returned from visiting Burma, brought us an interview with Naw Tha Dah Paw, an evangelist for the PatheinMyaungmya and PyiThaYarWaddy joint mission. (edited)Q What is your main task? A I taught the children how to read and write for three years and three of them have become believers. There are 28 households. Q How

much is your salary? A I do not get any salary but the parents of the students bring me food. When I go to town, the family of each student gives me sixty cents (500 kyats) Q What kind of problem do you encounter related to health? A People from the village are Buddhists and they believe that different spirits make them sick. If a child is sick they believe that the spirit of the chicken get hold of him and did not give the child chicken soup. Instead they release the chicken to the jungle. They did not give medicine to the child but cover him or her with a thick blanket, and kept the child in a room with little ventilation. Due to their lack of knowledge, they do not believe when I explain things to them. They only believe in local medicine man.

Their lack of knowledge resulted in the loss of lives of both mother and child. I told them that their extreme beliefs need to be discarded. Since there is a lack of medical doctor, knowledgeable person in medicine in the village, Saya Taw Lu gather villagers from Dar Bee and other villagers from around the mountain area and let them attend Auxiliary Midwife Training.

After that they go back to their village and help with health care. Saya Taw Lu also made them learn things that will improve the quality of their life. Please keep these evangelists and Saya Taw Lu in your prayers and support them with donations.

Just two more things. We are now set up to receive donations on the internet by Razoo. However, it costs us 4.9% to do it this way. For those of you who still use checks, we can send the whole donation if you do it that way.

Please remember Friends of Burma in your will if you are so disposed. Our contact, as always, is: Friends of Burma, Inc, 548 Home Ave. Ft. Wayne, IN 46807 tel. 260-745-3658 website: www.friendsofburma.org email: neildianasowards@juno.com

God Bless You for your continued care and concern for the very deserving people of Burma. All donations are tax deductible because we are a 501(C)(3) nonprofit. Administrative costs and overhead are less than 2%. All work is done in the U. S. by volunteers, one paid staff in Burma. An electronic form of this newsletter in color can be e-mailed to you if you want to pass it on to friends.