



Newsletter: Friends of Burma

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The Good News in Faithfulness

World News! Breaking News! Latest News! Fake News! Whatever they are called, their headlines largely convey bad news and it feels disheartening to hear them. This is all the more reason why we need to open our eyes wider to notice the good news. Begin observing faithfulness around you, and there you will find the good news.

Joyce Myer said, "Faithfulness is not doing something right once, but doing something right over and over and over and over."

Friends of Burma (FOB) appreciates your willing hearts and good stewardship. Together we have been faithful - we are doing things right over and over and over. It is our fervent hope that the stories you read in this newsletter would bring you the assurance that your faithfulness brings forth fruits unto God and His people! And that is definitely good news!

Adam Maung
FOB Executive Board
Member

Faithfulness that Brings Water to Bago Yoma Sin Zwe Village

With summer comes extreme drought and water scarcity in Sin Zwe Village from the Bago Yoma Mountainous area. The difference in this year is that the water reservoir that FOB built is holding up and helping the villagers with their water needs. The livestock also gets to drink enough water this year. Previously, villagers had to wait for the water to come up tiny narrow wells and take a bath in water puddles that quickly dried up under the scorching heat of the unmerciful summer. Now, water fills the built-up dam between the two hills. A villager excitedly sent a message, "Praise God! By the grace of God, we don't have to worry about water for the first time." What a precious gift to Sin Zwe Village!



The struggles with water scarcity can be seen in the two pictures on the left. Now, there is water and the villagers also transport water through the pipes for the water to reach nearer to the neighborhood.

Friends of Myanmar Governing Board (FOMGB)

Our Friends of Myanmar Governing Board (FOMGB) held an annual meeting on April 1, 2019, and decided to support these ministries with their annual budget:

- ♥ Scholarships for Bible school/seminary students
- ♥ Evangelistic efforts
- ♥ Dr. Chit Maung Library
- ♥ Printing books
- ♥ Women's empowerment initiatives
- ♥ Eye glasses

A Trip to Burma/Thailand in January 2019

The sights and sounds of our trip have become a part of me. They speak of misery and need, and yet they offer hope that is born of faith and a determination to find a brighter day. You feel it, and you see it in the eyes of young and old. And the love. It is evident in the smiles, the warm embraces, and the thankful hearts. My team and I experienced a wide range of emotions on our journey, from our visits to a migrant learning center and a refugee camp in Thailand, to an orphanage and then a small village on a mountainside in Burma. We carry with us today, impressions that will remain with us for a lifetime.

Our visit began at Thoo Mwe Kee, in Thailand, a migrant learning center for Karen refugee children and youth from the Karen State, along with children of Karen migrant workers who seek access to primary and secondary education. Currently, 734 students are enrolled in this school, and 41 teachers are responsible for their education. Classes were already over for the day when we arrived. Clothes hung to dry adorned the dormitory, as if ornaments decorating a Christmas tree. Dinner was prepared for them and featured rice and cabbage soup. In spite of a scarcity in many things, the joy expressed by staff and students for learning and serving one another was contagious.

Early Monday morning, we were picked up by a truck and transported to the Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School and College (KKBBS) for a week of teaching and being with the leaders and students. Our team, including Eh Htoo Wah and Dahgay Beney from the Arizona Karen Baptist Church in Phoenix, instructed students on how to be effective leaders, how to teach students with special needs, and an overview of pastoral counseling. Our students remembered last year we provided a meal with meat, and they requested we do it again. Meat is a rarity in the food the school can provide. We had dinner together, followed by games, dances, praise and worship. It was again a joy to observe the students enjoying their meals and praising God in fellowship with us and one another. On Tuesday, when we were teaching, there was a rain storm and the lights went out. That did not bother, but their relentless desire to learn allowed us to continue teaching without a hitch. In the evenings, we called on homes of the Principal, Vice-Principal, Academic Dean, and other faculty members. We also made friends with guests from other countries visiting KKBBS. We visited the veterans who were injured, maimed, and blinded. We toured the new library that FOB helped build. It was a joy to witness the uplifting spirits, filled with tenacity, resiliency, and a drive to march forward and face life with its rewards and challenges.

Thursday evening, our classes got together and planned a fun evening for 138 orphans/students living in the three dorms, managed by KKBBS. We had backpacks and school supplies for every one of them. Friday afternoon, we went hiking to a mountain that has a prayer house on top. We reflected on our time together and received feedback from the students. Friday night, we had a fun night and distributed our gifts to the children. It was with immense joy that I watched everyone having a fun time singing, dancing, playing, and receiving gifts.

Saturday morning, we said goodbye and left the school. It was sad, but also joyful, feeling that our relationship with the KKBBS staff and students has deepened and there will be more joy coming from working together serving our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank everyone who supported our efforts. To view a video of our trip, please go to:

<https://youtu.be/4z0by3C8AY4>

~ Tansy Kadoe, FOB Executive Board Member ~



Backpacks with school supplies were given to students in a refugee camp.

Updates from KKBBS Teachers Studying DMin at Central Baptist Theological Seminary (CBTS)

God's amazing grace brought me all the way from Myanmar to the US. When I first arrived, everything frightened me: a new country, a new life, English language, a new learning system, and new challenges. But, people are kind, and they help me to grow. Now, America begins to feel like my sweet home away from home. I just finished my first trimester at CBTS. My first class was "Shaping a Theology for Leadership and Spirituality." It challenged me to reflect on my spirituality and the leadership style in the Karen communities. The instructors were Dr. Molly T. Marshall and Dr. Angela. I learned a great deal from their teaching and testimonies. I also want to thank Dr. Park for welcoming me to study at CBTS and being always there for me. Of course, my heart is overwhelmed with gratitude for Rev. Mary Wood, who provides a home for me and takes care of me so lovingly. I am looking forward to learning new things and overcome new challenges. Thank you for helping me toward achieving my goal to serve the Lord.

~ Nay Tar Mu ~



Nay Tar Mu (front right) and Kaw Khu's (last one on the left row) DMin cohort with President Dr. Molly Marshall

God has opened a door of opportunity for me with a purpose. I cannot begin to grasp God's love and power; I can only offer gratitude to God and passionately be committed in His service. After arriving in the US, I became more fearful as I looked around and saw every aspect of life in this country as a challenge. Although I was dreadful, my confidence in God toughened me to confront challenges with courage. So far, I have been able to cope with my fears and worries. By God's grace, I just finished the first trimester. My leadership vision has emerged as I begin to learn about leadership and the Trinity. A leadership vision shaped by the Trinitarian theology motivates my commitment to serve God and others. Service and humility come before honor. Indeed, the reason I am able to move forward is all because of God, and the supports and prayers of friends. With an excitement I look forward to a new trimester ahead of me. As I keep pressing on toward the goals God has for me, your prayers and encouragements are my hope and strength to finish the race. ~ Kaw Khu ~

FOB & Lightning for Learning – Faithfully Working Together

Bob and Cindy Wu, mission partners with FOB, visited Pu Saw Bu and Kwe Lwe Childcare Centers in Burma. They have been faithful supporters of the children. On their trip, they also met with students who are doing well academically and pledged scholarships for college/university students. One of them was Saw Edison who has been accepted into a Singapore Hospitality Management College. Bob and Cindy also visited Matthew 25 Hospital. In 2020, Matthew 25 Clinic will celebrate its 25th year of serving people with healthcare needs. At this time, they are still in need of funding for the new hospital. Bob and Cindy had a mutually uplifting time visiting our friends and partners in Christ in Burma. Here are in their own words. *"The students are doing well and feel positive about their studies, despite the challenges. They are sweet and full of gratitude and we had a great blessed fellowship together. Thank you for who you are! Because of you and FOB this is all possible!! You are the true Lightning of Philippians 4:13, and we feel so blessed by you. Thank you sooo much!!"*



Bob and Cindy Wu Visiting Children, students, staff, and partners in Burma

God's Mercy Childcare Center

A visit to God's Mercy Childcare Center in Burma was an experience that will be hard to forget. The children patiently waited for us and greeted us with beautiful smiles. All of them had Thanaka (the yellowish cosmetic paste from Thanaka tree's root) looking fresh and beautiful. What contrasted to their lovely presence was the dismal living conditions. The house they live in is extremely small to accommodate more than 50 children. The girls stay upstairs and the boys stay in the extra space on the side of the house. They eat, study, play, and sleep in the same place. Their house is also in extreme proximity to neighbor houses on the left and right. The neighbors often complain if they play hard and loud. And yet, the children seem healthy and happy. They sang their hearts out. They were happy to receive gifts. God's Mercy is currently raising funds to build a house on a farm. Please help if you can. ~ *Tansy Kadoe* ~



*Living space for boys
(above)*



Living space for girls (above)



Faithfulness in Little Things is A Big Thing -- Acts of Christmas Kindness

Friends of Burma provided \$50 each to those who are willing to engage in acts of Christmas kindness and report the stories. It is mind-blowing how such small gifts bring joy and hope to many. It also impacted the givers in ways unimaginable. Here are some of the reports we received:

After her mother died, Naw Eh Tha Yu Paw had to carry on life with her father and six brothers and sisters. Things even got tougher when her father remarried and she had to drop out of school. Her uncle quickly came to the rescue and she is now studying in fourth grade. Working as a driver, it is hard for her uncle to provide all her needs. The Christmas gift helped her with her uniform and some school supplies.

Naw Eh Tha Yu Paw





Naw Pwe Say with her grandma

Naw Pwe Say has experienced heart-breaking losses in her 12 years of life. She lost her mother when she was four years old. Three years after, her father also passed away. One of her brothers was adopted, and the other ended up in an orphanage. Naw Pwe Say's grandmother, a widow who struggles very hard to make a living, takes care of Naw Pwe Say. They very much appreciated the gift that provided for some food and school expenses.



Nail salon workers



Daw B. Nan

On a visit to the nail Salon in Yangon, one of our representatives chatted with the girls and found that they worked 12 hours a day, six days a week for a very minimal wage. The Christmas gifts were given to three workers. They were immensely surprised and grateful. She also came across a restroom attendant at the Yangon International Airport and gave her a Christmas gift.

For Daw B. Nan, life has offered such hardship, but that does not deter her one bit to stop praising God or going to church. It became Daw B. Nan's responsibility to take care of her granddaughter with disability after her daughter died from a snake bite and her son-in-law sought new employment in a new place. Daw B. Nan would put her granddaughter in a wheel chair donated by one of FOB's executive members and regularly take her to church. She recently suffered a stroke and things are harder than ever for her. The Christmas gift brought a big smile.

Others who received Christmas kindness include:

- ♥ U Ngun Hmung (67 years old), who cannot walk.
- ♥ U Hrang Thang Ceu, who has 10 children, and whose wife suffers from stomach cancer.
- ♥ Daw Zing Tial, who is a widow.
- ♥ Daw Mu Lay Cho, whose mother was in the hospital. She was trying to sell her piece of land and animals to pay for medical expenses.
- ♥ Naw Hsi Hsi and Naw Eh Wah Htoo, college freshmen.

Report from Pathein Myaungmya Sgaw Kayin Baptist Association

On behalf of Pathein Myaungmya Sgaw Kayin Baptist Association, I would like to give my sincere thanks to Rev. Dr. Neil and Diana Sowards and all the members of FOB and the donors. May the love of God and peace of Jesus Christ be with you all! In 2018, we did God's ministry through the guidance of God and the participation of our churches and friends abroad, especially Friends of Burma. We sent evangelists to the mission fields. These evangelists worked as school teachers, health workers and then shared the Gospel. We built schools, teachers' quarters, an assembly hall, and a church. In these ways, people come to know who Jesus is and His work. We also love our neighbors through programs, such as health care, leadership training, women empowerment, and students support.

To build a new building for the Matthew 25 Love Hospital, we reclaimed our land from the government. We are keeping faith that we will get the land so we can continue our construction for the new hospital building. In 2020, we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of Matthew 25 Love Clinic. The generous donation from the FOB is very beneficial for the ministry of Matthew 25 Love Clinic.

Due to political challenges and armed conflict in our Myo mission field, we are asking for your prayers. People are facing shortage of food. Extreme summer heat, coupled with scarcity of water, adds extra physical and mental stress to villagers who are trying to keep themselves safe from the battles. The future is very much uncertain for them.

(continued on next page...)

On a more uplifting note, outstanding students from villages studying in our boarding school program are doing well. There are 79 of them, and 28 students just sat for the metrication exam. They have come a long way, and we cannot be prouder of them. We are offering summer classes for 9th and 10th grade students so they can be better prepared for the next academic year. These students are also active in church and community activities. The number of outstanding students is increasing and we receive more requests for educational support, which bring us so much joy, but at the same time presents challenges. For us to support them with their pursuance of education, we really need to extend our building.

~ Thrah Moolergay, Secretary ~

Wish List

♥ Please pray for our ministries! ♥

Partnership opportunities in education:

- Kawthoolei Karen Bible School and College (KKBBSC) teacher support (\$70/month, \$840/year)
- KKBBSC student scholarship (\$50/month, \$600/year)
- Sponsor Nay Tar Mu and Kaw Khu to continue with their DMin studies, (any amount to contribute to \$12,000/year)
- Dr. T. Thanbyah Christian Institute student scholarship (\$200 per year for 20 students)

Partnership opportunities in caring for children:

- Sponsor one orphan per year (\$360)
- Sponsor gifted students in Pathein, who have been in the Gillen Hostel, to go to university (\$500/student)
- Sponsor six middle schoolers from Bago Yoma to study in Thayawaddy (\$300/student per year)
- Extending the hostel for outstanding students in Pathein (any amount to contribute to \$20,000)

Partnership opportunities in healthcare:

- Matthew 25 Hospital new building (any amount to contribute to \$70,000)

Other partnership opportunities:

- Alternative Christmas gift (\$50/gift)
- Eye glasses (\$20/pair); Mosquito Nets (\$7/net)

Your support of full amount or any portion would be a blessing. For more information, please visit us at www.friendsofburma.org. Please write a check payable to *Friends of Burma* or use Paypal or Mightycause.



Please consider including FOB in your will.
FOB, tax ID 20-5572384, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and all donations are tax-deductible.

Dr. T. Thanbyah Christian Institute (TCI)

Located on the bank of the Salween River in Mutraw District, Kawthoolei Karen territory, Dr. T. Thanbyah Christian Institute (TCI) aims to address education needs of Karen students, who have been oppressed and deprived of opportunities for higher education. The main objective of TCI is to provide high quality educational and training opportunities that are compatible to changing circumstances and needs of the country. Through its academic programs, TCI prepares students for the challenges of the 21st century and empowers them to meet the demand of a rapidly changing world. The TCI is dedicated to providing faculty, staff, and students with the environment and infrastructure that help them develop potential for scholarship, creative work, professional realization, and service to the society at large.

Students can major in English Language and Literature, Computer Information Systems, and Business Administration.

TCI's very first graduation was held at TCI campus on March 3, 2018. There were 26 graduates: 7 students from Information Technology, 11 from Business Administration, and 8 from the English Department. Graduation dinner was held on March 2, 2018 in front of TCI library. Students, parents, faculties and guests attended the graduation and dinner. To learn more about TCI, please visit their website: <https://tci-institute.org>



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* This newsletter is prepared by Adam Maung and Tansy Kadoe. *