

# Friends of Burma, Inc. Newsletter

## Friends of Burma, Inc. Newsletter Spring 2020



April 30, 2020

We thank the Lord for His faithfulness, mercy and unending love. "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:22-23). In this time of pandemic and uncertainty, we pray for those who are sick to receive healing and the safety of all healthcare and other front line workers. We ask for God's protection, trusting His promises in the Bible. In this Spring Newsletter, we want to share the great things that the Lord has done through FOB and many supporters of FOB for the people of Burma.

We rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn because we are in the family of Christ. We are sad to report the passing of our dear friend and former FOB board member, Rev. Dr. David Horton.



David E. Horton of Phoenix, AZ died April 7. Born December 10, 1931 in Fort Wayne to Thomas and Bernice Horton. Dave graduated from Northside HS in 1949 and served in the Air Force during 1952-56. In 1957, married Doris Tindall of Trenton, NJ. Ordained as an American Baptist minister and served churches and communities in Cardiff, NJ; Saginaw, Grass Lake, and Jackson, MI; Pueblo, CO; Fort Wayne, IN; and Green Valley and Phoenix, AZ. Remembered as warm, kind, caring, dedicated, and energetic. He was close to the Amish and Burmese communities in Indiana. After retiring, lived in Fort Wayne, and Green Valley, AZ until Doris's death in 2008. Married in 2009 to Mary Frances Ward, and lived in Green Valley until moving to Phoenix in 2013. Predeceased by parents, sister Carolyn, and first wife. Survived by wife Mary Frances of Phoenix, daughter Bethany Klingensmith of Colorado Springs, and son Mark Horton of Bethesda, MD, grandchildren Thomas, Peter, and Anna Horton, sister Shirley of Fort Wayne, and his brother Steve of Naples, FL. Deeply loved and will be dearly missed.

We thank you all for your prayers, generous gifts and support for the people of Burma through FOB. We could not do it without you.

### **Christmas gifts 2019**

\$50 was given by each donor to be used as Christmas gift in Burma. FOB sent the gifts to some local leaders and the gifts were to be given to those who are in need. We also obtained \$75 gifts which were given to the Kawthulei Karen Baptist Bible School and College students who went to different villages in Thai-Burma border area.

### **Your gift was a blessing to a young widow and her family**

From Chris, a friend of FOB in Burma, who received \$50 gift from us to give it to someone in need. Chris wrote in his own words (we didn't edit):

"May His Joy and Perfection upon you. This year Christmas is wonderful for me as I got the phone call from Saw Sweetie who arranging your Santa Claus' gifts to the less opportunity people. I'm also pleased to cooperate with you in this Christmas season.

The \$50, I got from Saw Sweetie has changed to Myanmar Kyats then with a short pray I started to think who needs the gift. Around us, a lot of people are in need, but finally, I chose a young widow with her two sons called them to a warm-clothing shop and let them to have any things they need and want. After we buy warm clothes I set prayer together for praising God and the giver (Mr/s Santa Claus). I am very happy to see their faces are shining and smiling together with the gifts in their hands. I told them about this is the gift from Santa Claus, I even don't know their name. Instead of hearing their words of thanks to you, only I can hear on your behalf. Thank you Santa Clause for the Christmas Gifts. May the Lord shower His blessings upon you always. Amen."

**Your gift was a blessing to a local missionary in the rural area**



Thramu Naw Eh Htoo

Christina wrote: "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Yesterday, we received FOB love gift for our Bible School from Thra Moolar Gay. I also gave 75000 kyats to Thramu Naw Eh Htoo for Christmas present as you advised me. She served at Pa Daunk Gone mission field work since 2013. Thramu Naw Eh Htoo is a faithful servant. Even though, she faced a lot of things, she never gives up. That point, I chose her to give Christmas present in this year. May the Lord continue bless FOB and you for evermore."

**Your gift has helped an elderly couple who are in poor health**



Daw Than Yee presenting gifts to Mr. Moses

The Agape Child Care Center committee member said "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!! Greetings from the committee members of the Agape Orphanage Project and the orphans. We're very happy to inform you that we've received Kyats 75,000 that you sent to help anyone who's in need of help. We gave Kyats 50,000 to an old couple named Mr. and Mrs. Moses who are over 80 and are members of the Loikaw Church. They live on a small pension and are in poor health. We also bought them Ovaltine, Milo, canned milk, sugar, some biscuits and snacks with the rest of the money. They were very happy when we gave them the presents and told them they were from you. They thank you and send you their blessings. I'm sending you some photos of Daw Than Yee, our Project treasurer, presenting your gifts to Mr. Moses. We hope you'll be glad to see them."

**Your gift was a blessing to a grandmother who is raising her grandchildren**



Saw Sweetie said: *We just back from giving the Christmas gift of FOB to Su Pone Chit. Five of us, me and my 4 kids, with bicycles, went to her house. When we were there we saw her sitting in front of her house, her elder sister was cooking and her grandmother was washing. Unlike former years she did not cry and show no feeling of embarrassing.*

*When I asked my kids "who wants to share their snacks?" all of them went to their room and put some packets of snacks to the plastic bags. I was so happy that the kids have learned about sharing. I did many times of distributing the gift of FOB in front of them.*

*We gave some foods, drinks, 50000 kyats and together with the present from my kids. The grandmother was nearly cried. She may think we are not coming this year.*

*Her smile makes me happy but not so long. Many thoughts come into my mind. Her future without Mom and irresponsible Dad, unhealthy Grandma and under age sister is quite challenging.*

*Anyhow I thank FOB very much for making needy people happy in Christmas time with this Christmas gift program. We are not only wishing Merry Christmas and Happy New year by words to her but with presents from FOB. I am 100% sure; this moment is a big happy moment for all of the family. Thank you FOB. You are making poor people happy time by time.*

### **Your gift was a blessing to two Theological students who are in need of financial support**

Nang from Myanmar Baptist Convention said, "Thank you so much for scholarship fund to support a student in a financially difficult situation. I got \$ 100= 150000MMK, I gave it to two Theological students. I gave them each 75000 MMK (Myanmar Kyats). I am sure both of them are needy. They both lost their father and lived in the difficult place. Thank you for supporting them. Both of them are needy one day got fund they are very happy and very thankful to you and Friends of Myanmar. They wrote to you thank you letter in Myanmar."

### **Your gift was a blessing to a pastor who is suffering from stroke**

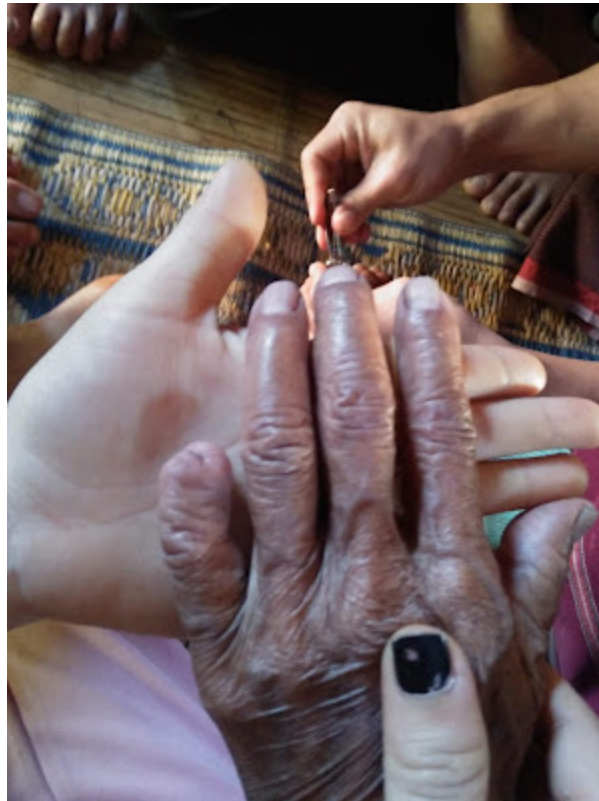
Saw Frits wrote: "Dear FOB, I took responsibility of \$50 for the Christmas gifts requested by Diana. Before I gave the gift, I searched carefully for the person who needed it the most. On the 22nd of December 2019, when I went to Pyaw Bwe Gone Village Church, I found out that their pastor is ill due to the stroke he received a year ago. His name is Rev. Thara Joe, he is 78 years old, he cannot walk and talk but he's attending the church every week in every devotion. He greets everyone who comes to the church "God Bless You". He's been serving the church for more than 25 years. The medical expenses of the pastor are about 100,000 kyats per month. The church members take care of his medical expenses but since they all are villagers and farmers, they do not earn much. Therefore, the \$50 of our Christmas gift meant a lot to him and to the church. The attached photo is the pastor at his house after the Sunday noon service."



**Your gift has supported many seminary students to share the Joy of Christmas with many villages in the border area**

Friends of Burma, Inc. sponsored fourteen teams from Kawthulei Karen Baptist Bible School and College who went out to villages along the border at \$75 each. Below is a report from Rev. Mary Wood.

Rev. Mary Wood said, "The amount of care and compassion that they provided to 13 villages amazes me beyond belief. During their travels, they managed to travel by truck, foot, boat and tractor. What 75 dollars can do in one month for a group of traveling students to Karen State in Myanmar only God can fathom."



The First group reported traveling to brigade seven visiting 13 villages. They did not meet any Christians. All villagers were Buddhist and Animists. Some village leaders allowed the group to share the good news of Jesus Christ but some did not allow. The villagers were poor and unable to afford to send their children to study at school. Another village consisted mostly of grandmothers and grandfathers. Their children did not care for them. Out of great pity the students cared for the elderly ones in their loneliness. The students took pity on the children and villagers as they provided dramas, music, singing and love. The students are pictured here traveling in various destinations during mission campaign.



If you ever wondered how you can do ministry from your life in USA, consider giving 75 dollars to a mission campaign group this Christmas during sweet December. Your money will send students to do the work you want to do but you will not ever be able to do for yourself. The

students will do, in their capacity, the work of God in your place. Their love is packed full of determination and commitment to do the will of God with a Smile and a greeting. These students go into places in Burma where you may be able to go, but the students will go often at great risks to themselves and their health, and they go with deep ability to love others as Jesus commanded us to do as Christians.

**Partnership.** FOB has partnered with several groups whose objectives are in line with FOB's mission statement. One person is raising money for the Leprosy Hospital in Moulmein. Another has various projects with the churches and Bible school in Karen State. Still another has projects in Chin State. By partnering with FOB their donors can get tax deduction for their donation. Also FOB has the means to get money to the projects they want to support.

### **Lightning for Learning**

Cynthia Wu and her husband have a program, called **Lightning for Learning**, to sponsor orphans from Child Care Centers to go to college or other advanced training. She went to Myanmar, ran in the half marathon and raised over \$30,000 from her sponsors. The race money will be used for Matthew 25 Love Clinic. Her program has motivated the students to really work hard so they can go on for further education. Before her program, they were discouraged from achieving well because there was no way they could go on to college. Now they are really applying themselves and many more are passing the final matriculation test. Thank you Cindy and family!



### **Self Help Groups**

Years ago Naw Paw Gaw was trained in the Philippines to start, train, and oversee Microcredit or Self help groups. Since she is employed by ZOE, a Karen organization to help women, she worked with the Karens. She and ZOE have agreed to lead a three day conference to train women from all ethnic groups on how to form, train and nurture Microcredit or Self help groups. The plans were to invite sixty women, pay their transportation costs, feed them for three days at a conference led by Naw Paw Gaw and women from groups she had formed over the years. Unfortunately that conference has had to be postponed due to the corona virus. We hope a good number of the participants would form groups. After their groups have saved

their targeted amount of money, we hope to give them a grant. The grant is not repaid but is recycled to new groups. We are very excited that ZOE has allowed Naw Paw Gaw to lead such a conference and we think many groups will benefit from it.

For years FOB has helped Naw Paw Gaw with her Microcredit Groups or Self Help Groups. She organizes twelve to sixteen women into groups and they learn about business and set a goal for each person saving money. When they reach their goal, they get a grant from Friends of Burma and one of the group gets the money to start a business such as pig or chicken raising, sewing, small retail shop, beauty shop, ethnic clothing. Etc. When they pay back, another person gets to borrow the money. They charge themselves 5% interest a month which is much better than the 10 to 15% the money lenders charge. Below see how Naw Paw Gaw is leading Self help group, helping individual becomes more financially independent across Burma.

### **1.Mara Chin Women Group** (by Naw Paw Gaw)

“This women group is living in Chin state. The purpose of this group is to support women who have student of children in their family. They create way to receive more income for education support for the students. For women they only have tradition weaving and agriculture. So woman pastor Rev. Mai Ki has a plan for women extra income by plantation of Yam Plantation. It has regular market demand and they can grow in local land and they can receive the seed of Yam plants from the local people.

Rev.Mai Ki has started from Mrs.Ngechai who has 5 daughters and one son. Their family owns few lands for traditional farming and it could not afford well for children education. So we provide 300000 kyats from FOB fund to start the Yam plantation. For one container of seed (16 Kilo) she has to pay 60000 kyats and she can buy 5 containers. She begins her plantation on June and harvest time is in March. From 5 containers she gets 1000 plants and from 1000 plants she will receive 130 Kilogram within 3 years. Every year this lady has to pass one container of seed to another woman until 5 containers but the rest products of yam are belong to Ngechai.The price of yam is 10000 KS for .65 Kilo and for 3 years she will gain 20,00000Ks for 130 kilo. This income is extra income for them apart from their regular farming products. Now Mrs. Ngechai has already passed one container of seeds to another member and she has already started for second year. She is happy and willing to do it because this plantation is in her local place which can work with her family members and she has many experiences and skillful in this work.

The leader Rev.Mai Ki said that in future there will be a new factory of Yam Noodle which will be set up in Mandalay. So it will be a new market demand for them.”



Mrs. Ngechai & her Yam harvest



Mrs. Ngechai & Family

## **2. Pwo Karen Women Department**

After this women group receive the fund, they provide sewing training on mosquito net at headquarter level then sell them to their members who are living around in rural areas. When they gain the profits, they invest in another production like making washing soup liquid, harbor medicine lotion. They collect all projects and add with the capital and provide loan to women church groups. They have to pay back capital and interest once in a year. After that they provide loan to another women church group. From all the benefits, they take 200000 kyats to support 2 young girls to attend the vocational training. Now they still have 800000 kyats for their revolving fund. As they are large organization, they need more to invest for more profits. Thus on this coming March we will provide them second time grant 200000 Kyats so that they can invest more to gain more profits.



Mosquito net project

Making herbal balm

### **3. Hope Center**

The women group is running for education support to the needy students. This year they can support 8 students in different classes and location. They try to get more technical skills in new materials. This year they take granted from some class which rent their room for bag sewing training which take a week. They get chance to learn without charges. So the 3 workers of Hope center gain new technical skill for each differently from that training. Now they are sewing things which they have learned from the trainers. Now they can make income for these sewing products. The capital for raw material is funded by FOB. Moreover in summer holidays the students from center help them in the activities of income generation.



Sewing activities and chicken breeding at Hope Center

### **A friend to those who need friend that cares** (by Tansy)

All that Thrah Ler Lah wanted was to show Christ's love to those suffering from leprosy. He had been working hard to raise funds and collect surgical instruments for the leprosy ministries in Burma. With excitement, he looked forward to visiting Burma. Then came the Coronavirus outbreak! Just like most of us, he felt confused and discouraged, but not for long. He sought God's guidance earnestly. It was clear to him God still wanted him to go. He had to cancel some flights and make new travel arrangements. Things went smoothly, which was encouraging because God Is Faithful. So, Ler Lah spent almost a month in Burma, from February 5 to March 3. His mission was simply, "Show God's Love!" On this trip, Ler Lah visited multiple areas where people suffering from leprosy live as separate communities.



Ler Lah with a patient

Many of you also contributed to the dining hall for multipurpose use: Thank you all very much for sharing!



### **Wish List**

1. Donations to Matthew 25 Love and KBC Hospital for Covid-19 prevention practices and equipment.
2. \$17 each for prescription glasses for students at various Seminaries and Bible Schools.
3. \$300 for a microcredit or Self Help group.
4. Scholarships for KBTS Liberal Arts students \$500.
5. Scholarship for Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies students \$500.
6. Scholarships for Seminary students at Nyaungleben and Pwo Karen Seminaries \$500 each.

7. \$360 for an under-served child at Htee Mu Htaw Ber, Pu Thu Thu Pu Shay, and Ywa Dah Eh child care centers. (We welcome lesser amounts and will combine them to get the \$300 or \$500 needed.)

**990 Form for Federal Government.** Saw Htaw Plaw Htoo, Michelle Kessler, and Neil have been working hard on the 50 page form required of all 501(C)(3) organizations.



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Newsletter

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