

# Friends of Burma annual report for 2008

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A COMMITTEE OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANS FOR AIDING THE PEOPLE OF BURMA

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February 13, 2009

## **Cyclone Report**

2008 was another successful year for Friends of Burma, Inc. (FOB) but a disastrous year for our friends and loved ones in Burma. Cyclone (Hurricane) Nargis hit the delta May 5<sup>th</sup> and 10,076 Baptists lost their lives. Seventy pastors died. Our two orphanages near the delta were flooded with children who could not be cared for by their extended families. So we need support for nearly eighty



more children. Over 120,000 are thought to have died.

You, who support Friends of Burma, opened your hearts and purses and gave. We were able to pass on your gifts totaling \$113,500 for Nargis relief through Baptist organizations in Burma. So much relief money was diverted by the government and never reached the victims but all the FOB relief money did go to help the people who suffered such losses. The money was used to purchase mosquito nets and blankets, flashlights, plastic sheeting, water filters, fishing nets, boats, food, seeds, tractors, low priced housing, guitars (to the churches) and scholarships to Bible school students who lost their support when their villages were destroyed. Friends of Myanmar Governing Board in Rangoon also used most of their \$20,000 allotment for Nargis relief.

The Pwo Karens and Sgaw Karens of Patheingyi took in many students from the delta so they could continue their education since their schools had been destroyed. This has strained the resources of these schools tremendously.



**Waiting for supplies after the cyclone**



**The devastation shows in the face.**

It was encouraging to see how help came to Burma from many sources--Chinese Bible School, Hong Kong Chinese Methodist Church, Snow White Film Production, World Vision, churches outside the devastated area, and many, many, individuals contributed relief money and supplies.

We try to keep you up to date during the year on various projects we are supporting for the people of Burma. Our primary purpose is to help the people inside Burma. The last year, 2008, the overwhelming tragedy of Cyclone Nargis in May put other projects into the shadow as we tried very hard to make money available in the fastest way for the humanitarian efforts of the people of the Myanmar Baptist Convention and the Pathein Myaungmya Sgaw Karen Association. To this end FOB made over \$50,000 available. We felt that these



organizations were more ready and trained to help the devastated survivors, in a more cost worthy way.

### **Myo Mission**

For years FOB has partnered with Pathein-Myaungmya Sgaw Karen Baptist Association in their evangelism among the Myos in the Arakan area. That work has borne fruit and in December they celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Thanksgiving Service. They are now taking the very important step of becoming Myo Baptist Churches Association and joining the Myanmar Baptist Convention as the 20<sup>th</sup> ethnic group. The Myos now have 17 churches and 17 mission fields and about 5,000 members. I can remember when there was less than 400 members.

**Students taken in by the Pwo Karen Seminary after the cyclone**

**The Pwo Karen Seminary kitchen**

## Education Ministry

FOB has been supporting medical students Hsa K'Paw Moo and Lwawn Moe Paing. They are now in their final year. Naw Wah K'Paw, Greta Din's daughter, has also passed her medical exams.

FOB has supported a program in Pathein where the one student most qualified from each of thirty mission fields and from each of thirty five rural churches were brought to Pathein so they could attend government high school. It has been reported these students are doing well and studying hard for their tests in March 2009.

One area where needs crop up during the year that we may not report on are the various needs of the Myanmar students studying in foreign countries. Let us tell you about four of these.

Miss San Lung K Nu is studying music at AILM seminary in the Philippines. She would like to finish a Bachelor of Church Music degree, which is a four year course, but it is uncertain if her financial resources will allow this, with the limited help we can give her. Her goal is to enrich the music program of the secular school, BARS, which is associated with Myanmar Institute of Theology. Saw Ka Paw Moo is the principal of the Nyaungleben Baptist Seminary, having served several years in this position. Because he hopes to upgrade the level of his seminary he is seeking higher education himself in Malaysia.

Miss Ler Blute Po, a Karen, is now studying at Payap University in Thailand. She will return to teach at KBTS (Karen Baptist Theological Seminary. In January, Ler received a grant from the Payap University to visit and volunteer in the cyclone affected area. She spent two weeks teaching and giving encouragement to the



victims.

Miss Eh Tar Gay is a respected lecturer at MIT. She is studying for her PhD in England with an emphasis to prepare her to teach New Testament studies, helping the seminary to start offering a doctorate in Theology, hopefully in 2010. All four of these students are highly qualified and respected and all want to improve the levels of their prospective places of service when they return. We feel we cannot turn our backs on these people who are struggling, even though they are not in our primary emphasis area, inside Burma. We are hoping that money can be donated to help these fine young men and women. We often use undesignated funds to help these students because we feel they will return and serve their people for many years.

## Martyrs Scholarships

One of the quiet programs we have had for years is giving Martyrs Scholarships. These seventeen scholarships are given in memory of Sein Ko who was martyred during World War II, the two girls who died in the Gideon

Ler Blute Po (2<sup>nd</sup> from the left) visiting people affected by the cyclone and engaging in activities with

Campaign  
of the

Kachins, the seven who died in the CCOC (Chins for Christ in One Century) and the seven who lost their lives in the AD2000 Karen Evangelistic Program. The scholarships are given to a Bible school related to each martyr.

## Annual Report of Child Enrichment Centers [Orphanages] Karen Baptist Convention of Myanmar



**Many children became homeless after the cyclone.**

The cyclone that struck Burma in May devastated thousands of villages, homes, churches, schools and our orphanages. The government denied assistance to thousands of the Karen people and thus over 100,000 men, women and children died during and after the storm. Our childcare facility dorms were damaged, children died and many more children showed up on the doorsteps. Our regular supporters (76) provide just the basic (\$180 annually) needs of the children at seven different locations. Yes in most cases the soup was thinned down and the meager surroundings were severely taxed during this time. Often churches and individuals scrape

from their limited resources to meet such emergencies but this total devastation

prevented much of that from happening. Sickness and disease grew exponentially as the leaders and volunteers of the Karen Baptist Convention responded. Personnel at the KBC Clinic in Insein made medical teams and disaster relief efforts. In many cases clothing, bedding, kitchen equipment and food was washed away in the storm. Two temporary childcare facility dorms (Kwe Lwe & Yedwin Yegan) were established in areas of great need by the convention to provide the love and care for these homeless children. There was a great need for counselors to help children deal with the trauma. More individuals are desperately needed to sponsor (\$15 per month) one or more children. Volunteers at FOB are unable to provide pictures and information about each child as we once did because of censorship and poor communication. The FOB board needs to assist in recruiting more support. We commend all of the volunteers in Burma who worked so many hours to help all the needy children.

### KBC Clinic Annual Report For 2008

After 10 years of treating the medical needs of people in and around Insein, the clinic has a reputation for loving and effective care for those who are sick and injured. The demand on the time, skills and energy on the doctors, nurses and staff is overwhelming.

Thanks to the continued donations of medical equipment and supplies the staff is able to provide much more effective care for over 2,000 in patients and 5,400 out patients this year. Some new equipment (incubator) and surgical room lighting has



**When you are hungry, rats make a good meal.**

been acquired. Much of the standard equipment and building are badly worn and in need of replacement. Several churches and individuals in the United States have provided resources for some fine, state of the art equipment for the surgical suites.

When the cyclone hit Yangon there was some damage to the clinic. Such concern did not limit the medical staff from going to Bogalay to bring help and hope. These additional hours and grinding travel nearly exhausted these very dedicated people. Dealing with large numbers of sick and injured people is very exhausting. The FOB board commends and praises these dedicated workers for the tremendous job they did. Medicine and supplies have literally been exhausted.

Dealing with such an overwhelming disaster has prevented the staff from accomplishing the major renovation and upgrading of the present facility as planned. The inability to secure permits and dealing with the constantly changing demands of the local authorities makes progress almost impossible. Continued training of the staff in the midst of such a calamity has been truly amazing and enables the staff to improve their skills and to be recognized and appreciated for their dedication and devotion. Creating and maintaining a wish list for equipment has been an effective way to communicate the needs of the clinic.

*The reports for Child Enrichment Centers and the KBC Clinic are prepared by David Horton.*

## **Welcoming Dr. May Pearl Charlie to the FOB Executive Committee**



**Dr. May Pearl Charlie**

Dr. May Pearl Charlie has been elected to the Executive Committee. May comes from Pathein, a city of 220,000 people and capital of Ayeyarwady Division, Myanmar, 118 miles west of Rangoon. As one of the top 550 in Myanmar on the "high school" graduation exam, May was eligible for Medical school which she entered. However, the school was frequently closed by the government which feared pro-democracy demonstrations. Emile Ballard—one of the still living participants from the American Baptist missionary era in Burma--arranged for May to come to the U.S. She entered Judson University in Elgin, Illinois and was graduated in 2001. While exploring medical school options, May came to live with John and Ruth Peterson, current executive FOB members, in DeKalb, Illinois and take special courses at Northern Illinois University.

Soon identified as a hard working, dependable graduate student, she was given an assistantship for the doctoral program in bio-chemistry from which she was graduated with a Ph.D. in 2007. Upon completion of her academic work and thesis defense in the fall of 2007 she was granted a post-doctoral position at the University of Michigan. Her specialty is enzyme research. May was always one of the most faithful participants in the Baptist Campus Ministry at Northern Illinois University and invited other Internationals to participate.

Her family remains in Pathein where her father is a builder and has erected many buildings related to the Baptist association. FOB has supported many ministries in that area via Erville Porway's (General Secretary of the Pathein Myaung Mya Sgaw Kayin Baptist Association) calls for support including the campus ministry at Pathein University and the Matthew 25 Love Clinic. Through regular phone calls back home, she has a window into

life in that area of the country. May's character is beyond reproach, her commitment to our Lord solid, and her cooperative spirit is a model to all.

### Other Reports

Another aspect that we rarely mention in the newsletters is the participation of some other persons in some projects which they have initiated themselves in Burma. For instance, one Karen woman, now in the US, is very committed to helping a variety of mission causes in the Hpaan area. FOB helps her by making sure her funds get to the pastor in charge of these missions. She makes a significant contribution to the lives of many people in Hpaan.

Tansy Kadoe has now translated the U.S. Manual for Citizenship which is available in printed form in both English and Karen and on a sound DVD. The cost is \$20 plus \$5 postage. The English-Karen translation of the Arizona



Driver's Manual is also available for \$15. The money goes to the Youth Group of the Arizona Karen Baptist Church at Monte Vista Baptist Church. This Karen church recently joined the American Baptist Churches.

There is now a monthly Karen Christian Leaders' Newsletter sent by e-mail with relevant information. A committee is developing A Karen Christian Ministers' Manual. E-mail me if you want to see a copy of these.

Two persons have indicated they believe in what Friends of Burma is doing and so have put us in their wills. We appreciate their support. If you are interested in

remembering us or arranging a Charitable Remainder Trust for us through Baptist Foundations, please contact us for details.

Friends of Burma, Inc. has General License BU #14 from the U. S. Treasury Department, Office of Foreign Assets Control which permits us to send money to Burma.

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### Wish List

- ♥ Support farmers in Pathein. \$ 3,000 per tractor, one to a village to replace dead water buffaloes.
- ♥ Support 80 new orphans at Hpu Saw Bu and Kwe Lwe orphanages. \$ 180 per child
- ♥ Support student refugees in Pathein to attend school (\$265 each for a year includes tuition, textbooks, uniform, food, mosquito net, etc...). \$ 265 per student
- ♥ Give Burma-made mosquito nets. \$ 5 per net



- ♥ Provide supplemental aid to Bible School students who can no longer receive support from their families, affected by Nargis. \$ 30 each
- ♥ Give guitars to churches under rehabilitation to provide music. \$ 50 each
- ♥ Sponsor doctors and nurses to work at KBC mobile clinic. \$ 600 per month
- ♥ Give an ambulance/truck to KBC clinic. \$ 21,000
- ♥ Help build a new dormitory and library for Hpu Mya San Bible School. \$ 130,000
- ♥ Help build a new dormitory at Kwe Lwe Orphanage. They already raised \$13,043. \$ 16,957 still needed
- ♥ Help build a new dormitory at Hpu Saw Bu Orphanage. \$ 50,000
- ♥ Help build a new clinic that will bring healthcare to 47 villages in Bogalay. \$ 15,000

**Thank you for your support!**

Friends of Burma is a 501(c)(3) organization. “All donations are tax deductible.” All work in the U.S is done by volunteers.

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