

# Friends of Burma Annual Report 2017

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We are now entering our 33<sup>rd</sup> year with one part time financial secretary in Burma (Myanmar) and a hard working core of volunteers here and in Burma. Our board of sixteen is all volunteers. Several have visited Burma and helped carry out our work there.

We are small but do important work.

## **Preaching tapes.**

One interesting project FOB has become involved in is partnering with Karen Baptist Theological Seminary. They are inviting ten really good preachers to come and preach to the students. These sermons will be videotaped and then shared with the Homiletic Class (Preaching Class) in future years and with the 15 Karen Bible Schools. We believe good preaching is learned by hearing good preachers.

## **Where There Is No Psychiatrist and Where There Is No Child Psychiatrist.**

FOB made thirteen copies of the above books (with the publisher's permission) and had the four schools who train Village Health Workers and nine seminaries evaluate them. Burma is facing a rising crisis in mental health with an increase of alcoholism, drug abuse, anxiety, and depression. The feedback we got from the evaluators is that these books were too high a level for village health workers, Bible Schools, and Seminaries. Therefore the conclusion is that they should not be translated into Burmese at this time. It costs \$15 to copy a pair of these books. Since there are forty eight Baptist Bible Schools and Seminaries in Burma, it will cost \$720 to give one copy of each book for each school. Some have requested six copies for their professors and library. If we give two copies to each school, the cost will be \$1,440.00. FOB board will vote on this project at its Annual meeting Feb 17<sup>th</sup> in Phoenix, AZ.

If any of you know of helps for pastors and health workers in dealing with the four mental illnesses listed above, please let me know about them.

## **Public Funding Sites**

Friends of Burma needs to find add additional sources of income. There are many Public Funding sites. Some of the sites are: GoFundMe, YouCaring, GiveForward, Fundly, Indiegogo, FundRazr. However, we don't have enough knowledgeable people to productively use these sites to raise money for us. We tried and failed. We would love to have some volunteers who can help put up the projects from the Burmese Christians on the sites and steer the projects to get enough funding. If you are interested in helping, please contact Neil Sowards.

It might help if you mention us on Facebook etc. or pass on our newsletter to friends.

### **Dr. T. Than Byah Christian Institute.**

Founded by Rev Dr. Saw Yaha Lay Lay La in 2014. This school on the Thai border offers three majors; Management Information Systems, English Language and Literature, and Business Administration. Their program is three years which ends with an Associate Degree.

It is supported by several Karen churches here in the United States.

### **Paw Wah Doh Children's library.**

Neil met Paw Wah Doh in 1985 when he carried in medicine that saved her life from TB. She spent her life establishing preschool nurseries, training Nursery Teachers, teaching people to make educational toys, and helped establish 94 nursery schools in the Shwe Gyin area. She has retired and is working to develop a library related to Nursery Schools and Children's books.

### **Genevieve Myrtle Sowards Gillen**

I am sorry to report the passing of my sister on September 16, 2017. She was born in Burma and in recent years visited there several times. She helped FOB over the years and built the Gillen Hostel in Pathein which housed outstanding students from the villages so they could complete Middle and High School.

### **Summary of FOB Finances**

#### **Expenditures for 2017.**

Orphan Support	\$33,867	Dr. T. Than Byah Christian Institute	\$10,000
Other organizations' projects	\$85,400	Library	\$300
Humanitarian	\$4,990	Scholarships	\$21,850
Medical	\$8,558	Myo Mission Field	\$1,000
Microcredit	\$1,900	Karen Bible Schools	\$5,000
Specific Scholarships	\$3,850	Naw Paw Doh, Shwe Gyin	\$2,000
Bible Schools & Seminaries	\$6,030	Grant to all Bible Schools	\$7,990
Myo Evangelism	\$4,600	Grant to Friends of Myanmar	\$20,000
Buildings	\$750		
Special Projects	\$400	Total	\$218,494

General Funds Total \$63,483.94 Used for budget \$57,840. Overhead—postage, printing, office expenses \$658.61, Bank Charges \$240, Financial Secretary Salary \$ Total Overhead \$ which is X% of our income.

To be allotted at Annual Meeting \$5,643.94

### **Dr. Chit Maung Library Report by Anna Maung on the 20th Anniversary**



We would like to comment on donations to Friends of Burma. The beauty of supporting a small nonprofit such as ours is that donors feel a close association with the country and the needs of the people.

Some people, particularly sponsors of orphans, donate to a specific child in a specific child care center. We always tell donors that their support helps ALL the children there. Others support other projects that they have a particular interest in, such as microcredit assisting the poorest of the poor to establish their own businesses.

On the other hand, some donors send in undesignated donations, allowing us to either hold these funds until used for an emergency or to use for some immediate need. This is what allowed us to assist workers in the country with relief efforts after the devastating Nargis cyclone in 2008. People working in Patheingyi with the Karen associations which were already there were immediately able to give humanitarian supplies to the survivors. We also have sent support to Kachin and Rakhine internally displaced people (IDP's) We do this from our general funds. Without undesignated funds we could not do this.

Whatever the designation of your kind support, we thank you and the people of Burma thank you!



*Anna Maung and Adam Maung at the celebration*

## Lwin Moe and Swe Di Nar

As we are writing this annual report we would be remiss if we did not mention how much our Board member, computer guru, webmaster, and “foster” son, Lwin Moe has meant to us and to Friends of Burma.

From the time he arrived in the U.S. in 1998, to live with us and attend university, to graduation with a B.S. in Computer Science from Purdue University at Ft. Wayne to his return to Burma to teach at the Myanmar Institute of Theology, and then his graduate work in Thailand and at Indiana U. he has been a constant support to Friends of Burma.

Now, after six years of being here on an H1B visa, a working visa with Linguist List, that visa is expiring and, not having been given a green card, he and wife Swe are leaving the U.S. to become Canadian citizens. They will return to Burma for an extended visit to both their families and then fly to Canada in the summer to take up residence there, and hopefully enter a PhD program somewhere in Ontario.

He will continue to support FOB electronically when he is able. To say we will miss him will be an understatement. Words cannot describe how important he is to us. Best wishes to him and Swe Di Nar as they embark on their new lives.



## In Their Own Words



*“Dear FOB donors,  
First, I would like to thank you so much for loving this poor family. It is impossible for the family to get this kind of big present from local people. I*

*found the kids are very happy in this Christmas season. The family come to the church and also to the thanksgiving service of the other villagers' family in the village.*

*I don't see the father in the village but this Christmas is very special for them. They can eat what they want to. Especially kids are very happy with their new dress and presents. Before they did not come to the village often but now I frequently find them in the village. Your love put them out from the depression and encourage them to come to the community. The pastor and the villagers also pay the attention, and show their love to them as much as they can.*

*I even see them in a thanksgiving service this morning. The elder sister push the wheelchair. Thank you so much for what you do for us. May the Lord keep on blessing you." Sincerely Russ Kadoe*

### **Wish List.**

1. Dr. T. Than Byah Christian Institute, a rural college \$10,000
2. Distributing mental health books set \$14.00; to all schools- \$1440.00
3. Medical students \$1000 each year for two students

### **Amazon Smile**

When you shop on AmazonSmile (<http://smile.amazon.com>), the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate a small percentage of the price of eligible purchases to your choice of charitable organizations. Friends of Burma, Inc. is registered on AmazonSmile. You can use this link to choose FOB, start shopping and donate without costing you a dime: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/20-5572384>.

*This report was prepared by Neil and Diana Sowards with help from Lwin Moe*

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