

Myanmar Hope Christian Mission, Inc. • 624 Garvey Lane • Chatham, Illinois • 62629-5086
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Greetings!

Spring has sprung! Where, oh where, has the time gone? Is time flying by you as fast as it is flying by us? In just over a month MyHope will be celebrating our five-year anniversary, and it feels like we just got started. But you know what? We **have** just started, and it's all because of God and good people like you who believe in this mission and support it with your prayers and financial gifts. Will you continue to partner with us in the months and years ahead? Who knows what great and marvelous things God will do with your gifts, when you give generously with grateful hearts? Let's watch and be blessed together!

Five-Year Anniversary

Yes, it is hard to believe, but the five year anniversary of Myanmar Hope Christian Mission is quickly approaching . Five years ago at this time, Chuck and MaryAnn Cherry were preparing their home in Springfield, Illinois to receive a doctoral student from Yangon, whom they had never met before, by the name of Nehkholal. They fell in love with him right away, and it wasn't long after his arrival that together they determined to do whatever they could to help the poor people in Myanmar. Thus was born Myanmar Hope Christian Mission.

On Friday, May 4th we will host an Anniversary Dinner and Silent Auction at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Springfield, IL. The goal of our fund raising that night is to gather resources to build a new girls' dormitory next door to the current Hope Boarding School (HBS) building in Yangon.

If you are within driving distance of Springfield, will you plan to attend this momentous occasion? God willing, Palal and Kikim will both be here! It will be a joyous time of celebration as we reflect on all of the amazing things that God has accomplished over the past five years, and look hopefully ahead toward the next five years and beyond!

Donated items and services are coming in for the Silent Auction, and there will be a lot of great things for everyone to bid on. If you have a product or service that you would like to donate for the Silent Auction, please contact MaryAnn right

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away at 217-415-9187.

The K of C Hall will comfortably seat two hundred seventy people, and we hope that every seat will be filled! The catered meal will consist of a delicious pork chop dinner including all the fixings and choice of beverage. Ticket cost is \$25.00 each or you can reserve a table of eight for \$200.00. Call today to reserve your spots!

Christmas in Yangon

It was wonderful to spend a few weeks in Yangon over Christmas and New Year's. Chuck and MaryAnn had the privilege of spending a lot of time with the students and staff at



HBS kids excitedly looking through all the cards and letters given to them by their sponsors and other individuals in America

Hope Boarding School, to participate in some leadership training, worship, and fellowship with church leaders in Yangon and the northwest, and also to observe HBS's annual Christmas Outreach to their Buddhist neighbors.

On our last Sunday in Yangon, the three small congregations that make up Yangon Christian Church came together for a joint worship service, followed by a fellowship meal. As many of you know, one of those congregations is from Dalah and is led by Pastor Khup.



Pastor Khup and some of his family. His eldest son is on the right.

During the service, a young man from his congregation came forward to sing, and Pastor Khup said something in Burmese to the congregation. Palal told us that this was Pastor Khup's oldest son. This surprised us because we thought we had met all of his children. When Palal translated Pastor Khup's words to the congregation, we were amazed and asked for more details. What we heard brought us to tears.

After the service, we sat down with Pastor Khup's son, and heard more of his story. This is what he told us.

When he was nine years old, the family was living in a small village in the northwest. Pastor Khup, who was not a minister at that time, had traveled to another village to find work. One day a stranger showed up in the village with a large van, looking for workers and promising the men that they would get good jobs if they came with him.

As a young boy, he didn't understand what was happening, but since other young boys and young men were getting in the van, he got in too. He said he thought they were just going for the day, but he ended up somewhere in China working as a slave laborer in a large factory. For the next sixteen years he was moved from factory to factory, where he was never out of sight of the factory supervisors and was never allowed to make contact with others from his village.

Meanwhile, when Pastor Khup heard about the kidnap-

ping, he was devastated. He thought he would never see his son again. Eventually, Pastor Khup became a minister, moved to Yangon, and started evangelizing among the Buddhists. With Palal's help, he started the church at Dalah, where he serves to this day.

Last summer, Pastor Khup's son was finally able to escape from the factory where he was working. He had managed to scrape together enough money to purchase bus fare and head back to Myanmar. He remembered the name of his village, but not where it was located. After a long and difficult trek from northern China to northwest Myanmar, he finally made it back home, only to find out that his family was no longer there. However, there were people who remembered them, and they were able to put him in contact with his father in Yangon.

He finally made it down to Yangon, where he had a joyous, tear-filled reunion with his father. Pastor Khup's long-lost son was back from the dead! We were all filled with tears as we worshipped together with this family which had, by God's grace, so recently been reunited after so many years!

Please log on to our facebook page at facebook.com/myanmarhope, or visit our YouTube channel at youtube.com/user/MyanmarHope to view interviews of students, photo slide shows, and more!

Christmas Meals for Poor Villages

Thanks to the help of many families and individuals, volunteers in the northwest were able to distribute Christmas meal funds to twenty-seven poor village churches. The receiving churches were overjoyed with these gifts, which enabled them to share at least one, and sometimes up to three large "feasts" with their congregations and neighbors.



Depending on the size of the congregations, some of the churches were able to purchase a cow or water buffalo, or one or two pigs, to provide the meat for their meals. Additional funds were used to purchase extra rice, and each family brought vegetables and other items to share in the feast.

For many poor families in the northwest, this is the one time of year they can eat meat, which is too expensive for them to purchase on their own.



These gifts were given in the Name of Jesus and on behalf of caring individuals in America who donated the funds. The poverty-stricken people in these tiny, remote villages are always amazed when they find out that anyone from far-away America knows about them and is concerned for their welfare.

Thank you to everyone who donated to help purchase a Christmas feast for these poor brothers and sisters. Your gifts will have eternal significance!

Here is a listing of the churches/villages which received Christmas Meals this year, thanks to your donations:

Aishi Village	Naungket Village
Bokaan Village	New Canaan Village
Boljang Village	Phoilien Village
Canaan Village	S. Valpabung Village
Dalah Township	Tamu Town
Homalin Village	Tingkaja Village
Jangnoi Village	Tisetgone Village
Joljam Village	Towa Village
Lallim Village	Tungcho Village
Lhanglei Village	N. Valpabung Village
Mokholoh Village	Wokso Village
Myenigone Village	Yangon Christian Church
Namihan Village	South Dagon

2nd Annual Kuki Convention

The 2nd Annual Kuki Christian Convention was held at Tahan Theological Seminary in Kalaymyo, and though the number of people in attendance was less than last year, we all felt the convention was a great success.

This is the one time of year when ethnic Kukis from northwest Myanmar can come together to worship, hear the Word of God preached and taught, and fellowship with one another. It is a great blessing for the people, made possible through the loving donations of Christians in America.

The Kuki tribe are part of the Chin ethnic group, a diverse people that inhabit the hilly country stretching over west and northwest Myanmar, northeast India, and even into Bangladesh. The vast majority of the Kuki live in Manipur State in India. The Myanmar Kuki were cut off from their Indian relatives when the borders were fixed after World War II. The resulting isolation of the Myanmar Kuki villages left them at or near the bottom of the social hierarchy among the other Chin tribes in Myanmar, who viewed them mostly as outsiders. The Chin themselves are low on the overall social hierarchy of people groups in Myanmar (the Burmese are the highest), and have suffered much persecution and discrimination over the past fifty years.



Conference attendees holding up their new Bibles

To make a long story short, the Kuki people are now some of the poorest of the poor among the many tribes and people groups of northwest Myanmar, which itself is one of the poorest areas of a very poor country.

Because of their abject poverty, lack of educational opportunities, and years of persecution and discrimination, the Kuki people have little or no confidence in their ability to rise out of their seemingly hopeless situation.

However, now that they have a godly, visionary leader like Palal, who is training them, encouraging them, and providing them with tangible resources, many are starting to see some hope for their future.

As an example of providing resources, over one hundred new Bibles were distributed to the conference attendees at the convention this year, most of whom had never owned a Bible of their own! These Bibles were part of the one hundred fifty new Bibles which were purchased with a donation from the "Alive With Christ" women's Bible study group at West Side Christian Church in Springfield, Illinois.

With God's help, we look forward to the next convention being held in Tamu. Tamu is a central location for most of the Christian churches, but because of government restrictions, so far they have been unable to hold the convention there. Please pray with us that, due to the many positive changes happening in Myanmar, by the time of the next convention the government restrictions will have been lifted and a much larger group of Kuki Christians will be allowed to worship together!

Thank you all for your many prayers and financial donations which are making such a positive impact among this group of very poor Christians in northwest Myanmar!

Feeding the Hungry



Some members of the tiny village of Aishi

One of the ways your gifts help the people of Myanmar is by feeding the hungry. In March MyHope received an emergency request for food from a village that had recently experienced a devastating loss and were almost totally out of food.

Last summer, a deer wandered aimlessly into their little remote mountain village and then just stood there. The men thought this was obviously a gift from heaven to help alleviate their ever persistent hunger, so they shot the deer. The whole



village then shared a feast with the deer meat. What the villagers did not know, however, was that the deer was sick and near death already, which is what caused it to act in such an erratic manner.

Soon after the feast, many people in the village became ill. Shortly after, the man who had shot the deer had a dream. In his dream an evil spirit came to him and demanded to know why his "pet" had been killed and eaten. When the man told his dream to the other people in the village, they all became very frightened, thinking that an attack by the evil spirit was now imminent.

The villagers were so afraid of the evil spirit that they would not sleep in their own homes at night, but instead they all gathered each night in some of the largest huts to sleep together, hoping that their strength in numbers would prevent the evil spirit from attacking.

Unfortunately, in the days that followed, more and more people became sick, most likely from the spread of a flu virus, and eventually nine people died.

In fear and desperation, they found a way to take those who were the most ill to the nearest clinic, which was miles away. They had no money to pay for transportation, doctors, or medicine, and so they went into debt to pay the fees.

Last December, after they harvested their rice, they had to sell off most of their crop to pay the debt. This left them with only enough rice for a few families, and now they faced the prospect of famine and, even worse, malnutrition.

The village elders knew about MyHope through Palal's Christian Leadership Training programs, and they reached out for help. Thankfully, there were enough funds on hand to purchase rice to help tide them over for a few months.

Moving forward, Palal will be working with the village elders, training them with principles drawn from Community Health Evangelism, to educate them on things like how to avoid eating bad meat, how viruses spread, spiritual warfare, and so on.

Hope Boarding School Update

The weather was very good in Yangon in January and February, not as warm as usual. The HBS students are all healthy and were able to study hard for their final examinations.

Twenty-one students, in grades one through eight, took their examinations from February 20th through the 24th. When asked how they thought they did, the students all said they could answer the questions, so we believe they all did well. The final results will be posted in April.



A few of our girls standing in front of a snow scene, pretending to be "cold."
It was only about 100 degrees Fahrenheit when this was taken :-)

The rest of our students, with one exception, started their final exams on February 27th. Our oldest student, Miss Hoi Kho Nei Lam, will take her examinations starting on March 12th.

In January Palal & Kikim were able to begin the long process of purchasing the next door lot. As of the date of this writing the paperwork is still in process. We hope to give a final report at our anniversary dinner in May!

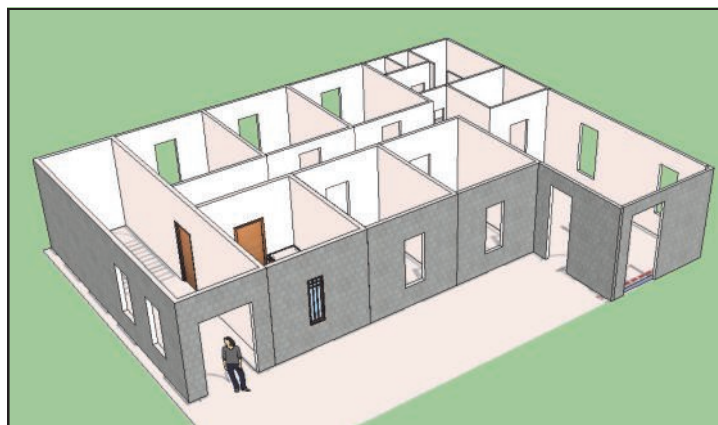
Even though the land purchase is not completely finished, the previous tenants have moved out, and MyHope has taken tentative possession of the lot. The ground was in bad shape, and required draining some swampy areas before it could be cleared. Next, a lot of fill dirt will be needed to bring it level with the existing HBS property. The old bamboo shack that the former neighbors lived in will have to come down, of course.

The plan is to build a new girl's dormitory on this lot. It will have six rooms, with two girls per room, indoor bathrooms, showers, and an expanded kitchen which will connect the new building to the existing building. Eventually, two more floors will be added to this new building. The second floor will be Palal and Kikim's living quarters and ministry offices, and the third floor will be a meeting room for church/school activities.

The estimated cost to build the foundation and first floor of the new dormitory will be around \$50,000.00 (if it can be constructed this year). This is a major project, and it will only happen with the Lord's help and many generous people catching the vision! This project will be the primary focus of the Five Year Anniversary Dinner and Silent Auction fundraiser on May 4th. Please pray for the success of this project., and please consider giving generously.

As has been said many times, quality education is one of the primary ways that the poor people in northwest Myanmar will become self-sufficient. The goal is to help them to not have to rely on gifts from the West for their survival! Your prayers and gifts now will make that dream a reality, and will also cause many blessings to fall upon you.

Be sure to check Facebook for pictures and videos of the HBS annual field trip last December. You will be blessed!



A rough sketch-up of the proposed Girls' Dormitory (1st Floor)

Hope Preschool

Last year the Myanmar government passed a law requiring all children entering kindergarten or first grade to know the Burmese alphabet and numbers, and have some basic familiarity with the Burmese language. To ensure this, the government opened preschools, staffed by Burmese Buddhist teachers. As part of their daily activities, the young children are instructed in Buddhism—how to pray Buddhist prayers, etc.

The Christian families were very distraught at the prospect of having to send their children to these government-run Bud-

dhist schools, to say the least. The elders of Tamu Christian Church decided to open a Christian preschool in their new church building. They didn't want the building to sit unused during the week, and a preschool seemed like a perfect way to make use of it.

A young Christian woman was found who agreed to teach the children. The monthly tuition rate was set at 2,000 Kyats (about \$2.50) as a way of paying the teacher a small salary. Unfortunately, only a few families could afford that, so only eleven students were enrolled in the preschool.

Late last year, the elders determined that they would have to close the preschool for lack of funds. It was a great idea, but there was not enough money to pay the teacher a working wage, and also provide supplies and meals for the little children.

However, when some wonderful folks at Lakeside Christian Church in Springfield, Illinois heard about Hope Preschool, they stepped up and offered to help by paying the teacher's salary. Another individual offered to purchase school supplies for all the children!

Now, not only is the preschool able to stay open, they were able to take in more children, for a total of twenty preschool students. Praise God!

In order for the preschool to succeed and continue long-term, we would like to be able to hire an assistant teacher as well as help even more children. Please consider helping these children by committing to a monthly donation of any amount. If the Lord is prompting you to help them, please call 217-415-9187, or email info@myanmarhope.org. God bless you!



The teacher and children of Hope Preschool in Tamu

Pastor Support Program

We thank God for the many faithful pastors and elders who lead our congregations in northwest Myanmar. They have labored long and hard for the Lord under very difficult and trying conditions. Since MyHope began five years ago, one of our primary concerns was to help these men to take care of their families while they do the work of ministry.



One of those faithful men is Pastor Lun Kho Thang of North Valpabung Christian Church. He has been working with Palal for many years, and has been a trusted and faithful servant of the Lord.

Last summer Pastor Lun Kho Thang became very ill with pneumonia. He had to spend several weeks in a clinic, and needed to have his lungs drained of fluid several times.

His house, made of lumber and bamboo, is mostly open to the elements. Palal believed that this was at least partly responsible for his sickness. Palal asked if there was any way that we could help Pastor Lun Kho Thang by putting walls on his home. Immediately, a request was posted on the MyHope Facebook page and also sent to some of our friends. One family indicated a desire to help as soon as they could.

Thankfully, Pastor Lun Kho Thang was able to participate in the Kuki Christian Convention in December, though he was visibly weak.

We determined to put out the word again when we returned to the States, to see if funds could be raised to give this man of God an "Extreme Hut Makeover." Praise God, we can now report that the family who originally desired to help was able to come through! They recently sent a check for \$1,500.00 dollars! These funds will be used to rebuild Pastor Lun Kho Thang's house, with proper walls and a good roof.



Pastor Lun Kho Thang's current house. Note the lack of walls on three sides.

These changes will not only encourage this faithful servant of God, but will hopefully help keep him healthy for many years to come. Thank you so much to the family who donated these funds! You know who you are, and so does our Father in Heaven. Your reward will be great indeed! God bless you!

If this story inspires you to want to help in a similar way, please read on...

Family Support Program



Mr Myint Aung and his wife, Mrs. Ny Oh Lah, have been on the MyHope family support program since the very beginning of this ministry. If you have been with us for very long at all, you have probably seen their pictures.

Mr. Myint Aung contracted leprosy many years ago, and because of the disease he lost all of his fingers, parts of his feet, most of his eyesight and, as a result, is not able to work to support his wife and aged father. Now the disease is dormant and non-communicable, but he still suffers a great deal because of it.

Over more than twenty years, Mrs. Ny Oh Lah has stayed faithfully by his side, caring for him and working hard to try

to earn a little bit of money to buy food. Her primary way of earning income is by weaving and selling bamboo baskets.

This beautiful woman made the difficult trip from her village to the Kuki Christian Convention in December in order to speak directly to Palal, and also to Chuck and MaryAnn Cherry.

Through Palal's interpretation she thanked us with tears for the many ways that Myanmar Hope Christian Mission and the Christians in America have helped her and her family over the years. She acknowledged that they have been able to survive these past five years because of the great generosity of the believers in the West, which has provided them with regular food aid, a cow and a calf, and other items of help. Now she was coming to us with a humble heart, and a very large request.

She related to us how her husband always gets cold, and since their little hut doesn't have any real walls to speak of, he has to sit as close as he can to their fire in order to stay warm. However, he has no feeling in his extremities, and he is constantly burning himself. Since he can't feel the burns, they sometimes become sore and infected. She is concerned that he will get sick from these infections and die. Also, her old father-in-law also gets cold because their little hut is so inadequate.



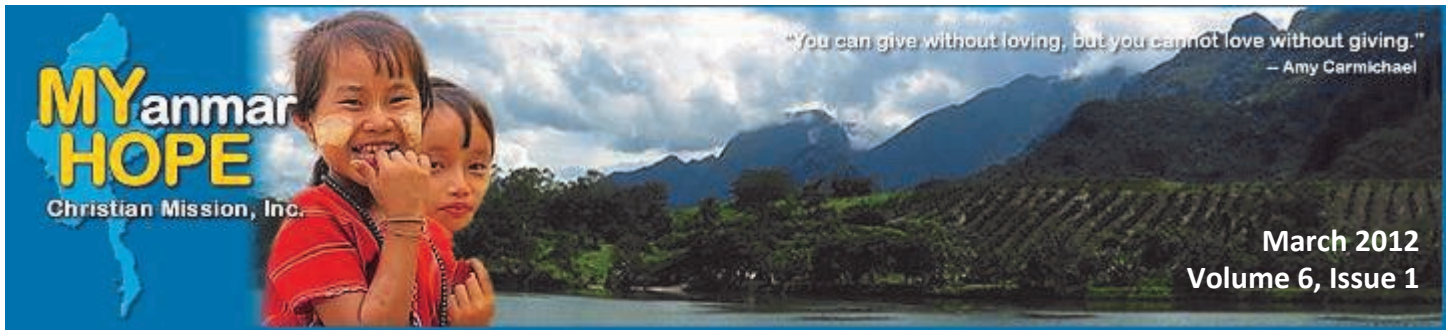
Mrs. Ny Oh Lah, wife of Mr. Myint Aung

She asked if there was any way we could help her family by rebuilding their house. She knew she was asking so much, but there was no way they would ever be able to save that much money in their entire lifetime. Their local church helps them as much as they can, but they are all so poor themselves.

We were moved to tears by this beautiful woman and her heartfelt request! We wished that we could tell her right then and there that yes, we would build her a new house. Unfortunately we did not have the funds to do that, and we still do not.

So MyHope is now reaching out to you, our dear friends and supporters in America. Will you please consider a sacrifice of love and give this beautiful little family an "extreme hut makeover?"

To build a two-room house with a lumber floor and posts, bamboo walls, and a corrugated steel roof now costs about \$2,000.00 to \$2,200.00 USD, depending on the current



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**Bringing the eternal hope of Jesus Christ to the people of Myanmar in a holistic manner
by addressing their spiritual, physical, emotional and educational needs**

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exchange rate.

Perhaps there is one family out there who could do this all on their own! Or, if you would like to take on just a part of the house, the breakdown of materials* and labor is on the right side of this page. To watch a short video of Myint Aung and his wife, and to see the hut in which they currently live, please go to: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZRbe7_Ilj4

If you would like to help this poor family with an "Extreme Hut Makeover" please contact us right away. Thank you and God bless you!



Particular	Rate (Kyats)	Rate (USD)	Qty	Total (Kyats)	Total (USD)
Pillars	10,000	\$ 12.50	15	150,000	\$ 187.50
Lumber 5"x2"	3,500	\$ 4.38	30	105,000	\$ 131.25
Lumber 4"x2"	3,000	\$ 3.75	20	60,000	\$ 75.00
Lumber 3"x2"	2,500	\$ 3.13	76	190,000	\$ 237.50
Lumber .5x1/2	2,500	\$ 3.13	80	200,000	\$ 250.00
Lumber 3"x1"	1,000	\$ 1.25	40	40,000	\$ 50.00
Lumber 6"x1"	3,000	\$ 3.75	10	30,000	\$ 37.50
Tin 6' x 2'.5"	3,650	\$ 4.56	85	310,250	\$ 387.81
Roofing Nails	3,000	\$ 3.75	4	12,000	\$ 15.00
Nails	2,500	\$ 3.13	15	37,500	\$ 46.88
Bamboo	10,000	\$ 12.50	10	100,000	\$ 125.00
Labor				300,000	\$ 375.00
Transportation				200,000	\$ 250.00
TOTAL				1,734,750	\$ 2,168.44

* figures based on the houses built for the Hmun Tha fire victims two years ago. The exchange rate used in this chart is 800 Kyats per Dollar. Prices will likely be higher today due to inflation.



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