

Global Day of Prayer for Burma

2017

20 Years Ago

20 years ago, the Burma Army crossed the Thailand border to attack and burn the Wangka refugee camp, where thousands of Karen people had fled for safety, including this mother and child. 20 years ago, the Global Day of Prayer for Burma was initiated in response to attacks against the ethnic people and the oppression of all in Burma. Thank you to all who have faithfully prayed with us for the people of Burma to know freedom, justice and reconciliation.



Dear friends,

Up with families in a hiding place high in the Kachin mountains of Northern Burma, I was reminded we serve a living, all powerful God. At the end of a relief mission I was feeling bad for leaving the people in their cold and rocky hiding place. I felt I was abandoning them. Then I was reminded, "Introduce them to Jesus. He will never leave them." Jesus has the answer to all our



problems and the best thing we can do for each other is to help each other trust and call on Jesus. So I encouraged the people to call on His name, to ask Jesus for anything and to trust Him. We serve a living God and we do so by faith. Faith in the midst of evidence to the contrary, but faith in a God who cares so much for us He sent His son to live and die and live again for us. Faith that all things work together for good for those who love the Lord.

Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, support and being part of the prayer for Burma for over 20 years. Your prayers have resulted in many good changes in Burma (Myanmar), with the National League for Democracy and Aung San Suu Kyi winning the election and leading the new government. However, many people in the conflict areas could not vote and the military still controls an automatic 25% of the seats in Parliament. Underneath a layer of a democratically elected government is a deep layer of continuing military authority. We keep praying that the attacks against the Kachin, Shan and Ta'ang in northern Burma and against the Arakan in western Burma will stop. Even in ceasefire areas, the Burma Army has not withdrawn its forces. Also in western Burma over 100,000 of the Rohingya minority live in concentration camps. We pray for and try to help those still under attack and oppression. Prayer has brought good changes and has changed us too. We pray for more of both in Jesus' name.

In the midst of ongoing conflict in Burma, ethnic relief team members have felt the call of God to go help people under attack in Kurdistan, Sudan, Syria and other places in the world. One night during a mission in Syria, we got to explain why: It was late in Kobane and we were finishing up a distribution of relief supplies to orphans and widows; a woman asked one of our team, "Why did you come? Why are you helping us?"

He answered, "My God sent us to help you."

"Who is your God?" the widow asked.

He told her, "My God is the one who loves you and sent us to help you. My God is the creator of all and loves us all. He sent His son Jesus to die for us. He helps us help each other." He went on to explain his own experience of God's love and why he came to help. The widow was joined by other widows holding their small children and saying to us, "Thank you, we are so glad you came, it is very good." We prayed with them and left as friends and fellow children of the God of love.

We see the power of God in this and, as in Burma, we go compelled by His love to give help, hope and love in Jesus' name. We stand with the oppressed and pray for oppressors, be they in Burma, Kurdistan, Syria or Sudan. Psalm 77:19 says what I feel about how God leads us, "Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen." We follow an invisible God who visibly changes us! Thank you for helping and praying with us!

God bless you,

David Eubank

Christians Concerned for Burma/Free Burma Rangers



Top: A Pa-Oh family pounding rice.

Middle: A Karen family together in a temporary shelter.

Bottom: A Kachin child gets water in a high mountain IDP camp.

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The Global Day of Prayer for Burma happens every year on the second Sunday of March. Please join us in praying for Burma! For more information, email info@prayforburma.org.

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20 Years Ago

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Global Day of Prayer for Burma. Thank you to all who have faithfully joined with us in prayer and worked to bring hope and peace to Burma.

Before there was a Global Day of Prayer for Burma there was a group of friends who cared about Thailand and Burma. They were doctors, pastors, poets and writers, teachers - revolutionaries all, desiring to bring freedom to people through the gospel and their respective work. They cared for leprosy patients, young people, old people, handicapped people, students, refugees, and families caught in the crossfire. For the most part, their work was in Thailand, but it became apparent to them that Burma's people, all of them, also were in great need of prayer. And so they began to add Burma to their prayers every Tuesday night, lifting up the people, the politicians, the ethnic groups, Aung San Suu Kyi and the democracy activists, the oppressed and poor....alongside their many other ministries.

This prayer for Burma, informal and independent as it was, rose to a mission and annual date after David Eubank and Laurie Dawson took a trip to Rangoon to hear Aung San Suu Kyi speak in 1996, during a brief period of freedom for her in between house arrests. Dave and Laurie heard her speak from her front gate, stirring up in her oppressed people hope for freedom. They too were stirred with hope, and love for these people seemingly on the brink of freedom. They secured a meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi, Dave met with her and she told him: "We need unity. We will never have peace without unity. And we need prayer. Please pray for us, and tell those here in Burma especially, please pray for us. Don't be afraid because, 'Perfect love casts out fear.'"

The final step was the encouragement of Dr. Saisuree Chutikul, a friend of Joan and Allan's and also of Aung San Suu Kyi's. Dave came back to Thailand with the idea of praying for Burma and then met Dr. Saisuree, a permanent senator in the Thai government and an advocate for women's and children's rights and trafficking victims. She said, "You should start a day of prayer for Burma." And so it began.



Top: A poster used to announce the first Global Day of Prayer for Burma. Amy Galetzka came in 1999 as the first full time volunteer to help with the Day of Prayer and helped it spread to over 56 nations.

Middle: Families leaving Wangka IDP camp after the Burma Army crossed the Thai-Burma Border in 1997 to attack and burn down the camp.

Bottom: A Karen IDP man reading the first Day of Prayer magazine in 1997.

Peace Process in Crisis

Dr. Ashley South reflects on the first year of the new government led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy, and how the peace process initiated under the previous regime is in crisis.

One year into the new government led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy, the peace process initiated under the previous regime is in crisis.

In October 2015, during the last months of U Thein Sein's military-backed regime, eight of the country's 21 Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) signed a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) with the government and Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw). As a result, across southeast Burma (/Myanmar), ceasefires established since 2012 and reconfirmed under the NCA have largely held - although not without occasional flare-ups. However, since both sides signed the NCA, there have been clashes between the Tatmadaw and the main Shan EAO (the RCSS/SSA-South); furthermore, there have also been clashes, based on territorial disputes, between the RCSS and Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) in northern Shan State. Over the past year, the Myanmar Army has continued to launch attacks on groups which did not sign the NCA, such as the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO), including large-scale offensives which have forced civilians to flee, deepening humanitarian crises across conflict-affected parts of northern Burma. The KIO and other members of the United Nationalities Federal Council (the main EAO alliance) have been willing to sign the NCA, but only under certain conditions, such as 'inclusive' participation of all the country's EAOs. Although State Councillor and de facto government leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has spoken in favour of inclusiveness, the still powerful Myanmar Army has so far refused to accept the participation of three small EAOs. Other unresolved issues include the role of international observers/monitors, and how to resolve disputes within the peace process.

In this context, first steps have been made towards establishing Joint Monitoring Committees under the NCA, to liaise between government, the Tatmadaw and EAOs, and civilians

in those parts of the country where the NCA is implemented. Following the '21st Century Panglong Conference' of August 2016 (which was actually held in the capital, Naypyidaw), a form of political dialogue has begun to emerge. This consists of sub-national consultations, with regular (six-monthly) plenary sessions to be held at the Union-level. However, it remains unclear whether the political dialogue will be regarded as sufficiently inclusive on the part of Burma's diverse civil society and political actors. Another key challenge will be whether the country's diverse ethnic stakeholders can develop coherent positions on key issues - and whether the Tatmadaw leadership is willing to see the political dialogue move towards a competitive political settlement, with resulting political change. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and ethnic political leaders see federalism as a key element in resolving Myanmar's decades of violence and ethnic conflict. However, federalism means different things to different actors, and it remains unclear whether agreement can be reached - and whether the Myanmar Army is willing to support a fundamental re-imagination and reorganisation of the country's troubled state-society relations.

In the meantime, most of Southeast Myanmar and other areas covered by the NCA remain relatively peaceful. Although conflict-affected communities are concerned about widespread land-grabbing and unsure about the future, most have experienced significant improvements in their lives and livelihoods since the ceasefire. However, across much of the rest of the country, ethnic nationality communities continue to be exposed to widespread violence. The situation is complicated and compounded by new forms of conflict emerging in Muslim-populated parts of northern Rakhine State (in western Burma), where the stateless Rohingya community has long suffered abuse and marginalisation. Northern Rakhine State has recently seen a very worrying upsurge of violence, with a heavy-handed response by state and military authorities.

Pray for genuine dialogue to flow from the hearts of leaders, from the ethnic groups, the NLD and the military and that trust could be placed and not misplaced.

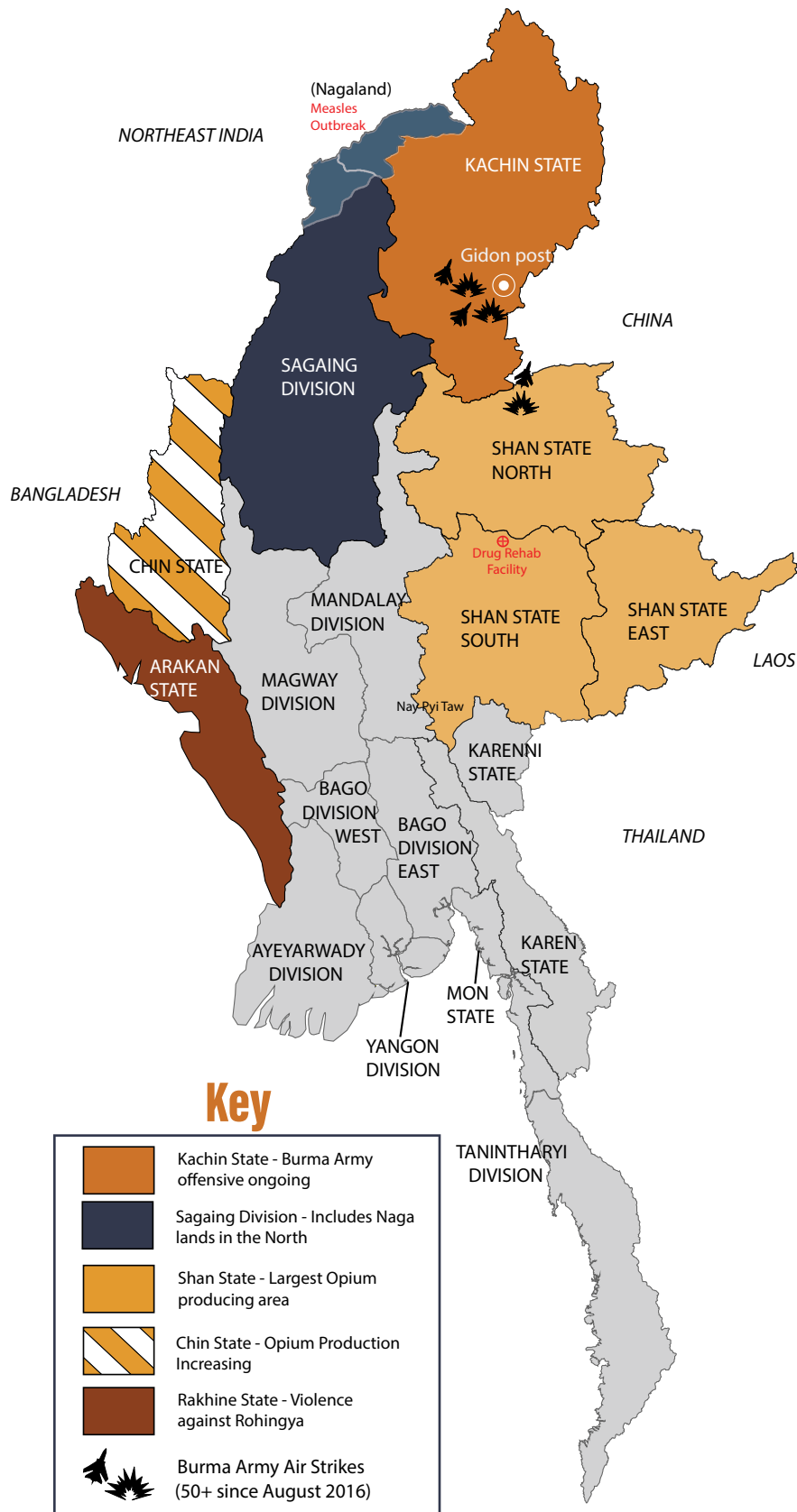
In This Magazine

The stories throughout this year's magazine represent some of the ongoing challenges facing Burma. While many of the stories reflect specific situations that happened in the past year, all provide a piece of the bigger picture of Burma and the people within her boundaries. Roughly 150 people groups can be found within Burma, each with their own cultures and challenges. Please continue to pray for the leaders of these groups—that they would serve their people and lead with courage.

The map at right shows the locations for the stories in this year's magazine. Use it as a way to place the events and people. Further, use it as a guide to pray for the many challenges within Burma.

"I want to help my people, I want peace for ALL people in Burma. I don't believe the ceasefire."

— Saw Wai Yan Tun, on why he doesn't trust the ceasefire





Conflict Continues in Kachin State and Northern Shan State

In August of 2016, conflict continued to escalate in Kachin State and northern Shan State. Clashes and infantry assaults backed by mortar attacks became a daily occurrence, and civilians frequently found themselves caught in the crossfire. Burma Army soldiers, backed by local militias, tanks, and aircraft, continued attacks in civilian areas in an attempt to root out ethnic forces. For the first time in several months tanks were used for fire support by the Burma Army against Kachin Independence Army (KIA) positions. Relief teams also reported that Burma Army drones were seen over KIA positions in northern Shan State.

Relief teams reported 15 incidents containing human rights abuses. Ten incidents concerned arbitrary arrests, beatings, torture, and the use of firearms in order to capture suspects. None of the instances involved court proceedings, lawyers or other elements of civil law. The soldiers and militia members involved in beatings or torture have also not been held accountable for their actions.



Burma Army Targets Rehabilitation Center in Central Shan State

In October 2016, sporadic fighting in two separate incidents was reported in central Shan State between the Burma Army and the Shan State Army-South (SSA-S). The clashes were deliberate actions by the Burma military and corresponded with the deployment and rotation of two separate Burma Army infantry battalions in the region. The attacks came within the first anniversary of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), which was signed October 15th, 2015.

The attacks caused thousands of people in the region to flee, with relief teams reporting over 2,000 people displaced and living in nearby IDP camps.

One target appeared to be a drug rehabilitation facility used by the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS) and SSA-S personnel to help local users of heroin and methamphetamines reduce their dependence on drugs. The reasons for the attack remain unclear; however, all of the drug users who were at the facility have since fled the area. The region is known for its heavy drug production by both local and foreign (Chinese) criminal enterprises. The RCSS was also conducting a drug eradication campaign in the nearby area.

Pray for those who are newly displaced, that their voices would be heard too, in the midst of all the voices claiming change and progress.

The Spread of Opium

Burma's cash crop sees a production increase in Chin State after severe loss of other crops

The United Nations Office on Drug and Crime reported that Burma produced an estimated 647 tons of opium in 2015, and potentially up to 820 tons, putting it second only to Afghanistan in terms of production.

Shan State, which shares a border with Thailand, Laos, and China, produces 91% of the opium coming from the infamous Golden Triangle region but opium production is now spreading to other areas in Burma as well: on the western side, bordering India, Chin State is experiencing an increase in opium production in the wake of large scale destruction of traditional crops due to recent natural disasters such as flood and drought.

In the past, many farmers in Chin State turned to hunting and fishing to provide for their families in the event of crop failures. However, the floods of the last several years have depleted local fishing stocks and with the Indian military shutting down hunting along the border, villagers have been left with few options for providing for themselves and their families. According to relief teams, in Singpial Village, a community of around 70 homes near the Burma-India border in Chin State,

residents have experienced seven opium-related deaths, along with arrests of four individuals involved with opium smuggling.

It's in these rural areas that opium production seems to be the most prevalent. Earlier this year, relief teams on the ground there noted that many internally displaced people (IDPs) and farmers have turned to opium harvesting. Its drought-resistant nature provides an easier and more lucrative means of income when their other options fail. Further, its medicinal uses and the high demand from China continues to increase its attractiveness to farmers.

With its high cash value, however, comes high risk. Addiction to the drug is common for those who choose to grow it. Even with the arrests in places like Singpial Village, Chin relief teams noted that many of the local authorities and police are apathetic to opium production and have not taken reasonable steps to eradicate the illicit production of drugs. Bribes are commonplace between farmers and local authorities, who then look away from the opium production.

In order to tackle opium farming, underlying problems must be dealt with first. Irrigation channels destroyed by nature must be repaired, the infrastructure that allows crops to be sold in markets must be built, and schools must be established. Unless concrete steps are taken to alleviate the underlying causes of drug production, the growing of opium in Chin State will likely increase.

Pray for economic options and hope for those tempted to both grow and use drugs because they feel they have lost everything.

Members of a relief team hold a young opium poppy while standing in an opium field in Chin State.





85 Children Die in Measles Outbreak

The Cost of Neglect in Nagaland

At right: Members of the Naga relief team sort medical supplies during a village clinic.

Tucked deep into the northeast corner of Burma, some 1,300 kilometers north of Yangon, lies Lahe Township, home to the ethnic Naga people of Burma. This area, part of the broader region known as Nagaland, is one of the most remote areas in the country and also holds the unwanted distinction of being the most neglected, impoverished and least developed area in all of Burma.

The roughly 95 villages that make up Lahe Township have no electricity or running water. Villagers collect all water necessary for daily survival in buckets after long treks up into the mountains. There are no roads to these villages. It takes three to five days of walking up and down mountains to get to Lahe Town to get supplies or medical care. The township has just one hospital to serve approximately 750,000 people.

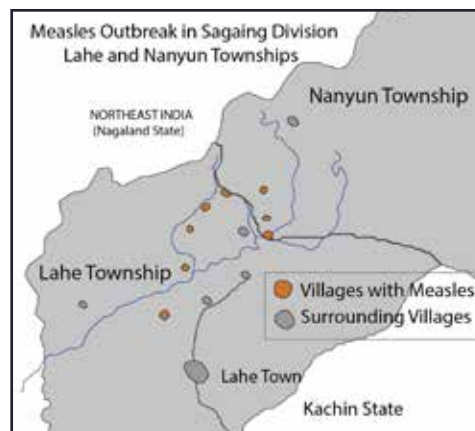
The Free Burma Rangers currently have one Naga ranger relief team operating in Sagaing Division. Mr. Kapom, leader of the Naga team, stated, "The Naga people basically live in a prison. This is because they have no access to the outside world via any modes of communication such as telegraph, phones or internet. The lack of schools and the opportunity for an education leaves the children with no hope for an improved future."

In July Mr. Kapom received word that 30-40 children had recently died, all within a few weeks, from a measles outbreak.

The Naga relief team went to help.

They spent the next six weeks walking and administering care to villages affected by the measles outbreak. By the time the illness was contained, 85 children from the ages of 1 to 17 had lost their lives - due to a treatable disease that is largely eradicated in the west thanks to a safe and effective vaccine.

Naga leaders stated that for decades their communities had pleaded with the Burma government to support their people with things like medical clinics, schools, clean water and toilets - things that, as exemplified by this outbreak, can be life-saving.



One village headman related to Mr. Kapom that one day in 2015 the Burma government came to their village of 58 families to drop off a water storage tank and attempt to construct a motorbike road. Yet, the pipes for the tank were the wrong size, rendering them useless, and the road collapsed within a short time period because of poor engineering. The headman described the government's attempt at support as a purely symbolic gesture to appease the villagers.

To date, nothing has changed in Nagaland. Lack of basic resources and infrastructure continue to impede progress in the region while lack of medical care continues to lead to unnecessary deaths.

Pray for the people of Burma who are suffering from poverty and deprivation, in the form of illnesses that are preventable and the absence of care. Pray for those who are suffering spiritual illnesses that are preventable with care.

You Must Live Here

Jenn Tendero, of Partners Relief & Development (PRAD), reflects on the Rohingya people and life inside an internment camp.



Photo courtesy of Partners Relief and Development

There is a certain despair I've encountered in deep poverty, a despair that knows tomorrow won't be any different or less miserable than today, and neither, for that matter, will next month. This is the despair of the people who live in the internment camps.

Before 2012, the Rohingya people lived and worked for generations in Burma, now called Myanmar. They owned shops, farmed land, and taught schools. They were not allowed to study medicine, per the Burmese government, but they could attend university. Then all hell broke loose and at the end of a violent week in 2012, the Rohingya people found themselves rounded up and confined to what has been called the world's largest internment camp: 140,000 people dumped onto a 5 sq. km piece of land that belonged to them, and told this: you must live here. You may not leave, ever. You may not farm this land because it now belongs to the Burmese government. If you resisted being rounded up, you will receive not one kilo of rice from this day forward from the government. You may not open up schools. You may not practice medicine or you will be shot. The town you own shops in, get your coffee from, go to school in? It is now off limits to you.

In the entire world, 140,000 refugees is a drop in the ocean barely worth considering. But for a people who start nearly every sentence with the words, "Before the conflict of 2012..." it is their reality and their suffering that the world is apt to barely notice. They are afraid for their lives; they believe the Burmese government has the plan to exterminate them from the face of the earth, slowly. They believe they will be killed eventually. They have no jobs, most of the children can't attend school, they cannot grow anything. They can sit

and pray and wait to for the Burmese army to make good on their promise to take a shower with their blood.

It is into this deep suffering that Partners enters with love and rice and oil. These are our neighbors and they are confined to a caged area "like chickens in a pen." They are afraid and they are hungry. All around them is land they could farm if allowed to; last month, when someone leased land from the government and planted rice, the government decided to build a road through that field, just before the harvest, decimating it. No one has seen them use the road once. Last week, when the police noticed a building being constructed, they imposed a stifling new tax on roofs that no one can afford to pay.

The Rohingyas had one plea when we visited village after village within the camp: Please be our voice. Talk to Kofi Annan for us. Get us back the ID cards the government stole from us. We have no one, only you. As they pled with us, I remember hearing once that the saddest thing of all is to be forgotten. And I think that the saddest thing of all would be for my own children to be forgotten, hungry and thirsty. And then I am propelled to act. Because what I want for my own children, I want for others.

I repeat that. I tape up pictures of their faces by my desk so I won't forget. I pray for them at night because someone should stand in the gap for them. And I tell their story because that is what they asked us to do. And though they live off the rice and vegetables we deliver to them, what they really want is their freedom, their old lives. I doubt we can do that for them, but we can do something - so we are, so we will.

Pray for justice and truth for these people. Pray that God would come to the least of these Himself and raise them up.

Sent to Share

Toh Win is the medical director at the Jungle School of Medicine-Kawthoolei, where he oversees both patient care in the clinic and the teaching program for basic medics. He has worked to help poor and oppressed people for many years.

This is the message Jesus gave to his disciples. It's also a message for me. It was a nice experience for me to go on a mission in Kurdistan. I had prayed about this many times since 2015, when FBR first went to Kurdistan. Finally I heard God's call: "Go, and share my love to those who need it."

Why did God want me to go there? To share the love of God and stand with those who face a difficult situation. God opened the way for our group, step by step, in the right time, so I know very well this is the calling from God to go and help these people. For me, as a Karen person, when I arrived to this country almost everything is different: culture, environment, weather and food. The place is very dry, with no streams, trees, and it's mostly flat. Seeing this I know very well it is very hard to run from the enemy and hide; also it is very difficult to get water. In my mind probably the IDPs' first need will be water.

These people are very good in welcoming guests and friends. They love us and are happy that we help them and stand with them. We said, we are a small group, we cannot help a lot but what we can do is we can pray for you

and stand with you because our God sent us. One of their leaders said, "You are a small group but you are very important, like a cup of water is important for a thirsty person." This touched my heart a lot. I know God is doing a big thing that I cannot imagine. Most of the people we met were not the same religion as us but they let us pray for them.

Trust: They have trust in us. As I am a medic and doing dental care sometimes, I can see this very well. They cannot speak our language, we cannot speak their language, but they trust us and come to see us for their health problems. And they let us help train them in first aid. We enjoyed our time there with them very much.

Humble: This is the word that came from one of our translators. He said this word to me many times. He said, you people are humble. I do not know why he sees this in us, especially me. I know myself, that I am not humble. One thing that I know, God is doing big things in our team. So we are on the right path. We need to continue this light from God that people see.

Finally I want to say we still need to continue and pray for these people who are in desperation, and see the work that God will do for them.

Thanks for a good calling and good opportunity to help people across the world. Please help us all to see opportunities around us to make more friends and build more bridges.

And he said to them, Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.
-Mark 16:15



Toh provides dental care to a soldier in Kurdistan, Iraq.

Faith on the Mountain

Kachin State is in the northernmost part of Burma. Pinched between India and China to the west, east and north, with the plains of Burma below, it is full of the steep mountains of the foothills of the Himalayan range. It is beautiful, both the landscape and the people.

But Kachin State also has another story that is not as nice. Since the 17-year ceasefire with the Burma Army broke down in June of 2011 there has been constant fighting that has displaced over 98,000 people, according to UN numbers.

Fighting the enemy with prayer

After every Sunday's worship is finished, parishioners at the local Baptist church in Maga Yang IDP camp start moving their pews here and there. They push together five or six of them, and lay out a grass mat on top and add a pillow and some blankets. They are transforming their church into a 24/7 prayer room for their soldiers up on Gidon Mountain, where the Burma Army has been attacking for the last two and a half months. On either side of the podium is a curtain and every hour of every day there is someone behind that curtain praying for the soldiers. The church hall usually has a few others lounging around on the beds made of pews and waiting for their turn to go behind the curtain and pray for the Gidon soldiers. They have faith that their prayers are not in vain and it is God helping their men to be able to hold on up on top of that mountain.

One day in early October God answered those prayers in a miraculous way. It was a clear day with blue skies all around. The Kachin could hear an attack helicopter in the distance approaching fast. About two minutes before the helicopter arrived, the very top of Gidon Mountain was completely wrapped in fog. The soldiers could hear the helicopter flying back and forth but without being able to see where the Kachin Army was, the helicopter had to turn around without firing a shot. Just after it left, the fog lifted and the sky went back to being clear and blue. All the soldiers there realized they had seen a miracle and thanked God for bringing the fog to hide them from the Burma Army.

Fighting the enemy with a ladle

In a large make-shift tent along the road to Gidon Mountain there are 15 women working furiously: chopping, boiling, simmering, and stirring. These women are the cooks for the front line soldiers. More than just cooking for soldiers, they are cooking for their husbands and brothers that are defending Gidon Mountain and their homes. Every one of these women has a loved one up on top of the mountain defending the Kachin from the Burma Army. The meals are prepared with love and

(continued on page 14)



Pray for the Kachin people as they make their stand for freedom – pray that they would see the fruit of their struggle soon.

Children play outside their home at an IDP camp in Kachin State. This camp is home for 650 people and is situated at a high mountain pass on the border with China.

these women are fighting the Burma Army the best way they know. After the food is prepared it is loaded onto the back of motorcycles and driven to the foot of the mountain. From there it is loaded onto a team of mules and carried up the steep backside of the mountain for three hours until it finally arrives at the front line.

This is our home now

Up at 6,000 feet and surrounded by mountains that rise over 2000 feet higher is an IDP camp where 650 men, women and children have lived for the last five years. At this elevation and this far north it gets bitterly cold in the winter; last year they had a foot of snow. Established right on the border with China, this camp offers the IDPs some safety, as they know the Burma Army cannot easily penetrate the mountains. The Free Burma Rangers have visited here many times – because it is so secluded and difficult to get to we feel a need to visit and share what we have with these people. When our team arrived this time we were surprised to see them at work building new houses. A new church had been constructed on the hill above the village. The head of the camp committee had asked if we could help fund a hydropower



generator large enough for 100 homes. We asked them, what if the war ended tomorrow, what would you do with this hydro unit? The camp leader looked at us and answered, “We have been here five years already. We are busy constructing new, permanent houses. We can’t keep living like we will go home tomorrow. Besides, for many of us, this is our home now and most of us would rather live here up in these mountains, even if peace does come.” We were impressed by their resilience and their attitude of seizing the day and not waiting on someone else. We helped them with funds to buy the parts they will need to make the generator, and the men volunteered to do the work for free as a way of benefiting their community.

The Fight for Gidon Mountain



Top photo: Women who cook for the front line soldiers

Bottom photo: Burma Army under the N'khram Village school

In August 2016, the Burma Army started attacking the Kachin on Gidon Mountain. Its location allows the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) access to IDP camps north of the mountain. If the Burma Army were to succeed in their attacks and capture Gidon, those IDP camps would be cut off from aid.

The Burmese government has rarely allowed aid groups to deliver food to IDPs in the non-government controlled parts of Kachin State. Therefore, the vast majority of aid comes from local Kachin based groups and the local Kachin government.

During reconnaissance of Burma Army positions, FBR teams could see the commander of the troops in bunkers under the school and soldiers meeting at the school in a village called N'khram (photo at left). They were also able to see the Burma Army based in and dug around the Kachin Baptist Church. The villagers from N'khram had fled from their village to IDP camps near the Chinese border because of attacks by the Burma Army in December 2011. Villagers from N'khram, living in Maga Yang IDP camp, confirmed from photos that the places where the Burma Army was positioned were in fact the school and church of N'khram Village.



Set Free

A Kachin woman shares her story about being taken into China for work amidst a hidden deal to sell her.

Mayaw Hkawn Lum was 32 years old when she and her family had to flee their village, Seng Mai. Attacks by the Burma Army in Kachin State beginning in 2011 meant that it was no longer safe for them to live there. Before 2011 the family grew rice and had a small vegetable garden. Back then, Seng Mai was a nice and beautiful place. Every day Mayaw wishes to return to her village and show it to her youngest child who was born in the camp and has yet to see the beauty of Seng Mai.

After the attacks Mayaw and her family had to flee to Maga Yang IDP camp, where they, like most of the IDPs there, didn't have much of anything and were dependent on the aid and support that came from the Kachin government and foreign aid organizations.

One day a Chinese woman came to the camp and offered Mayaw a job in a Chinese toy factory in China. She was promised 60 yuan/day, which was a lot of money. She decided to accept the job, leave her family and go to work in the factory to save up money to help support her family.

When Mayaw arrived in Guan Dong State, near Hong Kong, where she was going to work, she noticed the Chinese lady talking with a man. While she did not understand the language, she could tell they were negotiating a price. Mayaw realized right then that she had been tricked and was in a lot of trouble. The Kachin Women's Association (KWA) had worked in

the IDP camps, teaching the Kachin women living there how to recognize human trafficking and gave them a phone hotline to call if they were in need.

Mayaw took her cellphone and called the KWA office back in Kachin State. The person who answered told her to run right away to a police station. Mayaw did as she was told and escaped. Unfortunately no one among the local police spoke Kachin so she had to wait one month before KWA was able to send a translator. She was transported to Yingjiang, China, where the police drove her back to Kachin State. Soon Mayaw was back with her family in Maga Yang.

"I was very lucky that I made a quick decision and had people to help me. At the same time I worry about the young girls in camp and that they might be tempted to take a job offer to be able to afford nice clothes etc. After about one month of work and build up trust the Chinese sell the girls away to get married and have children with Chinese men because there are not enough women in China," she said.

"We need help for protection of human trafficking. We need your help. Still there are a lot of Kachin girls who are being sold to men in China. Please pray for girls and women who are being tempted to take jobs in China and for the women who are there now. Pray for protection from human trafficking."

Pray for those so desperate they leave their families for the unknown to find hope – pray for protection and wisdom.



Pray and Do

On a mission in Kurdistan, Iraq, recently, Zau Seng, camera in hand, joined a meeting we were having with a small group of local leaders; smiling goofily, he introduced himself with: "Hello. I am handsome hero fat man." Everyone laughed. The meeting continued, in a light spirit. The man who is indeed the hero of what could be a grand adventure story took pictures as everyone talked. But Kurdistan is just the latest adventure for Free Burma Ranger Zau Seng, who was born in Myitkyina, Kachin State, in 1980.

Kachin State is the northernmost region of Burma, bordering China, and contains Burma's highest mountains as well as some of her richest resources. In 1962, when General Ne Win assumed power over the Union of Burma in a military coup, the Kachin formed the Kachin Independence Organization and declared independence. Geographically far removed from the political maelstrom of central Burma, and thanks to the wealth of her gold and jade mines, and proximity to a lucrative Chinese market, the KIO was able to maintain a genuine sort of independence from the central government until 1994, when the Burma Army took over the jade mines of the area. After initial fighting, the KIO signed a ceasefire – and another independence movement was born, inspired by those who still wanted to fight.

Zau Seng was just coming of age as the peace of his homeland began to crumble, but an unstable family life had already started the uprooting process. His mother was a career teacher and his father was a security guard on a train – and an alcoholic. Zau Seng was ready for a change from his family routine and when he was 16 he decided to join the independence army and fight for freedom for his people. He was disappointed when they told him he was too young. But he had already declared independence in his head so, against his parents' wishes, he left school and joined four of his friends as they headed off to fortune-hunt in the jade mines.

Soon after he left, his father died of liver failure – but it would be four months before Zau Seng found out. When he received the message, he headed home and stayed briefly with his family – now just his mother, two brothers and one sister – before returning back

to the mines. Not long after, he and his friends struck it rich. They found a giant chunk of jade worth enough to give them each the equivalent of about \$30,000. Zau Seng headed home with his new riches.

For two years he lived at home, spending time hunting with his brothers, or working as a mahout, wrangling elephants in the jungle; he panned for gold sometimes – and he tried to avoid being arrested. In the wake of the ceasefire of 1994, the Burma Army were an occupying force in his home village. They set curfews, and arrested people who broke them. Political discussion and gatherings were prohibited. Once, Zau Seng's uncle was arrested and held for a week for breaking curfew and many nights saw Zau Seng and his friends scattering and fleeing pell-mell into the jungle to avoid the prowling soldiers.

Finally, his neighbor, who was a local political leader, decided some of that energy should be harnessed in a useful direction. He called Zau Seng and invited him to join a development effort in northern Kachin State, on the border of China, to help Lisu and Lawa villagers. With a group of soldiers, Zau Seng found himself building bridges and delivering rice in response to a local famine. He liked this work, and when it ended he didn't want to return to the aimless lifestyle he'd been living. Unsure of the next step, he fell back on jade mining and spent the next couple of years going between home and the mines.

But the oppression of the Burma government was increasing and Zau Seng finally decided to join the freedom movement that had rejected him when he was 16. He became a soldier. After six

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months of training he was sent again to the China border, this time as security. But from his new position, he could see that the leader of the group he had joined was really just a businessman who wanted profit. He quit, working briefly in the mines again before joining a splinter group that he felt was genuinely working for freedom in Burma. This group immediately sent him south, to Karenni State, where there was an active resistance to the dictator's army. He saw his first fighting in a week long battle that happened over Christmas of 2005.

In the following year, his Kachin leaders heard about FBR training and sent him to join it. He decided to be a medic, learning basic skills first at FBR training and then more advanced skills at Mae Tao clinic. He became part of FBR's headquarters team and went on many missions in Karen State. There was still no fighting in Kachin State, only the uncontested occupation of the Burma Army. He knew that this wouldn't last though and determined to learn as much as he could to prepare for the fight for freedom in his own home. He learned photography and also became skilled with a GPS and map-making.

Finally, in 2011, it happened: the Burma Army attacked Kachin positions near a dam, breaking the 17-year agreement that had originally let them in in 1994. The fighting quickly escalated as the Kachin refused to back down and the Burma Army attempted to

consolidate their power. Within a year, over 100,000 Kachin people had been forced from their homes and Kachin State became the center of some of the heaviest fighting Burma had seen. Soon requests came for FBR to train relief teams to help these IDPs. Zau Seng and some of his fellow Kachin rangers were ready – they helped coordinate and lead trainings and missions to help IDPs. When the Burma Army began using attack helicopters and jet fighters, Zau Seng was there with his camera to record it – footage that went out all over the world in a BBC broadcast that gave the lie to the government's denials that the Burma Army was on the attack. In 2015 he was wounded when

mortar shrapnel hit him in the arm- but he didn't stop filming.

Today, there is still fighting, there are still camps full of displaced people who have been

unable to return home for four years. He says, whether they win or not, the Kachin will fight until they are free. At the same time, FBR has begun responding in other countries – and his desire to help has grown to include people who are oppressed anywhere. He has gone on several missions to Kurdistan to help tell the story of what is happening there. To him, this is one more door God has opened for him. His prayer is for justice and peace in the world. He continues to actively work for that and his message is one of action too: he says to us all, "Pray and do."

"Whether [we] win or not, the Kachin will fight until they are free."

Pray for guidance for Zau Seng and that he would see freedom come for his people and see the fruit of his labor.

On page 16, top photo: Zau Seng (at right in photo) with medic and fellow Ranger, Joseph, after the liberation of Basheeqa, Kurdistan, in 2016.

On page 16, bottom photo: Zau Seng working on maps inside Burma.

At right: A young Zau Seng completes Ranger training.



The Sounds of Faithfulness

The Jungle School of Medicine-Kawthoolei (JSMK) is a medical school and clinic nestled in a narrow river valley in the jungle of Karen State. Students from all over Karen State come to learn medicine from a mix of Karen and foreign medical staff to prepare them to serve their people as local health care providers. They also come to learn to be faithful people for a nation that has been riven by violence and insecurity for decades. Here, Dr. John Shaw, JSMK's international medical director, reflects on faithfulness.

Long before the sun comes up over the Jungle School of Medicine – Kawthoolei (JSMK), even before the first rooster kicks in, if you are a light sleeper, you may wake to the chopping of wood. That rhythm of pounding, the iron ripping through the fibers and the splits falling to the ground, is one of our sounds of faithfulness. Every day of the year a student and staff member are up early with a head lamp and a splitting maul chopping fuel to cook our food and drinking water. What are some of the other sounds of faithful life at JSMK?



Above: A patient is transported through the dense jungle using a 'bambulance.' A lack of roads often causes problems for those trying to seek medical care.

The sounds of patient care

Hushed murmur of students up in the night to check vital signs and pass medications in the inpatient department (IPD).

Conversations in Karen – a student takes a history from a villager with a snake bite in the outpatient department. Monday through Friday, villagers arrive early and late to explain their problems, get examined, receive a diagnosis and treatment. A staff member explains the discharge medications to a patient going home.

Laughter between our 'city-staff' and their charges – the patients we have sent out to another country to get specialist care. The main effort is getting their difficult problems to the medical experts they need, but along the way, our staff give them much love and laughter to nudge them toward healing in the strange context of a city.

The sounds of carrying

Hiss of rice in a heavy sack in its long carry over the mountains. The students goad each other on, the way young people do, bearing their rice loads to campus to replenish our supply.

Creaking of strings on wood, as a sick patient, slung in a hammock suspended under a thick bamboo pole (a 'bambulance') is carried by villagers down to JSMK for care. As there are few roads, patients who are too ill to walk over the mountain paths must be carried.

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The sounds of counting

The steady counting of supplies: needles, gauze, bottles of pills, injections, notebooks, and all the other supplies needed to run a hospital, clinic, and school, all carried in from a neighboring country. Days away, in a city office, the sound of a computer clicking - ordering supplies for next month's run, confirming each item, arranging payments and tracking delivery.

The sound of children crying

A baby wailing his way through a dressing change. The burn on his hand is healing but requires this daily painful ritual. His father murmurs encouragements, holding him in his arms. Sometimes healing requires pain, and helping our patients cope with it.

Children waiting to be vaccinated break down in tears as the process inches them forward toward the needles. Afterwards, a candy sweetens the moment.

The sounds of learning

Two teacher's voices rise above the scratching silence of students taking notes, as a lecture is given in the classroom, and translated on the fly. Both the visiting doctor and the translators play crucial roles as teachers. Above, the hot metal roof ticks under the afternoon sun. Students who have been up in the night, caring for patients, battle to stay awake in the heat. The monotony is broken by group work, role plays and medical games.

Steady recitation of facts during IPD rounds. Students present the patients they have cared for twice a day, learning by doing and speaking as well as observing the progress of patients from sickness through to healing.

Children of staff recite after their teacher, their voices in uneven unison, calling out their lessons. A small preschool on campus is being expanded to accommodate the education of staff children.

Please pray. Our patients have such difficult lives. Our task of being faithful to them requires steady relationships, persistence, fidelity, responsiveness, and solidarity. Pray for us as we learn how to serve each other in all the lovely sounds of faithfulness.



Top Photo: A father holds his young son while JSMK medics change the dressing on his burned hand.

Bottom Photo: Students learning together at JSMK.

Meet the Good Life Club Kids

The Good Life Club is based on John 10:10 where Jesus says he has come to bring "abundant life". GLC wants to open the door, even if just a little bit, to that abundant life and what Jesus is offering, to the children we meet. We believe our prayers can have eternal significance. We also want to introduce you to some of the children we've met, and encourage you to pray for them as well.



From Burma

Sha Nay Paw (pictured above in the center) is a 13 year old Karen girl who was born with a hole in her heart that leaked oxygenated blood back into her lungs instead of sending it to her body, denying her cells the normal amounts of oxygen required to fuel the processes of life. As she grew and her body's oxygen demands increased, her life slowly ebbed. She was born in Karen State at a time when the Burma Army was laying landmines, building new roads and camps – and had orders to shoot anyone they saw. With traveling so dangerous, their options for treatment were limited. When they realized she was dying before their eyes, they brought her to a local witch doctor and left her, with a desperate hope that he could help her. She ran away and came home. Eventually, the fighting in the area diminished. A clinic was opened up nearby, staffed with foreigners and local Karen medics, called the Jungle School of Medicine - Kawthoolei. Her family decided to try it. There they learned they would have to bring Sha Nay Paw to a neighboring country for a major operation, and her mom could stay with her. When they got there, the surgery was a success! After she recovered, Sha Nay Paw was free to go home and live her life more fully than she has yet experienced. Thank you, God, for Sha Nay Paw's life, and pray for all the children of Burma whose lives seem to hang by a thread – pray for the abundant life You promise.



From Syria

Arjin (in the pink shirt above) has been an orphan now for just over a year. She is 11 years old and lives in Kobani, Syria. When asked what her greatest need for help was, she first gauged the asker – “what can she give?” – then replied, “Diapers, diapers are really expensive for us.” She has been, for just over a year now, in charge of her four younger siblings, including a two- and a one-year-old. Privately, the translator related that the only thing Arjin had ever really asked for was a framed photo of her parents. Her parents were gunned down by ISIS in a surprise attack on Kobani in June 2015; over 220 other civilians were killed in the same attack. On that morning of June 25th, as her parents lay dying, the first victims of the oncoming killers, Arjin and her siblings piled panicked into her aunt's car and escaped. Now Arjin is mother and father – and also child. We told her: “You have had to grow up quickly, Arjin, with many new responsibilities. But you don't have to be your mother and father. God knows you are 11 years old and He will help you. He won't make this more than you can bear.” Please pray that Arjin's burden truly would be light – and for all the orphans in Syria who carry an enormous weight of grief. Pray for hope and that their burden would be shared.

From JSMK

While 20 aspiring medics sit through lectures in a hot classroom, or do the patient rounds in the clinic, or read, review and study for tests, 12 kids in a building just across the path and close to the river have their own class. They are learning the alphabet of two different languages, and numbers too. They are learning songs and Bible verses. They are learning how to learn – and, more importantly, they are absorbing learning as a way of life. They have lived here, at the school, since they were born. Some of their parents are staff at the school. There is a garden that staff and students maintain, along with all the other facilities. Everyone learns how to help with every aspect of life, and everyone participates. The little kids do too – they sing in church, they herd chickens and run errands from mom in the house to dad in the classroom. They have never had to run from their homes, they've never had to leave everything behind, including any hope of studying. They are the new generation of Karen State and Burma and they are learning great things: besides reading, writing and math they are learning how to serve their people; how to care for their home; the value of being good with your hands and the value of being good with your brain. And they are learning love – from their families and the small JSMK family; from the Ranger family at the training camp across the river and the foreigners who come to teach. This is the next generation of Burma. Please pray for them, that they learn their lessons well.

From Kurdistan

Akram Khoro is an 11 year old boy from Rhambasi Village near Sinjar City. On August 3rd, 2014, ISIS fighters tore through his village. With only minutes of warning, Akram and his family piled all 16 of them into their only car (with two brothers on a tractor) and fled, leaving everything behind. They hid for eight days in a narrow gully, until more fleeing people arrived and told them ISIS was coming there too. They headed out on foot and walked for three days, until they found a place with water, some food, and other people. Here they stayed. At one point ISIS advanced to just the other side of the ridge, but the courageous Kurd and Yezidi fighters held them off and the IDPs remained. Now a great IDP camp has grown up. Akram and his family still live here. He thanks God for answering their prayers and giving him and his family their lives – and he prays that ISIS would be defeated and they could go home. He might sometimes say a prayer for Real Madrid too – they are his favorite soccer team. Please pray for Akram.



Top: Two of the youngest students at JSMK.

Middle: Staff and students from JSMK and the JSMK preschool.

Bottom: Akram Khoro in Kurdistan.

Always Pray and Never Give Up

Pastor Edmond is a Karen pastor and FBR chaplain. When he was young he was determined to be a resistance leader and bring freedom to his people. Midway through his education, he felt a different calling from God: to fight for the freedom of his people's souls. He met Dave Eubank through their shared calling to help the people no one else was helping - the people who had been run out of their homes but refused to be chased from their country - the IDPs hiding in the jungle. Today, he still provides spiritual training for FBR teams every year, and for Karen people all over the world.

With the fall of KNU Headquarter in 1995, thousands of Karen people lost their estates and properties. Some fled to the jungles and some crossed the borders and became refugees. During this period, some people hiding in the jungles were like a flock without a shepherd. While having difficulties with food, education and health, fear and anxiety were everywhere. The Karen pastor families among these displaced people served their best but with little effectiveness.

However, by the grace and love of our Almighty God, in 1996, an American missionary arrived at that region. He observed the situation and established a group called "Christians Concerned for Burma". Since then the second Sunday every March has become a global day of prayer for Burma. It has been 20 years now. The missionary and team served God by going to the internally displaced to give them medical care as well as physical and spiritual strength. He started his mission in 1997 and is still helping the ethnic people who are facing difficulties by visiting them with small groups and helping them as much as he can.

However, until now, Myanmar has not gained complete freedom yet. Although some ethnic armed groups have signed NCA, battles are still going on in some regions. There are still millions of IDPs. Human rights, land ownership rights, local ethnic rights, freedom of religion are still not fully gained yet.

By loving each other let us unite for freedom. For justice and peace, let us forgive each other with no hatred. Let us pray with faith and act with courage. Let us never surrender and continuously pray for Myanmar to be truly peaceful and at the same time have real peace and tranquility.



A New Life

Hsa Nu is one of our Karen team leaders and area coordinators and has served with FBR for over 10 years. This year he told us he wanted to be baptized before his upcoming wedding. He said, "It is time I gave my life to Jesus. I believe in Him and want to follow Him. I want forgiveness for my sins."

After he was baptized we were part of his wedding in a refugee camp. We love his wife and the new start Hsa Nu has in many ways!

After the wedding we were asked by one of our Karen friends to baptize his brother, Tham La Htoo. Our friend told us, "We lost our brother 20 years ago when he ran away from home and lived a life of drunkenness and alcoholism. This year he told us he had decided to follow Jesus and that Jesus had saved and delivered him from addiction." During that time, he said, some in his family had wanted to give up praying for Tham La Htoo, but he encouraged them to keep praying and not give up. For this family a miracle has happened and they have their son and brother back.

We are thankful for new lives for Hsa Nu and Tham La Htoo, and thankful that there is nothing that God cannot redeem if we offer it to him.

Above: Hsa Nu being baptized by Dave Eubank and Pastor Edmond.



Thank you for reading the 2017 Day of Prayer. The best way you can partner is by praying, really praying, today, right now. Please pray through this guided prayer for Burma:

Father, we come before you today to lift up Burma, its government, its people, its ethnic parties, and all the workers who spend time working for justice and peace. We pray you would Father them in new ways today. Be a Father to the leaders and decision makers, be a Father to the ethnics still displaced and facing conflict, be a Father to each worker who gives up their time and energy to fight for peace. Father them. Protect them Father, from corruption, persecution, and fear. Shield them.

Jesus, you have been given all authority in the heavens and on this earth and we praise you that you've given us a share in that authority as your sons and daughters. We pray truth, peace, and grace over the leaders of Burma in the name of Jesus. Your name has power, Jesus, power to heal the sick, power to stop wars, power to change hearts. We claim that power in your name now, and we pray in that power for peace to come to Burma, for reconciliation, for love to be stronger than hate.

Holy Spirit, we pray that you would move through each heart in Burma. That you would reveal yourself to every person in Burma. That through the beauty of the mountain ranges, the gentleness of the flatlands, and the beauty in the fields, that they would know you are the Creator, that each heart would turn to you Holy Spirit and discover you in new ways. Speak to the hearts of the leaders and decision makers, make them detest corrupt or evil ways and seek honesty, peace, and love. Let them seek you above all else. Move through hearts, Holy Spirit.

Gracious God, we cry out for Burma specifically on this day, but let the oppression of your people in Burma, and around the world, burden us every day. Put it on our hearts daily to fight the battles in the spiritual realm. To stand in the gap in faith for our brothers and sisters being persecuted and oppressed. We pray for our enemies, those doing the persecuting, save them. We pray for those who work in Burma, bless them and let their work be fruitful. We pray for the political and ethnic leaders, give them wisdom and love. We pray for Burma today. We combine our voices, as your bride, and ask you to pour out your revival spirit on this land. We pray and ask all these things in Jesus name. We love you, we trust you, we worship you. Amen.