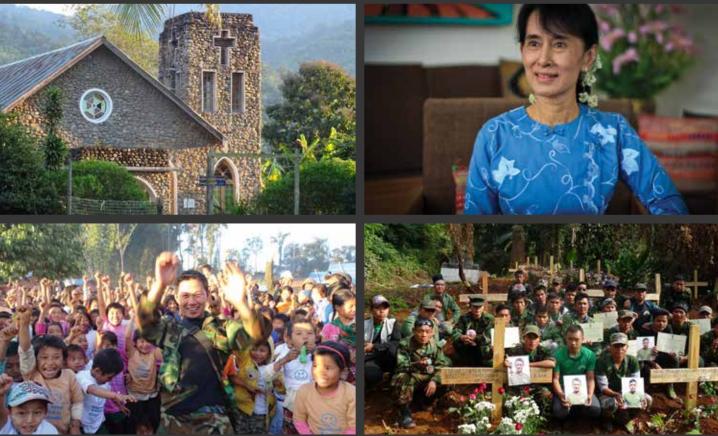
Global Day of Prayer for BURMA



2016

Photos, clockwise from top left: A church mortared by the Burma Army in Kachin State; Aung San Suu Kyi; memorial service for 22 cadets killed in Burma Army shelling; Shan GLC counselor with Kachin IDP children

COMPELLED BY HIS LOVE

Dear friends,

Thank you for all of your prayers, encouragement and support.

The elections held in Burma are a good step; many people could vote, the National League for Democracy won and Aung San Suu Kyi is helping to form a new government. There is hope that this will lead to more steps towards freedom, justice and reconciliation in Burma. However, many people in the conflict areas could not vote and the military still has ultimate power; the military also controls an automatic 25% of the seats in Parliament due to the constitution put in place by the dictatorship in 2008. Attacks continue against the Kachin, Shan and Ta'ang in northern Burma and, even in ceasefire areas, the Burma Army has not withdrawn its forces. In western Burma over 100,000 of the Rohingya minority live in concentration camps. We pray that the way of love and truth prevails for all. We also pray for, stand with and help those left out of this process and those under attack and oppression.

In the midst of this, relief teams from Burma feel the call of God to go help people under attack in Kurdistan, Sudan and other places in the world- even though Burma is not yet free. 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. In Burma, Kurdistan and everywhere we witness suffering, we feel motivated by the question: If our family was in this situation, what would we do? And then, just as importantly, how do we do it in justice and with love? We work to set the oppressed free, to share love and mercy and open a way for change. The first part means that we, the international community, immediately conduct all actions needed to set people free. The second part means we respect ethnic and religious tensions and acknowledge the concerns of each nation. It means admitting wrongs, correcting the injustices that form the soil out of which oppressors such as the Burma Army and groups like ISIS



friends and family did not.

grow, being willing to give freedom to ethnic groups within a regional partnership and leaving the door open for mercy and way out for the quilty.

We stand against oppressors, be they in Burma, Kurdistan, or Sudan, and we're also praying for the oppressors—and asking God for love for them. No one is beyond redemption: In Burma a regime soldier who once murdered villagers joined our team to help the same people he once attacked. Fighting evil and grounding our actions in love are practical ways towards defeating evil and uniting for a new way forward. Psalm 77:19 says what we feel about how God leads us, "Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen." Thank you for going and praying with us.

God bless you,

Zah

David Eubank Christians Concerned for Burma/ Free Burma Rangers

This year, the Global Day of Prayer will be on 13 March 2016. Throughout this publication you'll see these and other colored bars containing requests relating to the news and stories. Please take a moment to stop and pray along with us as you read through.

Comforting those who are suffering:

Relief team videographer talks to Lahpai Nang Bang. When the Burma Army came to her village in Kachin State, she refused to run away, along with six others. She became the only witness to their torture and execution. She says, "Since 1967 we have been in difficult times. Then I had to live in the jungle with only bamboo shoots to eat. I am grateful to be alive. Even though it is bad and I feel lost now also, I thank God that he has always given me life." (*Photo: Chris Sinclair*)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **4** Praying for the Impossible By: Zipporah Sein
- 5 Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement: A Small Step Forward? By: Dr. Ashley South
- 6 Ethnic Area Updates and Reports from the Field
- **10** A Sanctuary in the Storm: The Passing of Dr. Simon

3 Sudden Death: There are No Winners By: Fran Derocher

4 Medical Updates: Bringing Healing/ Training Healers

16 Good Life Club Report: Finding Freedom By: Karen Eubank & Hosannah Valentine

18 The Story of BA: A Ranger Filled with Passion for God and His People By: Amber Pleasant 20 International Missions: Breaking Forth Like the Dawn

22 Interpreters or Translators? By: Paul Bradley

23 What are we fighting for?/Who are we living for? By: Hosannah Valentine

24 Next Steps: A Way to Pray

PRAYING FOR THE IMPOSSIBLE

Zipporah shares two stories of tested faith where God showed that "in any circumstances, He can do things for His glory."

By: Zipporah Sein Vice-Chairperson of the KNU

I would like to bear witness to God's miracle to the Karen people. In 1975, in Nyaung Lin Bin District, Mon Township, there was fighting between the Karen National Liberation Army and Burmese troops. Our troops were surrounded by the Burmese, hiding in the forest and between the mountains. At that time I was a student at Kawthoolei High School; I remember the head of the school came and said, "We need to pray for our soldiers." The school was Kindergarten to Grade 10 and we all assembled in the assembly hall and prayed.

About a week later, we received the news that the five fighter planes coming to reinforce the attack on our troops had arrived in bad weather, crashed into the side of the mountain and gone down, giving our people a reprieve. This was a miracle for us, and showed me what God can do. God would

prove He is the same from the beginning and up to now.

In February of 1992, the Burmese troops had launched what they called "Operation Dragon King," to overthrow the headquarters of the KNU and take control of the various immigration checkpoints through which the KNU controlled their borders and earned revenue. These were also the only routes journalists could use to get into the country, as the central government did not allow them at all. The attack started in January with heavy shelling. Their aim was to overthrow Manerplaw, the KNU headquarters and center of the pro-democracy resistance, by March 27, Revolution Day.

teaching at the high school there.

By then I was

Our schools closed as the male students and some male teachers helped carry food to the front line and female teachers and students cooked and prepared food in the back. I remember the day in February, when the Burma Army first used fighter jets. We heard them come and could hear when they fired - and the explosion seemed to come at the same time. This struck fear into us: these new missiles seemed to travel faster than their sound.

> We got the message that they would return at 2 p.m., after reloading. I was at my mother's house, so worried for my soldiers and students. I walked up a hill, looked around the mountains, around Manerplaw. I spoke to God directly. I asked God, "Can you do the same miracle you did before?" I answered for him: "You cannot

do it, there are no high mountains here." I had many questions for God and for myself and then I resigned myself. I was sure that God could not do what He had done before.

We waited and prepared for the plane to return, but 2 p.m. came, and no plane. Then, 3 p.m., 5 p.m. - no sound of planes and I felt relieved for today, but still worried for the next day. Later in the evening the news broadcast announced that this flight had crashed along with four other fighter planes after taking off at Mingaladon. Since then, no more planes had come.

God showed me what He can do. In any circumstances He can do things for His glory. Every time I feel doubt about the situation, this story reminds me what God can do.

Pray for protection of school children and teachers, for both opportunity and perseverance as they build together the future of their country.

"I spoke to God directly.

I asked God, 'Can you

do the same miracle

you did before?"



NATIONWIDE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT: A SMALL STEP FORWARD?

By: Dr. Ashley South

On 15 October in Naypyidaw leaders of eight Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) signed a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) with the government and Myanmar Army. After more than 60 years of armed conflict and violent suppression, it was extraordinary to see the President and Commander-in-Chief acknowledge the Karen National Union (KNU) as a legitimate political organisation. Nevertheless, after two years of negotiations, the NCA remains problematic - as indicated by the decision of some 10 EAOs not to attend the event.

Some of these problems include ongoing concerns about increased natural resource extraction and landgrabbing, and in other parts of the country the Myanmar Army continues to attack civilians and EAOs which did not sign the NCA. Such attacks seriously undermined the credibility of the peace process.

This process has been a unique opportunity as, for the first time since independence, leaders of Burma's long and violently suppressed ethnic nationality communities have been able to articulate their grievances and aspirations on the national political stage. After the 8 November elections, with attention focused on issues of representative democracy, the ethnic question may slip back to the sidelines as the next government will have many contentious and difficult issues to address. While it is a flawed document, the NCA is a step forward on what is likely to be a difficult road to a comprehensive settlement of Burma's protracted state-society conflicts.

Also, the NCA as it is still faces obstacles: it needs to be ratified by Parliament, and, while political dialogue is supposed to begin within 90 days of signing, it remains unclear whether substantial political discussions can begin during a period when key stakeholders will be negotiating the make-up of the next government. Even in the current discussions, key actors are ambivalent at best. For example, while the National League for Democracy may be willing to talk about dialogue, its leading members have limited respect for most EAOs, tending to regard legitimacy as a product of parliamentary process rather than armed struggle. While the country's better-established EAOs may enjoy significant legitimacy within the communities they seek to represent, not everyone in Burma sees things this way.

Thus it is possible that EAOs have already gone past their point of greatest influence and leverage, with the NCA representing a closing window of opportunity to capitalise on the prime interlocutor status they have been accorded by the present military-backed government. A future government will probably press the reset button on the peace process. Any future structured process of national reconciliation in Burma is likely to be framed by the outcome of the elections and parliamentary politics, with EAOs invited to participate as just one among a set of stakeholders. Agreeing to the present NCA does not preclude the EAOs attempting to negotiate a better deal next year, but from what is likely to be a more marginal position.

The NCA acknowledges EAO authority in the fields of education, health, natural resource management and security, and provides for international assistance in these fields, with the joint agreement of government and EAOs. Many of the key issues need to be discussed as part of a structured multi-stakeholder debate, either coming out of the peace process or in relation to broader post-election political reforms. In the meantime, there is a need to support EAO provision of education and other services, during the 'interim period' between the NCA agreement (and earlier bilateral ceasefires) and negotiation of a comprehensive political settlement.

One of the key issues is the status and future of EAOs' governance regimes, and service delivery systems, which are often implemented in partnership with civil society actors. Will education and other services under the authority of EAOs be displaced by the state system, continue in parallel with the government system, or undergo a process of 'convergence'? Ethnic stakeholders are concerned that international aid agencies and donors are inadvertently supporting government strategy and practice of pushing state structures into conflict-affected areas, without taking account of existing local activities and services, or the impacts on peace and conflict dynamics.

Dr. Ashley South is an independent analyst and consultant, specialising in humanitarian, peace and conflict, and ethnic political issues in Burma/Myanmar.

Pray for the ongoing, complicated peace process, for the continuing ceasefire negotiations, and for the new government.

Major Flooding Hits Western Burma

Over 1 million people in Burma were affected by massive flooding in July and August 2015. Over 100 people died due to flooding, with the highest number of deaths occurring in Arakan State, where more than 463 villages were submerged. Thousands across the nation are displaced because their homes were damaged or washed away. Schools were also destroyed.

The year's rainy season saw unusually high rainfall, exacerbated by Cyclone Komen sweeping through the region in mid-July. Flashfloods and landslides destroyed roads, fields and buildings – especially in rural villages with limited infrastructure. The ability to get aid to the region was severely diminished, as road access was cut off or limited due to high waters and landslides, for months after the worst of the rains ceased.

The aftermath of the floods not only hampered the delivery of aid, but communication as well. Electrical infrastructure in the country was already weak, and telecommunications abilities were greatly diminished.

It is expected that needs will be ongoing throughout the year in the flood-affected areas, given the major damage to fields and subsequent loss of work for agricultural laborers, as well as the loss of the rice harvest.



CNF - Chin National Front SSA-S/RCSS - Shan State Army South/ Restoration Council of Shan State **PNLO** - Pa-Oh National Liberation Organization **ABSDF** - All Burma Student Democratic Front

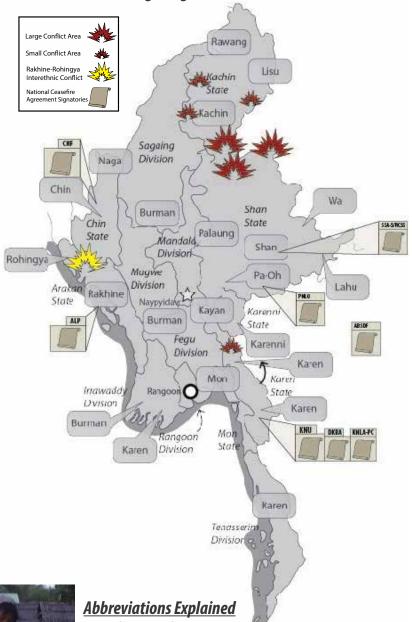
KNU- Karen National Union

DKBA- Democratic Karen Benevolent Army KNLA-PC - Karen National Liberation Army-Peace Council

ALP - Arakan Liberation Party

Ceasefire and Conflict:

Eight Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) signed the National Ceasefire Agreement on 15 October 2015, yet fighting continues.



NAGA UPDATE

The Sagaing Division, where the Naga people primarily live, has seen an upswing in development since the ethnic negotiations began several years ago, improving the situation of healthcare and education. The Naga were hit hard by the flooding of 2015, resulting in the destruction of many homes and the loss of crops. It is predicted that there will be a food shortage in the coming year.

At Right: Naga villagers on the move.

LAHU UPDATE

The Lahu people live in Shan State in the area controlled by the Wa, who have had a special agreement with the Burma Army since 1989. They are thus stuck between the two most powerful militaries in Burma: the Burma Army and the Wa State Army. While they live in fear of the Wa, the central government looks on them as part of the Wa operation, so they have no independent dealings with the Burma Army and are considered non-signatories to the most recent ceasefire agreement. While the Wa have some clinics, the Lahu are afraid to use them. The Wa area has historically been a major producer of opium and other drugs and addiction is a major problem in the Lahu areas. Only the most basic schooling is available. Major health issues are drug addiction, anemia, and dysentery.





PA-OH UPDATE

The Pa-Oh are located in the Shan State of Burma. The primary political groups representing the people have signed ceasefires with the government and as a result are able to travel more freely. The education situation has also recently improved, as the civil society capacity has increased to the point that the Pa-<u>Oh can</u> build schools and hire teachers. However there is still conflict between the Pa-Oh and local divisions of the Shan State Army. Until the situation settles down, the Pa-Oh are unwilling to invest in significant infrastructures such as clinics. Healthcare is primarily limited to mobile clinics.

CHIN UPDATE

The Chin are among the poorest in an already overwhelmingly impoverished nation. Their educational and healthcare infrastructure have long suffered, and the floods of this year did nothing to improve that situation. Not only have most of the crops for this year's harvest been destroyed, but the Chin are also struggling to maintain access to clean water.

Some larger humanitarian organizations have moved into the area to provide medical care and relief, which has helped alleviate one important need in the region.



medical care in Chin State.

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD: KACHIN STATE

Civilians Murdered and Widespread Use of Air Strikes Despite High Level Meetings

1 April 2015, Kachin and northern Shan

States, Burma

Despite recent meetings between senior representatives of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), President Thein Sein, and Burma Army military head Min Aung Hlaing, to discuss a potential ceasefire agreement, incidents of aggression by the Burma Army have increased to levels not seen since initial fighting began in 2011. On 21 March 2015, at 10:30AM, Burma Army troops from Light Infantry Battalions 317 and 415 of the 88th Division came to attack Mahtek Village, Mansi Township, in the Kachin Independence Army's 27th Battalion area. People from across the area fled from the advance, including residents from Du Hku Village, 1.27 kilometres from Mahtek.

These people sought refuge in the jungle and hoped to avoid the Burma Army. Amongst the refugees were 52-year-old Dau Ma La and his 103-year-old mother, Da Shi Hka. Grabbing a few possessions, they ran into the jungle and hid. At 11:00AM Dau Ma La and Da Shi Hka were discovered by Burma Army troops under the command of Commander Ye Win Lwin and were shot to death. The soldiers then looted over two million kyats from the son and mother before leaving. Dau Ma La's son, Maru Naw Grawng (19 years old) and daughter-in-law Hkai Htu (18 years old) fled to Mung Hkawng Village, Mansi Township, Kachin State.

Relief Team Member Injured By Burma Army Mortar Fire

23 May 2015, Kachin State, Burma A relief team cameraman has been injured by shrapnel while documenting ongoing fighting in Kachin State, Northern Burma. On 10 May, mortar and machine gun fire between Burma Army and Kachin Independence Army (KIA) troops was exchanged over several hours at the head of Nam Lim Pa Village, Mansi Township, in the KIA's 3rd Brigade district. During the fighting a senior cameramen was hit in the arm by shrapnel when a Burma Army 60mm shell dropped 7 meters from his position. Though the wound was deep and the cameraman sustained serious blood loss, prompt treatment from the KIA medics meant that he has already been able to return to duty. Nam Lim Pa has seen heavy fighting in the last month. On the 18th and 19th of May alone clashes continued for many hours and on the 20th Burma Airforce jets attacked KIA positions on multiple occasions.



Top Photo: The body of Dau Ma La who was shot by the Burma Army while hiding in the jungle. **Bottom Photo:** A relief team member receives medical aid to treat his shrapnel injury.

REMEMBERING: MARAN LA RU and TANGBAU HKAWN NAN TSIN Missionaries, killed by Burma Army soldiers 19 January 2015

Dear friends,

We have tragic information to pass on. Two Kachin girls were raped and killed on 19 January 2015 by troops of the Burma Army. The girls were named Maran Lu Ra, age 20, and Tangbau Hkawn Nan Tsin, age 21. They were from Myitkyina and sent by the Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC) as volunteer missionaries to teach about God's love to the people in Northern Burma along the Shweli displacement continue. Attacks are especially intense in the Hpakant area of northern Kachin State where hundreds are now trapped by the Burma Army.

Here with us are Kachin, Shan, Ta'ang, Arakan, Karen and Karenni teams, all working together to give help, hope and love to those in need.

At the beginning of this mission we all joined in

River and the Kachin State-Shan State border. The KBC church sends volunteers two by two every year into areas of need such as this area.

The rape occurred in the KBC church compound in Kawng Hka Village, Nam Tao Township, Muse District, Northern Shan State. On the



a prayer service for two of our relief team members who were killed two months ago by the Burma Army. From there we went to two camps for displaced people and gave medical and dental treatment and Good Life Club programs. With your help we are able to give some funds to help repair a church damaged

night of 19 January, Burma Army troops came into the church ground where the girls were sleeping, raped them and then beat them to death.

Villagers nearby heard the girls screaming and when they went to check they saw Burma Army boot prints and then the bloodied bodies of the girls. The 503rd Light Infantry Battalion under MOC 1 commands, occupies and controls this area. The church members went to the Burma police in the area but the police have taken no action.

Thank you for your help and prayers. We are sending this out from Kachin State, Northern Burma, where rape, murder, attacks and by the Burma Army here.

We feel angry and sad. We know we too are sinners, we know not all Burma soldiers rape, but we also know that rape, murder and displacement are wrong and we stand against these, and for justice, truth and love in Jesus' name. Thank you for praying for the families of those killed and for all here.

God bless you, David Eubank, family and teams 22 January 2015

Pray for the hundreds of thousands of displaced people in Kachin State, that they could be free from fear and free to return home.

A Sanctuary in the Storn: The passing of Dr. Simon

Karen State, Burma 3 August 2015 Photo: Saw Pokay

5 August 2015

Dear friends, family and teammates,

We are sad to pass on the news that Rev. Dr. Saw Simon a Karen refugee leader, pastor and founder of Mae La Bible School, has passed away. He is now in Heaven with Jesus and though we are sad for all of us who miss him, we are happy for him.

One story exemplifies for me Dr. Simon's accomplishments: I was with refugees fleeing the Burma Army and helping them carry their belongings to the Moei River that marks the Burma-Thai border. We crossed before the Burma soldiers could catch us and then walked to the sanctuary of Mae La refugee camp. Once in the safety of the camp everyone was fed and cared for. Later that night, outside the Bible school, I looked up at the starry sky, with the cliffs of Mae La on one side and the refugees' huts spread out below and the beautiful songs of Dr. Simon's choir floating through the air. I felt total peace and gratitude to be in such a sanctuary of beauty and goodness. We could all relax and sleep. I thought, "This is what refugees feel when they escape out from the hands of the attacking Burma Army. They find a place of safety, of shelter, of provision, of rest. And because of Dr. Simon, they also find a sanctuary of love, peace and opportunity."

David Eubank Christians Concerned for Burma/ Free Burma Rangers

r. Simon opens his own telling of his story by telling his name: "They called me Simon,' is what I used to answer when friends asked: What's your name?" – as if he held his name as lightly and temporally as he held the things of earth, ready to change it at any time to meet someone else's need. Born on the day that Burma's independence hero, Aung San, was killed, in the year the Karen mark as the beginning of their struggle for freedom, Simon's life was set in conflict and turmoil from the beginning. Yet his young years were stable: both of his parents had been professionals, his father as a police officer and his mother a teacher, but when they married and began their family they became farmers. He was able to attend school and when his parents couldn't afford to send him to secondary school, they gave him the freedom to leave the village and study on his own. But before he left, he describes a dream God gave him. "I dreamed for three consecutive nights: it was March 1963, one year after Gen. Ne Win led a military coup and took the power from U Nu, the then prime minister of Burma, and established military rule in Burma. But in my dream I was flying in the air, over the seas, over the mountains, and over the valleys, like a superman, free of worry and fear. Look at how God fulfilled my dream."

Simon was able to pursue his education through all the unrest in Burma in those days, ultimately going to the Philippines to pursue his doctorate at the Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary. While he was there he witnessed the People's Power Revolution in which the people overthrew Ferdinand Marcos through mass protests and civil disobedience. He returned to Burma and a post teaching at the Myanmar Institute of Theology, known as MIT, just in time to witness Burma's own people's power movement, known as the 8-8-88 uprising, which launched Aung San Suu Kyi to the forefront of the Burma democracy movement, and resulted in a harsher clamping down by a new military regime. The streets of Rangoon became the front in the people's confrontation with their brutal government, and protesting students were at the forefront of the demonstrations. All schools, universities and seminaries were shut down. Dr. Simon said, "Through this upheaval, I had no worry and no fear." But he did have a major change of direction. As the government clamped down on the urban pro-democracy demonstrators, it also ramped up its war on the rural ethnic resistance groups fighting for freedom in their home states. Dr. Simon decided it was time to leave the city and join his suffering people in the jungle



Rev. Dr. Saw Simon with his wife, Thramu Ta Blut Htoo. Photo: Saw EhEh

of his homeland, Kawthoolei – Karen State. He had married Naw Ta Blut Htoo, the daughter of Johnny Htoo. Johnny Htoo was first known as "Brigadier" for his part in fighting the Japanese during World War II and later known as "Reverend Johnny" when he became a respected pastor and evangelist. Together, Dr. Simon, his wife and family, and his in-laws moved to the jungle home of their people. They went first to the Karen National Union headquarters in Ma Ner Plaw, but Reverend Johnny asked to go to Wallei where he was originally from; General Bo Mya agreed and on the family train went, arriving at the end of June 1989. Dr. Simon was immediately asked to help teach at the Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School and College (KKBBSC) and the following year, at the

regional Baptist meeting, he was elected the principal. On their way back from the meeting, in March 1990, Wallei was attacked by the Burma Army and evacuated. Dr. Simon says, "I thus became the newly-elected principal of the KKBBSC without school buildings

and teachers and students." And this was only the beginning. They eventually resettled the school in Mae La refugee camp near Mae Sot, Thailand, but it was later attacked again by the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA). In 1996 there was a major flood that wiped out several buildings. And in 2012 a fire turned to ashes most of the buildings of the school. Yet as he looked back at these events, Simon saw only the fulfillment of his dream, saying: "There were lots of difficulties and hardships but God enabled me to fly over all of them."

In 2010 Dr. Simon wrote the following words: "Though we are still living and serving the Lord in the camps, I am strongly convinced that another set of 21 years of my life (2010 to 2030) the Lord will open the door and enable us to return to our own beautiful



From left to right: Paw Paw Mu Htoo Simon, Rev. Dr. Saw Simon, Hsar Ka Nyaw Htoo Simon, Thramu Ta Blut Htoo, and Thaw Thaw Mu Htoo Simon.

land called Kawthoolei and rebuild our life and live and serve the Lord as human beings created in God's own image. At our KKBC election for the new term of service, we have chosen the theme or motto for our KKBC and it was done by a leader chosen to pray for and draw the lot to choose the new motto. All the proposed mottos (seven in all) were written each on a piece of paper and rolled and put in a box and Thramu Htoo Lei was chosen to pray for and draw the lot for the new motto. She prayed and drew the lot and the new motto was Nehemiah 3: 'With their hands they rebuild.' I praised and thanked the Lord for answering my prayer. It was the one I had chosen as it is my strong desire and wish that another 21 years of my life, will see our people returning home and rebuilding

"Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2 our life in our own Land of Kawthoolei. God in His Holy Word, said, 'To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven' (Ecclesiastes 3:1). I am sure that all of us, the people of Burma, and people all over the world will agree that what the

world needs is love, healing, building up one another, and peace. Let us all join our hands together and try the best we can and with our own hands rebuild the world to make it a better, and a meaningful place for living. Thank you all so much and God bless you all."

In early 2015, Dr. Simon was diagnosed with liver cancer and he died on August 2, 2015, while en route from Chiang Mai, where he had been receiving treatment, to his home at the Bible school.

The following two verses are how he chose to end his written testimony, and were the inspiration of his life: "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2); "Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9).

SUDDEN DEATH: THERE ARE NO WINNERS

By: Fran Derocher, Partners Relief & Development

Sports fanatics know the meaning of those two words - sudden death. It is an odd use of the words for a sports match. The intent of course is to continue the game until a winner emerges.

This story has no winner. We were traveling to a small village in Western Burma to follow up on a number of families who had been displaced from a refugee camp because they were followers of Christ. Our guide to the village was a man who knew the area well. He shared that the home we were going to visit was the home of a father who recently lost his son. The story shared by this father is one that many refugee parents, husbands, wives are unable to share, because they have no idea where their child or loved one is.

This father knows only because a 'friend' saw an article in a country far away about a refugee that had died as he was carried across the border. The father filled in the gaps. It was three months earlier that he had paid \$8,000 to a 'handler' to get his two sons to a country where there was work and a brighter hope for tomorrow. One son had made it and was working. The other son was lost. No one knew where he was. The few details that could be gathered revealed there were many stops on the way to the final destination - likely camps set up by human traffickers with little concern for those in their care. The son became ill along the way and passed away as he crossed in to what was going to be a new country and a new life for him.

Passing around his son's autopsy photos I was stunned by how 'matter of fact' it was. It was only two weeks since the news had arrived. I have read and watched news specials on the TV about all the human trafficking that is taking place. Those stories were shocking and it's difficult to understand how fellow human beings can be so heartless. I was now in the same small, dark and very hot room listening as a father shared his story. These are stories that are seldom heard outside the walls, village or country. This is their life and reality. Sudden death.

It was with joy that we were able to provide small gifts to each of the thirty-five families represented who are living in very difficult circumstances: no education, minimal health care if any and unable to work legally. They are truly a people without a 'home'. There are plans to help in more sustainable ways. It is not an easy task and it comes with risk. We seek to obey our Lord. Join us.

We are grateful for Partners Relief & Development (PRAD) and all the other organizations providing help, hope and love to people in Burma.



The Rohingya crisis in western Burma did not improve in 2015, with thousands of people desperately attempting to flee the country by boat, only to be turned away from their destinations. Their desperate situation gained international attention with headlines such as on Time Magazine International's cover: "Asia's Shame:The Plight of the Rohingya." More than 140,000 people continue to be held in refugee camps. The International Organization for Migration(IOM) estimates that more than 88,000 Rohingya fled by boat between January of 2014 and June of 2015.

A relief team medic extracts a tooth from a young patient in northern Shan State.

BRINGING HEALING, TRAINING HEALERS

"Medicine is more than a profession. Medicine has a soul, and its calling involves not only the application of knowledge and the exercise of skill but also facing a human situation. It is not an occupation for those to whom career is more precious than humanity or for those who value comfort and serenity above service to others. The doctor's mission is prophetic.... The doctor is God's partner in the struggle between life and death." Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

At the Jungle School of Medicine-Kawthoolei (JSMK), patients come with their ailments and a new hope for help and healing. Aspiring medics learn diagnostics, treatment, community health issues - and they also learn the humility that is required every time they meet a new patient, a new person, unique and unknown to them whose total humanity must be learned and learned from.



Relief team medics treat patients at a field clinic in Karen State.

MORE THAN HEALTHCARE

By: Dr. John Shaw, Jungle School of Medicine-Kawthoolei

When people come to JSMK's clinic and hospital for help, the problems they bring are often shaped by the troubles they live with. The father was carried in on a hammock after trying to hang himself. His son had cut him down in time to save his life, but the fall fractured his back. He was malnourished and deeply depressed. Weeks later, his wife arrived, wrapped in felt blankets despite the mid-day sun, convinced that she was cursed to live with perpetual cold. This was a family in trouble.

The trouble had started a year earlier when she gave birth to their youngest child, and broke a customary taboo by touching water too soon. The outcome of this blunder was cold hands and feet. She lost her appetite and became withdrawn and despondent. Her husband also stopped eating and grew so weak that this year, they were unable to plant rice. And so, facing a year ahead without rice, and five children to feed, he had hung himself. After coming to JSMK we prayed for him and treated his malnutrition, depression, and back injuries. Within five weeks, he felt much better, and was up walking around the campus. He sent word to his wife to come get treatment too. She arrived, covered in her blankets, so that one of the staff called her a 'Jungle Angel'. She too began treatment, eating good food and medicines, and we talked about finding ways to help their family find rice for the coming year. We fed and helped their children too. But then she slipped back into her curse of coldness. She ate less, and became fearful. We spent time encouraging her, praying, giving her medicines and trying to convince her to eat. One day, after a time of conversations and prayers, she abruptly decided to leave, and the next morning, she packed up her family, and took them up the trail, back home.

In these nine weeks, we know that her husband made a good recovery, and that she too gained weight, and emerged from the fear, at least for a while. We tried our best to love this family with everything we can offer: medical expertise and treatment, love and prayers, food, even a crutch made from bamboo, foam, and duct tape. We hope and pray that she will find a way to be free from her curses. Free to live a better life.

PLANNING FOR PREVENTION

In spring of 2015, there was a small outbreak of cholera along the Thai-Burma border in the south. Handled quickly, it seemed to disappear. In Thailand, where there is modern medical care, nothing more was heard for several months. Then, in August, reports came that it had again surfaced - this time further north. Patients began to come to Lay Ton Ku clinic, right on the border with Burma, and there were reports of villages where up to two people a week were dying from something as common as diarrhea. It seemed the outbreak had not been stopped, but had gone underground, into the remote villages of Burma, where there is little education and less access to health care. There it had traveled silently north until it reached more developed areas, where it was again identified as cholera.

To respond to an outbreak that seemed to be spreading so quickly and yet is so preventable required a three-pronged response: correct diagnosis, quick treatment and a public education plan. Led by the Lay Ton Ku clinic medics and in conjunction with local government officials on both sides of the border, several local medical groups combined efforts to send five emergency response teams to the hardest- hit areas.

The lessons learned are several: education is the best prevention; it takes all groups working flexibly together to respond rapidly enough to make a difference; a difference can me made.

In northern Karen State, JSMK recently began a program to address just this issue of preventable illnesses breaking out. Together with the Karen Department of Health and Welfare and other local aid groups, the Kawthoolei Vaccine Program launched, with vaccinations in three separate villages near the school. As of August 2015, medics had successfully administered five different vaccines series to over 100 children. Vaccines given include Hepatitis B, Measles-Mumps-and-Rubella, Diptheria-Pertussis-Tetanus, Oral Polio Vaccine and Inactivated Polio Vaccine.

Pray for new medics, that they would be inspired with a clear and powerful vision of their vocation, and the opportunity to live it.

Good Life Club Report: Finding Freedom

By: Karen Eubank & Hosannah Valentine

"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10: 9-10)

This promise of abundance is also a promise of freedom. This story of Jesus' gives a picture of a sheep pen, full of terrified animals milling around in muck, afraid of wolves and thieves. Then the good shepherd comes, opens the gate and leads his sheep out, to good pasture, to green grass and cool streams and fresh air and freedom. Out of the pen there are still wolves, there are still thieves—it is not safe. But He is there and He has promised to be with us and lay down his life for our freedom.

What does this freedom look like in the middle of war? On the frontlines? What does it mean to farmers forced to grow opium? To young people born and raised in a society at war?

The FBR Chaplain training deepened the lives of the rangers before the first program by pushing them to define for themselves what freedom looked like, in their own hearts and lives. What did it mean to

serve, and what did they have to offer in the face of oppression and poverty? We saw an answer: we saw freedom in Shan rangers, raised in a militaristic society and typically unemotional and regimented, stepping out of their cultural norms to dynamically lead the GLC program with singing and dramas, in Karen State and in Kachin and northern Shan State. They became examples of new life, joy and freedom with new people - in Karen State; and in the middle of complicated politics, in the opium-growing areas where the people are at the mercy of multiple armed groups vying for control and also battling drug addiction.

We saw another glimmer of freedom in the opium hills of northern Shan State, where we met a Lisu man who had not only grown opium with his family, as it was the most viable crop, but had become addicted to drugs as well. He had heard a traveling evangelist and changed his life, quitting all connection to drugs - even his family had stopped growing opium. They invited us to a church service in which the prayers and singing were so enthusiastic they kept us warm (in freezing weather) and drowned out any internal voices advocating a return to growing opium to 'pay for education, or a new motorbike. Here, freedom was trusting God has wisdom to give in the most



Pray for freedom for children under attack and oppression: physical freedom, and also a spiritual freedom that opens the way into their future, redeemed of the wounds of their past.

children at the end of a GLC program. (Photo: Chris Sinclair)

Karen children learning about good health at a GLC program in Karen State.

complicated situations.

We found freedom amidst the noise of bombing every night, in Mirke Village, northern Iraq. The Assyrian Christians here have not fled. Freedom is their choice to follow God in the face of generations of religious oppression, and with joy. With the palpable evil of ISIS just over the next ridge, they were harvesting their wheat fields, leading their sheep and goats to graze, and letting their children ride bikes through the village to play in the schoolyard. We stayed in their school for two weeks as it had been abandoned by the teacher months before. The children gathered daily to play soccer and ride bikes. Teenagers became our facebook "friends" - and real friends too. Grandmothers brought us homemade yogurt and bread. Uncles discussed with us their politics and faith. Their freedom was a bright light against the black scorched earth and ISIS flag at the frontline. High on the mountain above the village, the lights of the Syrian Coptic monastery shown every night, proclaiming defiance against a threat whose most powerful weapon was fear. Freedom was their

Yazidi children at GLC program on Sinjar Mountain.

daily fight against this fear that threatened to take a seat at the table God was preparing for them in the presence of their enemies. And daily they fought it, walking through their routines in faith that "surely, goodness and mercy would follow them all the days of their lives."

This faith was difficult to hold on Sinjar Mountain; here the people had lost nearly everything. If there were any miracles, they were harder to see. The town of Sinjar, at the base of the mountain, had been captured by ISIS just ten months before. Thousands of Yazidi people were killed or captured and more died of thirst and exposure after they had fled. We met them in dusty, wind-blown tent camps, still in sight of their homes and of the bombs daily dropped on ISIS that destroy their city, and close enough to hear the exchanges of fire between ISIS and the Kurdish soldiers - many of whom are their fathers, brothers and husbands who have taken up arms to fight for their homes. Here, and in many places like it, is our challenge - to not just be observers, beneficiaries, of freedom, but bringers of it.

One way to help the Good Life Club is to put together children's packs and mom-and-baby packs. These packs are then delivered to mothers and children by relief teams.

SHIPPING INFORMATION

Please send standard gift size boxes with the description "household/personal goods, no commercial value" on customs form. Mark the package GLC and send via airmail to:

Christians Concerned for Burma (CCB) PO Box 392, Mae Jo PO, Chiang Mai 50000, THAILAND

MOM-AND-BABY PACKS

- Small fingernail clippers • 2 outfits for baby including
- cap, mittens, shirt (not a onesie) 1 fingernail clipper and socks
- 1 teether
- 1 picture of you
- 1 postcard from your city or state with a Bible verse

CHILDREN'S PACKS

- Small comb and mirror
- 2 children's toothbrushes
- 1 small toy
- 1 picture of you
- 1 postcard from your city or state with a Bible verse

USA: not to exceed 79 inches length/width/girth

The Story of BA: A ranger filled with passion for God and His people By: Amber Pleasant

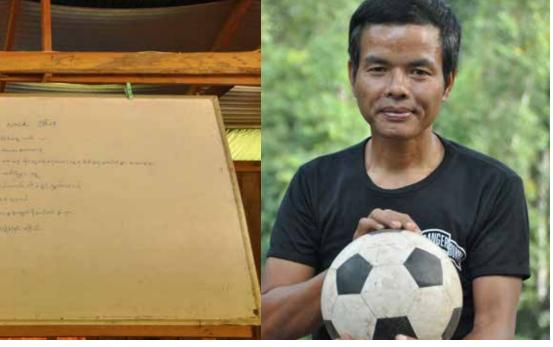


G am sorry. If given the chance, I will speak for a very long time." BA (pronounced "Bee Ah") smiles apologetically as he begins the interview. Born as Jay Rammian Moya in the village of Kalay Myo in Chin State, he quickly gained the nickname "Ball" because of his round head. Ball was quickly shortened to "B" and an "A" was tagged on to the end. He has been going by the nickname ever since.

BA was born into one of the poorest, least developed and most politically complicated regions of Burma. Since there was no school in Kalay Myo, BA's parents moved the family to Chaoun Kywat Village so that he and his siblings could receive an education. BA's father has long suffered from poor health, which prevented him from being able to do much work. The family lived on a farm and had a few cows, but money was always scarce. This didn't prevent BA from getting opportunities to play and he grew up loving soccer.

In 1989, at the age of 21, BA left home and began traveling around northern Burma, eventually settling in the jade-laden mountains of Hpakant Township in Kachin State. He became a truck driver on the jade transport routes, working in and around the lucrative jade mines for nearly 10 years. He also joined a local soccer team.

One day while BA was playing soccer with his team, members of a Burma Army soccer team noticed his skill and recruited him to come play as a paid member of their team. At the time there was a full league of Burma Army soccer teams in the region. For one year, BA played on this team, becoming friends with his Burmese teammates. At the end of the year, his team lost their championship



Far Left: BA shares the core principles of being a ranger to new rangers.

Near Left: A profile of BA taken during a relief training.

game, so the battalion commander informed them that they were going to be sent to the frontlines of battles going on in Burma. BA did not want to fight so he fled from the camp and resumed his work at a jade mine.

BA went on to try the timber business, and then began exploring photography. He ended up going into business with one of his brothers, and the two still offer photography services to this day.

BA reflects back on his varied careers and flashes a smile again: "When I was a bachelor, we didn't put any thought into our career. However, all this changed when I got married." In 2006 BA married his wife, and they soon had two sons. As he began focusing on his role as a father and husband, he also began examining his role as a leader for his people.

He began to be involved with different Chin organizations that sought to serve and empower leaders in Chin State, as well as provide aid to marginalized communities in the region. He became a counselor for a non-government organization (NGO) providing aid to people recovering from sex trafficking, AIDS and drugs. He traveled around, providing training to villagers so that they could in turn support those seeking to overcome their traumatic experiences.

However, BA began to notice that his time was consumed by his job and he started looking for something that was more flexible. It was then that he heard about Free Burma Rangers. In 2009 he attended his first training, and embraced the goal of helping his people in this newfound manner. BA has become a mentor for new rangers. Whenever he gets the chance to attend a training, he comes, both to learn and to teach. You'll find him in a classroom or reading a book or article, striving to become a better Ranger, and help others grow in their abilities along the way.

When asked what his favorite part about FBR missions is, he won't hesitate to tell you that he loves to share the Gospel with people. He loves God and wants others to experience the miraculous hope and joy that a relationship with God provides. This is a hope he's shared in many ways, including medical. Like all rangers, he's received basic first aid training but often encounters cases beyond his skill, forcing him to rely on God. He tells a story of helping to save a baby with pneumonia. The baby, less than a month old, was dying, with blue lips and labored breathing. They gave them what minimal antibiotics they had on hand, and were able to get the baby to a hospital in a nearby town. After pausing a moment, BA smiles as he says: "I am so happy that this child is okay today."

In a region - and a country - where people have long been divided by war and devoid of hope, BA seeks to reunite people and show them that God is all around them, and can provide hope and healing. He sees his FBR relief missions as one vital means for doing that.

Pray for rangers, like BA, who are working to provide relief and support to those affected by widespread floods and conflict. Pray for those who are struggling to find food and ways of providing for their families. Pray for the newest graduating class of rangers as they seek to apply their training in their home areas.

BREAKING FORTH LIKE THE DAWN

In Burma, for many years, dictators have oppressed and subjugated, attacked and destroyed. They have attempted to control everything. But there is one thing they can't control- the spirit of the people. They cannot prevent the people from serving and helping each other. And so they have not won. Now those same people are taking this spirit of service and love to other oppressed people across the world, bringing them help and hope in the middle of the worst of circumstances.

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to **loose the chains of injustice** and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and **break every yoke**?

Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Then your light will break forth like the dawn,

and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and **the glory of the Lord will be your rear** guard." Isaiah 58:6-8

From Monkey, Relief Team Pastor

My name is Monkey. I am a Karen ethnic minority from Burma. We are in Kurdistan to assist the Kurds in their struggle against ISIS. We are teaching them the skills we have used in the struggle against oppression in our country Burma. These skills include first aid and medical, GPS, and camera use; Good Life Club, a program encouraging and building up the children; and collecting the stories of those who have suffered.

We met several people there who I will always remember. When ISIS invaded Sinjar, Neam, her children, and thousands more fled into the mountains. Because they were starving and dehydrating, her brother and nephew tried to return to their home with a search party. ISIS captured and killed them. Some families tried to flee the attacks in their cars. ISIS cut them off. We met another soldier. ISIS came into his house, stripped his one-year old daughter from his wife's arms, and took her away. They also took his wife's father. We prayed with him that she would be returned; he needs a miracle.

I have filmed many stories like this in Burma. But it is never easy. I have seen war in jungles, but not in the desert. When ISIS moves in a phone call is made and the soldiers are saved by outside help. But for many Kurds, outside help came too late. Today they seek help for the future. Burma or Kurdistan, we want to help people who are suffering injustice. We want to offer love and support to different races, and religions. Please pray for these, our friends.

Neam sits with one of her daughters as she shares her story with Monkey.



From Ray Kaw, Relief Team Medic

I am Ray Kaw. I am a Karen medic and I have been working with the Free Burma Rangers since 2006. I was one of three Karen team members who went with the headquarters group on the mission to Sudan and also to Kurdistan. I am really thankful to God that I was able to go to Sudan and Iraq. Before I went to Iraq and Sudan I thought the bad war is only in Burma. Now that I have been to Sudan and Iraq I saw the people suffering there.

Compared to back in Burma, the situation in these other countries is worse. When I look at the IDPs in the different areas, everything is very different. The IDPs in Burma, we have more food and plenty of

water, lots of trees and bamboo so that we can build our own temporary houses, as we need.

It was very painful for me when I saw all the children who can't go to school. In my mind I secretly pray a lot for them. I know our country still needs help but God has arranged for us to go to other places to help as we can. I am always thinking about all of the people there; some of them became our very good friends. We were very happy to work together.

I would like to ask everyone to pray for them, that they can get freedom soon. Pray for their enemies to see the truth and receive the love, and to have mercy in their heart. Above: Ray Kaw and Eliya treat a Kurdish soldier shot by ISIS.

Paul Bradley (at right) teaches at a relief team training while Doy Sah (left) interprets.

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Interpreters or Translators?

By: Paul Bradley, Chaplain, Free Burma Rangers

Working to share the love of God is often done across multiple ethnicities, cultures, and languages. Because of this we often find ourselves trying to find someone who can speak the language of the people we are helping. This can be really tricky as we must trust that the one doing the translating/ interpreting is actually getting the correct message and information across. So whom do we want doing the job? An interpreter or a translator? And what is the difference?

A translator might be better called a transliterator. Have you ever used Google Translate? If you have then you know that taking a base language and using an algorithm that simply replaces the words into a target language falls extremely short in terms of being accurate. The resulting sentences are often disjointed and fail to communicate the heart or the true meaning of author.

An interpreter, on the other hand, is able to take the words of the author, understand the meaning or heart, restructure the sentences, and then use words that he knows will clearly and accurately communicate to the listeners.

The key ingredient I have found with all good interpreters is relationship. The best interpreters

know the author, know the material, and know their audience.

We see this truth played out in Luke 24 where we find the disciples struggling to know what to do after Christ has been in the grave for three days. Two of them are walking along the road to Emmaus and the risen Christ (hiding His identity) joins them as they discuss the past week's events. The two clearly have not understood the significance of the crucifixion and so the Bible tells us that "beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things written about himself in all the scriptures" (Luke 24:27).

The results of Jesus' interpreter skills are evident as the disciples exclaim, "Didn't our hearts burn within us while he was speaking with us on the road, while he was explaining the scriptures to us?" Jesus knew the Author (the Father), knew the Material (the Gospel), and he knew his audience (He created them).

As believers God has called us all to be interpreters of His love to this world. The great thing is that you don't necessarily have to speak another language to do that.

Building relationships is the best start to becoming an interpreter of God's love; we can interpret it by providing practical help, standing with people to offer hope, and sharing our lives in love.

Pray for chaplains, pastors, spiritual leaders, that they would be given the vision and steadfastness to stay the straight course, even through the powerful winds of change.

WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING FOR? WHO ARE WE LIVING FOR?

By: Hosannah Valentine

I live abroad, far from my family, and my time spent with them is precious. I am sustained by memories: of an afternoon at the park with my brothers and sisters, goofily kicking a tennis ball around in the light of a golden fall afternoon, turning clownish somersaults and performing recklessly acrobatic acts of spontaneous joy, with much laughter. Of my four-year-old niece – she is very blonde and asks me hard questions like, "Why do I not see you for a long time?" and easier ones like "Can I watch 'Fwozen' again?" Or my two-year-old niece sprinting laps around the bed, shouting with laughter when I catch her. These are perfect moments.

This is the stuff of life – the music that turns the prose of existence into a song of life.

Remembering "chase and laugh" games with my niece leads to another memory, an evening when the light of the setting sun seemed almost palpable as it streamed across fields of wheat ripe for harvest. I had joined young Aila and her mom for a walk and Aila began a game of "sneaking" up behind me until I turned to tag her – then she would shout with laughter and run away. Her mom laughed, and remonstrated. I laughed. We shared a perfect moment. I was in northern Iraq; Aila and her mom are Assyrian Christians. ISIS was two km away, with only a thin line of Kurdish soldiers between. And life was there, singing its song.

ISIS has left no doubt of their intent, destroying the lives of thousands, committing the most wanton destruction imaginable. And leaving none of it to the imagination, as they broadcast videos of their actions everywhere. They are helped by the nightly news cycle, and our minds are filled with images of rubble and bodies. This, we are assured, is what life is like in Syria. In Iraq. In the Middle East. Thus, not only have people's lives been destroyed, in the minds of millions of people watching, the very possibility of life is destroyed. That is, according to the facts we are presented, life as we value it doesn't exist in these places.

Our nightly news cycle has bludgeoned us with images of death and destruction. Nothing has been left to the imagination – including good. What happens when we lose our ability to imagine good?

Hate. Graham Greene wrote: "Hate [is] just a failure of imagination." We feel it now, vaguely, this failure; we vaguely feel that something has been taken from us, we vaguely feel ourselves on the brink of an abyss. There is a present urgency to name what is happening, to name what we are fighting: "war on terror;" "clash of civilizations." Like a cornered boxer, we are hunkered down and have latched on to the enemy; it is the thing that fills our horizon. But in becoming consumers of darkness, we are beginning ourselves to be consumed by it. And we are afraid.

How to free ourselves from the cycle of headlines, that feeds us body counts, timelines, in an endless repetitive stream? How to free ourselves from fear? By remembering what we are fighting for – the same things men and women throughout time and the world over, have fought for: love, joy, beauty – the stuff of life.

ISIS has successfully cast a shroud of fear far and wide -but we need not be helpless. We can throw it off -by adding to the beauty, adding to the joy, by responding with love. We need not spend our imagination in imagining the worst. We can and must redeem it because we need imagination to see the beauty of lives so far away.

In the very beginning of his Lord of the Rings trilogy, J.R.R. Tolkien spends significant time describing the Shire, the beautiful homely home of the hobbits. He wanted us to come to love it enough to understand, and feel in our guts, that it was worth risking everything for - because, eventually, that would be required.

That may be what is required now. We believe in human rights, but we must also believe in human beings. The question is: do we have ears to hear the music of lives like Aila's, and her family's and their neighbors? And then - do we love enough to risk everything?



Karen children receive GLC packs at a program in Karen State.

Praying for Burma

Thank you for reading the 2016 Day of Prayer and for partnering with the people of Burma in prayer. Please pray through this guided prayer for Burma:

Praise

God, we thank you for your faithfulness, for your love for the people of Burma and for the work that you are already doing there. We thank you that you are a God who loves the people in Burma and oppressed people everywhere. We give you praise that you are a God of love.

Confession and Surrender

Lord, we confess our own sins to you, we confess areas of our own lives where we have let oppression and fear take hold of us. We confess our own ignorance, and we thank you for your grace and forgiveness as we have to make decisions anyway. We surrender to you our agendas, ideas, and concepts and ask that you would guide us in praying for Burma.

Scripture Praying

Father, to everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven (Ecclesiastes 3:1), we thank you that you know exactly what season it is in Burma. You have a plan for good and not disaster, to give a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11). We thank you for the hope that you give us, we thank you that your plans, even though we might not understand them, are for good.

Petition

God you are faithful and just. We ask that you would provide health and healing where it's needed

in Burma. Physical healing to those who are suffering, and emotional and spiritual healing to those who have been oppressed and to those who have been oppressors. We pray for healing of the land, that crops would grow, that landslides, floods, and natural disasters would be held off, and that people would feel secure.

Thanksgiving

We thank you God for listening to our prayers, we thank you God for your love, for your strength to lean on, and that you give courage to those who need it. We thank you for those who work to help others in Burma, that you would bless them and protect them, guide them and provide for them.

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@prayerforburma.org.

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"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you." Jeremiah 29: 11-12