

GLOBAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR BURMA



Saw Doh Say leads prayer in northern Karen State.

11 March 2012

"We cannot change them, only God can..."

For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Romans 14: 7-8

Dear friends,

This was the verse that came to us as our mission took us to meet with ethnic people in a forced relocation site under control of the Burma Army in the plains of Burma. These words gave us a peace and commitment that no matter what happened to us being with these people was the right thing.

We walked at night to avoid Burma Army detection as they are posted all around the relocation sites. There was a full moon and we could see everything very clearly. Our group walked by an abandoned church that was falling apart. It was the church from a village that had been relocated by the Burma Army. We could see lights in the Burma Army camp and could hear their loudspeakers. We crossed the rice fields and came to an all-season road that was built on a dike. Houses relocated together looked like a slum. There was a church and school. There were few trees and there were houses on both sides of the road. All looked very poor and there were no lights. Around the relocation site were rice fields and the Burma Army posts.

Later we met the people displaced in these sites, and their faces seemed to shine like angels. This is what they told us: "Every year since 2001 we fast and pray constantly for the month of January to pray for the leaders of Burma. We cannot change them, only God can. It is difficult to pray for their hearts. So we fast and pray for the SPDC leaders' hearts to change. We have a month of fasting and prayer for the leaders of Burma. Every January 1-31, day and night, we have continuous prayer for the leaders' hearts to change."

I was humbled and inspired by their words and felt that the dictators could never really control people of love and faith like these. We were reminded that no one lives or dies alone, we all belong to God. that the pro-democracy resistance has strong support even in areas controlled by the Burma Army; that the villagers in forced relocation sites are strong in faith and hope; that one of the strongest and most active organizations in these areas is the church; that we all want and need mercy and that the dictators need our prayers and love; and that there are things we can do together: pray, communicate, and partner with the people all over Burma. Thank you for joining us for prayer and God's gift of freedom, justice, mercy and reconciliation for all in Burma.

God's power and love are bringing change.

God bless you,



David Eubank

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Wa girl, 16, who stepped on a landmine when she was 9.



Wa children at an orphanage in an inaccessible northern Wa area near the China border.



PRAY



LEARN



PARTICIPATE

GET INVOLVED

"My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."
Psalm 73:26

Encouragement from Nay Mu Htoo - FBR Thaton District team leader



Children laugh and sing at the GLC program.

A Closeness Born of Gratitude, Common Purpose and Love

The following letter was sent in December 2010, after a Good Life Club program in Tha Dah Der, a village that had been attacked and burned down just six months earlier.

Dear friends,

Thanks so much for how you help us and for how you care about the people of Burma. We are relaying this out from Karen State and want you to know how grateful we are for each of you. A few days ago in a village we had visited before, the headmaster of the school came up to me and, smiling broadly, said, "We thank God for you, you are such a blessing to us and are always bringing us the good things that we need. We pray that God will bless you and that you will keep coming here!"

I replied, "Actually I do not have very much. It is my friends from around the world who give these things to us to give to you. Without them we could not do this. So they are really the ones to thank."

"Oh yes, I understand," was the headmaster's reply. "We thank God for them and pray God's abundant blessing on them. Please tell them all how grateful we are and how they send the things we need. We see how they help you help us. Please tell them we will pray for them!"

So I am writing to let you know how you are a crucial part of this team. We are each in our different places and in our different roles, working together to help make a better Burma. Not only that, this service helps us to be the kind of people we want to be. Your encouragement and support makes us want to live up to the highest standards of love, courage and honor.

Earlier, on December 6, our team held a medical treatment, fun run and Good Life Club (GLC) program in a rice field valley near Tha Dah Der Village. The village had been burned by the Burma Army in July, 2010. It was the fifth time the village had been overrun by the Burma Army since 1958 and the third time it had been burned. In spite of these attacks there was an overwhelming feeling of joy as over 450 children, from four different schools, gathered here for the program.

I would like to have my father who, at age 81, traveled by foot, mule and elephant to be part of the

My father:

"Children, youth, and adults had come together for the races, songs, Bible stories, drama, health training and medical examinations. After the races the Karen Brigade Commander, General Baw Kyaw, addressed the villagers and the 17 FBR teams. The multi-ethnic four man teams had come together to this village after completing their 2 months of training at the FBR camp. From here they will begin their missions to other villages further inside.

The General said, "I want to thank God and Tha U Wah A Pa [the White Monkey's father] for bringing joy to our people. With all the pressures and dangers around us we have not been joyful. [Earlier this morning, machine gun and grenade fire was heard from a skirmish on the road about an hour's walk away.] Today I see happiness on the faces of the children. I could not bring this joy, but you brought it, and I am grateful."

Earlier, I talked to two new FBR team members, both university graduates. Daniel, a Karen, had been a concert pianist and the other, Naw Ya, is a Karenni woman. Both had struggled through the strenuous physical part of the training. I asked them, "What were some of the important things you gained from the FBR training?" I was very impressed by their answers.

Naw Ya replied, "Peace! I had peace all through the training because everything was done for and with God. I have attended many training programs but never where we did everything for God and with God. When I return, I will organize my training programs to teach what I learned here - doing everything for God and with God."

Daniel answered, "Closeness! I feel very close to the FBR team members and to the Karen all over Burma. Before I only felt close to the Karen right around me, but now I feel close to every Karen. Now, I feel close not only to my Karen people, but also to the Lahu, Karenni, Pa-Oh, Kachin, Naga and Mon, because they were with us in the training."

Even though we are far away from you dear reader, we also feel a closeness to you. This is a closeness born of gratitude, common purpose and love. God bless you.

David Eubank, family, and teams



Photos, top to bottom:

- Children from four villages gather for a GLC program.
- Children take off to begin the Tha Dah Der Run for Relief.
- Karenni team members hand out GLC shirts in Karen State.
- Daniel leads a multi-ethnic team in songs for the GLC program.

BURMA SITUATION UPDATE

People Groups of Burma

Rates of Displacement, Southeastern Burma - 2011

	2011	TOTAL
Shan State	52,700	145,600
Karen State	1,300	35,100
Northern Karen State	19,300	44,900
Central Karen State	36,100	106,800
Mon State	600	40,000
Southern Karen State	2,000	77,600
TOTALS	112,000	450,000

Source: www.TBBC.org

Kachin State, since attacks in June: 20,000

Northern Shan State, since attacks in March: 30,000

TOTAL DISPLACEMENT IN BURMA: 1,000,000



Overview: One Year After Elections by Ashley South

Following elections in November 2010, a new government took office in late March 2011. In his inaugural speech, President Thein Sein talked about the need for widespread changes in the country, and in particular for national reconciliation between the state and Burma's diverse social and ethnic groups. Over the following months, the new government implemented a series of important reforms. New legislation was introduced, and Burma's very strict censorship laws were considerably relaxed. Large numbers of political prisoners have also been released - although many more remain in custody. Perhaps most dramatically, in September the President suspended (effectively cancelled) the construction of a huge hydroelectric dam at the confluence ('Myitsone') of the Irrawaddy River. In doing so, he responded to an upsurge of popular protests regarding this environmentally destructive project, positioning himself as a populist defender of Myanmar against Chinese political and economic influence. After private consultations with the president, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has cautiously endorsed the reform process. In November her National League for Democracy re-registered as a legal political party, re-entering national politics on the parliamentary stage, and lending further credibility to the Thein Sein regime.

Whether the reforms can be consolidated and extended depends largely on whether Thein Sein can retain the support of key stakeholders. Ex-military powerbrokers centered around Lower House Speaker (and ex-general) Shwe Mann must also be kept on-side. He agrees with Thein Sein on the need for change, and is seeking to gain popularity by being associated with reforms. However, other military elements - such as army commander Min Aung Hlaing, and particularly the vice president (and ex-general) Tin Aung Myint Oo - may be alarmed by the extent and speed of reforms. As the government removes restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly, it seems likely that large sectors of the population will seek to protest the multiple abuses they have suffered under half-a-century of military rule. Hardliners and 'spoilers' within and beyond the security forces will no doubt use such occasions as opportunities to crackdown on dissent, and undermine reforms. How the regime deals with such protests will be a key indicator of its seriousness as a reforming government. Other possible problems for the new government may come in the form of economic crises.

It is important that the international community recognises and encourages the Thein Sein government's reforms. However, Burma still faces many problems, including serious and widespread human rights abuses, particularly in areas affected by on-going armed conflict. Burma's social and political problems cannot be solved without addressing the aspirations and grievances of ethnic nationality communities. This should involve resolving armed conflicts in ways which are just and sustainable.

Aung San Suu Kyi and Post-Election Developments

Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest in the wake of the national elections in November 2010, amidst uncertainty about how 'free' she would actually prove to be in post-election Burma. A Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, she is the General Secretary of the National League for Democracy (NLD), the party that, in 1990, along with their allies won over 80% of the seats in parliament in what was Burma's only truly democratic election. The military regime did not recognize the internationally-accepted results of that election and continued to hold power.

2011 has seen a gradual loosening of control over her activities. She was granted internet access in January. She has been able to talk with foreign journalists and have significant interactions with the outside world, addressing the U.S. Congress by video in June and giving the BBC Reith Lectures on "Securing Freedom" in July. The new government has allowed her some freedom of movement: on July 19, she and 2,000 of her followers marched from NLD headquarters to the Martyr's Day ceremony, unharmed by police who even helped facilitate what was the biggest opposition gathering since 2007. She has had meetings with senior ministry officials, including four with Aung Kyi, the government's liaison to the opposition leader. On August 19 she met with President Thein Sein. On October 12, the Parliament announced the passage of amendments to election laws that would allow Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD to legally participate in the political process and they have agreed to.

These moves by the new government are welcome per se, but there is still much uncertainty about whether they are tokens given to garner support from the international community or genuine steps towards true freedom in Burma - especially as the Burma Army continues to attack civilians in the ethnic nationalities areas.



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"Do you know why the Burma Army does what they do to you and your people?" I asked Naw Muu Wah. "No, I don't," she replied quietly. "All my life the Burma Army has persecuted, killed and hurt our family and our people. But nobody has ever told me why they are doing this to us."

I was in Karen State, Burma, speaking to Naw Muu Wah. Her husband was shot and killed by the Burma Army when he came into his village to get some rice for his family. He was the father of five young children. "Since he died we have not had very much to eat," Naw Muu Wah explained. "I am only one person, and I cannot produce as much food as we did when we were two. He would go hunting sometimes so we had meat. But I cannot do that."

This year, as all the previous years, praying for Burma is important.

A year ago Burma held its first elections in two decades, and recent political developments under president Thein Sein's new semi-civilian government have been met with robust international praise. While there is an understandable optimism in lowland Burma, something entirely different has been happening in highland ethnic areas, where thousands of civilians are enduring an increase in brutal human rights abuses by the Burma army, a lack of humanitarian aid, and ongoing civil war.

For people like Naw Muu Wah, life goes on as before. Nothing has changed, except she is a little more tired, her kids are hungrier and the future is as uncertain as ever.

We need you to stand with us in prayer, to speak on behalf of the people in Burma. My prayer this year is that Naw Muu Wah and her people will realize that although her enemy is powerful, God's love is stronger. My prayer is that she can look at her children, and confidently tell them that there is hope, there is love and that they have not been forgotten.

Oddny Gumaer
Co-founder, Partners Relief & Development

Pray



Ceasefires Break Down in Northern Burma

In June, Burma Army units attacked a Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) camp, breaking a 17-year-old ceasefire agreement. Relations in the area broke down over construction of a Chinese-built dam encroaching on KIO land, violating the terms of the ceasefire. However, tensions had already increased as the KIO rejected the Burma Army's demand that they accept a Border Guard Force (BGF) agreement under which they would give up territory, come under direct control of the Burma Army and accept Burma Army officers into their ranks. Since June, fighting in Kachin State has continued and over 20,000 people have been displaced. Burma Army abuses including torture and killing of civilians, burning and looting of villages, and dozens of rapes have been documented.

The Shan State Army-North (SSA-N) also rejected the Burma Army's BGF proposal; the BA similarly broke the ceasefire agreement and attacked the SSA-N in March. Fighting since then has forced approximately 30,000 people to flee into hiding in the jungles. Burma Army abuses against Shan people in the area have been documented: women raped, civilians tortured and killed, villages destroyed and property stolen. After several months, the level of fighting has decreased to small skirmishes. While many of the displaced women and children have returned to their villages, many men have not due to fears of forced conscription into the Burma Army.

Family who has fled twice in three months; all have malaria. (photo: PRAD)

Kachin mother displaced with baby. Photo: PRAD

War hits a village

The Burma Army has killed a villager and over 20 villages have fled attacks and mortar fire in Momauk Township, Kachin State. Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 73 under Division 88 has been attacking villages, with troops from Divisions 33, 44, 66 also entering the area. At least 400 Burma Army soldiers have been involved in the attacks, using 120mm and 60mm mortars and machine guns. Fighting in the area has increased and the Burma Army is building at least four new camps, using forced labor. Over 3,000 people have been displaced. The Burma Army shot and killed a Kachin farmer, Nang Zin Tawng, age 52, at 4pm on 21 November 2011. Earlier that day, the Burma Army attacked a small KIA force and then came down to a rice field near Kadaw Village.

Many people, including the family of the man killed, had hidden in the fields while trying to finish harvesting their rice. The victim and his two sons Nang Zin Naw, age 21, and Nang In La San, age 15, had stayed together for two or three days in their rice field hut while harvesting rice. That evening at 4pm they went to the rice field. The father went ahead as his two sons followed. He saw the Burma Army and ran, and the Burma Army shot him. The two sons heard the shots and returned to the village.

Displaced people flee fighting in Momok Township, Kachin State.



Ethnic Teams Report

Reports from Arakan Relief Team:

The Kaladan Project will displace thousands of people who live along the banks of the river, as well as disrupting the local fishing industry and flooding acres of rice fields. People living in the area are deeply concerned as the project is moving forward and there is no plan of compensation for loss of property or livelihood.

Flooding in Arakan State is causing much immediate damage and is also destroying this year's rice crop, setting the stage for major food shortages in the coming year.

Situation summary from Chin Relief Team:

"With units of soldiers in most villages, the local people are vulnerable to constant violations of human rights, including extra-judicial killings and arrests, rape, theft of land and livestock, and forced labor. They are also denied the right to education after 10th grade and the right to speak or teach their own language in school. The Chin are predominantly Christian and there are many reports of the destruction of churches or crosses which the local people often build on the mountains or at crossroads. The cumulative effect is a fear of cultural genocide."

Situation summary from Naga Relief Team:

"Eastern Nagaland is controlled by the Burma Army. The Naga Army is fighting the Burma Army and there are no refugee camps in India, but many IDPs (in Nagaland, Burma). There are no NGOs, relief teams or journalists in Nagaland because foreigners are not allowed. Nang Yoon was the last town the Burma Army attacked in September 2010, where houses were burned and people are now living in danger and fear."

Western Burma

Flooding in Arakan State.



Arakan team medic at work.



Chin team medics treating patients in Chin State.



Displaced Naga children eating rice at their hide site.



RAW REPORT

New attacks one month after elections

Note: Reports from the field are usually sent back to the support team, translated, edited and then sent out. In the case of this report, from Dooplaya District, we decided to send it directly out. The team leader sent it in English and we want to show you the raw situation and to show you how these teams work so that you could get to know the responsibilities and feelings of our ethnic team members.

Dear Tha U Wa A Pa (leader of FBR)

Today on 30/11/10, at 11:00 am, we visited Kwee Ta U Village and left at 10 minutes before 12:00pm. And 10 minutes after we left we heard two mortars firing from Choo Ka Lee Village, about 2 miles from Kwee Ta U. Then we immediately ran back to Kwee Ta U Village and helped the villagers out from the village. The Burma Army have based their camp beside Choo Ka Lee Village on top of the hill and are mortaring around the camp. So the villagers are afraid and left the village. All the villagers from Choo Ka Lee left the village two days ago. Now, they are hiding in the jungle. Today, we started leading the villagers from Kwee Ta U to hide in the jungle. We stopped at XX for a couple hours and cooked for dinner. Then the DKBA and KNLA (pro-democracy Karen resistance) fought the Burma Army, so we continued leading the people again to a safer place at XX X and, arrived at 7:30pm. Now, we stay with the IDPs. We give them security and encourage them that we will be with them full time in this situation. The villagers face a big problem; all of them did not finish collecting the rice on the farm. The school was shut down too. And the villagers and the school teacher have planned to do Sweet December, but it was canceled because the choice is in the jungle. They left all their animals and most of households. They hid some food in the jungle for being IDPs in the jungle. Today, we went through a village, Kwe Ta Hoe was quiet, no one left in the village before we arrive Kwee Ta U Village. It was about a Kilometer from Kwee Ta U. The villagers complain and worry about their future very much, because they left all the crops in the farm. Now, we take care of them until they got safe and will send them back to the village if the situation is good. The reason they fled, they dare not to face Burma Army since the fighting happened. They are afraid of being captured, forced to porter and being made to be human landmine detectors. Now, we are with about 130 IDPs.

Tonight I visited around, checked the villagers, children are sleeping on the ground by campfire and parents are chatting about the situation, I am very sad. But we try our best and made sure that no villagers were left behind us. While we are leading them to jungle, the Karen soldiers led them ahead and we stayed behind them.

My plans, Now, I am staying with this group and our other team leader Thara Sa moved to the IDPs site that fled from Choo Ka Lee Village and around the area. So I would like to have a prayer request, pray for us and the people here. GPS coordinates (removed for security).

God bless you,

Golden Love
Team leader and Dooplaya District FBR Coordinator



Post-election attacks in Pa'an District

On December 5, 2010, less than a month after Burma's elections, people from four villages were forced to flee after their villages were mortared by the Burma Army. Most of them fled across the Moei River effectively abandoning their homes and belongings. The attack affected a total of nine villages and displaced 773 people. At the time of the attack, there were ten battalions in the area under Military Operation Command (MOC) 19 and Division 22. Infantry Battalion (IB) 106, stationed at Jeh Pya Kone Camp, was responsible for the attack.



Photos:
 facing page: IDPs spending the night in hiding, Dooplaya District.
 top left: Young girl displaced by fighting in Pa'an District, December 2010.
 top right: 67-year-old woman being treated for dysentery while in hiding, Dooplaya District.
 below: IDPs continue to flee after a short rest break, Dooplaya District.



Loss of a Ranger

Karenni FBR Team Member Dies

On 2 April 2011, FBR Karenni team member Khu Neh Reh died of wounds sustained from a landmine explosion.



Neh Reh had been treating patients at Tee Lon Village just prior to the explosion. The mine had been found by security and brought back for further inspection when it unexpectedly detonated. Two Karenni Army (KA of the KNPP -Karenni pro-democracy resistance) soldiers were killed immediately, while Neh Reh died of his wounds the next day.

Please pray with us, for Neh Reh, his family, and his team - and for all of us, that we might be led by the same love that conquers fear, and that is eternal.

Neh Reh was trained by FBR in 2006 as a video camera man and later also received medical training. He died while serving his people in the front lines of Karenni State, Burma. We love him and will miss him, and pray for his family

and his team. At the same time, we are inspired by his life; we trust that God holds all things most precious in His eternal hands, and believe that Neh Reh's sacrifice, and the love he showed his people, is not in vain.

We extend our love and sorrow to Neh Reh's family and to the KNPP and are grateful for the honor that we had in knowing and working with him. Neh Reh gave his life for freedom and for love. We are reminded of Jesus' words, ***"Greater love has no man than this that he lay down his life for his friends."***

No Smell of Fire

by Doug Yoder

And the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them. Daniel 3:27

All nations, tribes, tongues are summoned to bow down to the image King Nebuchadnezzar has set up, when the music plays (Daniel 3:5). This is the carrot. The stick is the fiery furnace. Every ethnic group, every language, every country will be brought under the twin pressures of force and seduction to give homage to what they should not. Some who resist one will not be able to resist the other.

Some who are not seduced by music will be afraid of the furnace. Some who are not afraid of the furnace will be seduced by music. The “music” is whatever the world plays in our ears to enchant us and lure us to our doom. Many powerful and fearless men have also fallen to beautiful women, to easy riches, to a comfortable life. Many who resist the charms of the world become fearful when their lives are at stake. **It is not so easy to stand beside Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego on the plains of Babylon.**

These men are denounced by rivals to King Nebuchadnezzar, who is furious. We can expect this since the king will understand this as a direct challenge to his authority. Who would dare to disrespect a king in public? It is to Nebuchadnezzar’s credit that he does not throw the exiles into the furnace right away, but summons them to appear before him. He gives them one more chance to bow down in a way that shows how powerful he thinks he is -- when they are in the furnace, “what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?” (Daniel 3:15).

Daniel’s companions directly address the king in a way that personally challenges him. “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves in this matter,” they say -- they do not even call him “king.” Even if God does not save them, “we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up” (Daniel 3:18). The king has called them to a personal audience with him so the exiles personalize their refusal to bow down. They will not do it -- not to “Nebuchadnezzar,” not to “your” gods, not to “your” image -- whether or not our God will save us. No wonder the king asks for the furnace to be made seven times hotter.

But silver is refined seven times in the fire and these brave men are pure, and it is in God’s good pleasure, timing and provision to send them help. In that fire they suddenly have a companion, a messenger from God, who lets them come to no harm. Did they sing a hymn of praise together as the furnace raged around them?

Afterwards everyone gathers around -- the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the royal advisors. All of those who bowed down want to know if those who did not could actually survive. They can’t believe it. They have to see for themselves, up close, handling the folds of the exile’s clothing with their hands. What kind of material could withstand such heat? They look closely, they marvel ... we can imagine them taking the men’s robes between their fingers, someone lifts up the material and exclaims, “there is not even the smell of fire upon them!” (Daniel 3:27).

The faithfulness of God will be seen by men. It will be evident even to nonbelievers in a way that is beyond undeniable, that causes even those who have bowed down to be astonished and to think about God. Nebuchadnezzar himself praises the exiles for trusting in God and defying the king’s own command, and he brings the exiles under his protection. (Daniel 3:28).

The only way to get to this point in these circumstances is to stand there beside Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, among all those nations and ethnic groups, in the presence of a Golden Image, seeing the furnace and hearing the music, knowing you might die soon, but standing straight and tall.

Standing with Jesus.

Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. Luke 9:24

DOH SAY

FBR LEADER AND GOOD LIFE CLUB DIRECTOR

Doh Say has long worked for freedom in Burma - of all sorts. He started as a soldier in the Karenni Army, defending his people by fighting the Burma Army. After getting shot and nearly dying, he became the foreign minister for the Karenni National Progressive Party, the Karenni pro-democracy resistance, working for political freedom. Now he works with Free Burma Rangers and helps to direct the Good Life Club. As he shares below, his desire is for spiritual freedom for not only his people but people everywhere.

I would like prayer first for good leaders for the future of Burma: a good society without fear of unjust punishment. Many innocent people are afraid of everything – their property or family members being taken away even by one soldier. It is impossible to live freely outside one's house without fear. At the FBR Training I pray we can produce good leaders. In the many years I have been an instructor I always tell them that if we just equip them with good skills and no guidance we are not really helping them. We can teach many skills and provide them with good equipment but more important than these are good leadership principles. Many bad leaders have good skills and this is more dangerous than not being skilled at all. Pray that these young people from all over Burma will know how to treat their people in the right way. In a country the military depends on the people, for both provisions and weapons. As the civilians provide for the soldiers the soldiers should build relationships of love and loyalty not unjust demands, abuses, and cruelty. Leaders and soldiers should be servant leaders. Here at the training some students listen to corrections – others don't. I would like to change bad leadership examples of the dictators with the young people and equip them with good principles so they can serve their people well.

On my missions to support Karenni teachers (Doh Say delivers teacher supports provided by Partners Relief and Development) in rural areas I am sometimes afraid to go alone because of the nature of the Burma Army and other possible human threats. I am always trying to listen to God because when I am by myself it can be very dangerous. I know if God is not with me I can make big mistakes anytime. Sometimes I face temptations that are not good, but when I remember the scripture, "Lead me not into temptation," I know that is one way God is leading me. This time one Karenni leader thanked me for not resettling in a western country. She then asked, "Why are you doing this work alone? You should have people helping you to carry school supplies and working with you. You are so responsible to complete your duty amid such hardships." She assumed I was working for another organization who was monitoring my work. I told her, "No, I don't come here responsible to anyone, it is my own idea and plan. I make this trip for the teachers out of Love. I come here because I feel God is calling me to do this and I feel love and gratitude for all the teachers." She was very surprised.

Several years ago I was visiting a Karenni village and during an interview I talked to a child who did not go to school because there were no teachers. I felt convicted that if I could help support teachers any child could learn. To pay for a building was just a structure, but to pay for a teacher's salary was a real investment in a child's life. I always go in the early fall, and now they have come to expect me and I don't want to disappoint them.

Finally, I pray for peace for the world. There are problems in so many places and I want to pray for fellow humans. God wants us to think about more than ourselves and our own problems.



"Please pray that they not too long come to know Jesus..."

Message from Doh Say sent while on a relief mission

15 June 2011

"Thank you for your prayers. We are now in No Au Lah Village, Pa-an Township. We have just finished Good Life Club program and the health care is still going on. The program went well and many villagers from 19 villages came. There were about 500 adults and over 700 students who came. We started the meeting with one minute silent prayer and some local leaders and some FBR rangers gave out speeches.... All the team members are doing great job.... I am very happy to be here. It is my first time here. Seeing the beauty of the area has different feeling from seeing the beauty in the mountains. I have prayed that God touches ... hearts so that they become knowing Jesus. If you were with us, you are more brave to talk about Jesus and God to them. Please pray that they not too long become to know Jesus...."

Photos, clockwise from top:

Doh Say praying on a Shan relief mission, teaching hand and arm signals at training, directing during swimming training, smiling.

Facing page: Doh Say teaching hand and arm signals.





Singing with children during the Good Life Club program.



Local and FBR medics work together where there is no clinic.

A Good Life Club Christmas Letter How Beautiful on the Mountains...

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" Isaiah 52:7

On November 26th, 2010, I seriously sprained my ankle during an early-morning trail run with the rangers during this year's FBR leadership and relief team training. It was one week before the end of the training and the beginning of a follow-on mission – a mission planned for remote Internally Displaced Person (IDP) sites in the Toungoo District of northern Karen State, home to some of the highest mountains in the area, and roughest terrain. With a badly-sprained ankle, my feet did not seem destined to be the beautiful, good-news-bearing feet of Isaiah's messenger; as a Good Life Club (GLC) team leader I felt the gravity of my situation and uncertainty about whether my ankle would hold up during two months of strenuous hiking.

But now it was December 24th and as we approached the village of Saw Wah Der, deep in Toungoo District, the words of Isaiah 52 came to mind. They were first a prayer of thanks, for strong feet that had simply survived the walking – and not just mine, but four others with foot injuries. God had taken what was broken and made them beautiful and strong. But as I looked at the mountains surrounding us, the words and gratitude became deeper. We had long planned to spend Christmas here, a village that had been attacked many times by the Burma Army, had gone from 1000 people to none in three years and was now back up to around 140 people. The people lived with the regular sound of gunfire and mortar fire, the constant threat of attack, amidst hills strewn with landmines and less than two hours from areas completely controlled by the Burma Army. This time of year especially, the dry season in Karen State, also tends to be "attack season" and a time of heightened anxiety. **Today God wasn't just bringing broken feet to Saw Wah Der, but the feet of people from all over Burma: FBR teams from Lahu, Pa-Oh, Karenni, Naga, and Kachin areas all walked here together, proclaiming the good news that these people, the people of Saw Wah Der, are not forgotten, are not alone in their struggle for freedom, and bringing hope of a peace born of love and their shared struggle for freedom.**

Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices; together they shout for joy. When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. Isaiah 52:8-9

Arriving in the village, the rangers began to plan for the program. Because it was Christmas we would do a program for the whole village and not only the children – however, by this time on the mission

after going to many villages and IDP hide sites, we did not have enough gifts for everyone. One ranger volunteered to walk the two hours to the nearby Burma Army-controlled village to buy gifts. He left that evening, dressed as a villager, to buy a bar of soap, toothbrush, toothpaste and sweets for all the villagers. His brave feet carried him to the village, through landmines laid on the edge of the town, around Burma Army positions, to shops where purchasing things for over 100 people could easily arouse suspicion in a place where one could be arrested for no reason at all. We prayed for his safety and greeted his return with joy; every villager got a gift, a rare part of Christmas for them to experience.

A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.
Isaiah 40:3-4

Christmas morning dawned and while we waited in hope that our gift-buying ranger's way had been made smooth, and prepared for the day's program, another ranger medic came to invite us to visit the grave of her husband. Her husband, Mya Win, had been a ranger and his feet had carried him to the ultimate sacrifice: he had died of malaria in 2006, while helping the people under attack in this area and refusing evacuation until all were safe. After his death, his wife, P'Saw Paw, had written a letter saying she would take his place on the team. She did, and her feet had then carried her all around Karen State on missions; this was her second visit to his grave. At the site, Karen resistance soldiers guarded the trails that led to the Burma Army-controlled villages; we cleared the gravesite, erected a cross and had a service for Mya Win. He had died working to make straight the way of the Lord for his people, bringing help, hope and love, and it was with gratitude for his sacrifice and for his wife's commitment that we sang and prayed that morning.

Later, back with the IDPS, our feet were dancing as we sang with the children. I was reminded of the Christmas story I had just read my children, "The



Burma Army patrol nearby.



The nine young students at the Saw Wah Der school.



Saw Wah Der villagers singing at Christmas service.



Burma Army troops and bulldozer build up camps nearby.

Grinch Who Stole Christmas,” when the Grinch expects to hear crying from the Who-villagers he has persecuted, but instead only hears singing: “Every Who down in Who-ville, the tall and the small, was singing! Without any presents at all! He hadn’t stopped Christmas from coming. It came. Somehow or other it came just the same.” I suddenly realized that the whole month had been spent with villagers singing – singing with us in our program, singing Christmas carols through the night, villagers who decorated their homes in advent with expectation of joy, and in spite of the nearby threat of evil.

And as I looked around at the mountain villagers I felt gratitude at the present we were being given. We knew the tenuous nature of existence here, knew of Burma Army attacks, atrocities committed against villagers, we had heard gunfire and mortar explosions, and experienced the threat of attack. And yet here we were, singing and dancing all the same, and the Good News brought by these mountain-dwelling feet spoke clearly that God is with us and we can live with peace and joy despite difficulties on every side. **These villagers had fled their homes repeatedly in recent years and yet relied on God to provide for them and prepare a table, even in the presence of the enemy. They were giving us a living example that in spite of all, God’s love endures.**

I suddenly remembered a warning we had received the day before, to “sing quietly and not make too much noise or draw attention to our presence,” as there were four Burma Army camps very near. But as we began to celebrate, the leader who gave the warning smiled widely and said, “Never mind, it is good to be happy, it will be ok.” Our hosts joined us and sang and danced, with guitars and tambourines and full hearts. There was no shooting from the Burma Army camps. The following day was Sunday and church turned into a thanksgiving service. Rangers and villagers spontaneously took turns thanking God and each other for the joy of that Christmas. We were grateful for the villagers’ endurance and courage that kept them in their homes and for the strength that God granted us to travel to them and for the love we shared in the Christmas promise of ‘God with us.’

God bless you all,

Karen Eubank and the GLC team

Karen State, Burma



Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good.
His love endures forever.
He remembered us in our low estate
His love endures forever.
and freed us from our enemies.
His love endures forever.
He gives food to every creature.
His love endures forever.
Give thanks to the God of heaven.
His love endures forever.

Psalms 136:1, 23-26

Maw Naw, FBR team leader and medic sharing his thanks at the Christmas service.

Ethnic Leaders Speak on Prayer and Peace

"Prayer is powerful and it's the direct talk to God. Lets pray for peace in Burma."

Abel Tweed, Vice-chairman of KNPP and UNFC

"Pray for peace in Burma for the 60 million people now!"

Mai Kwe, Information Department, UNFC

"As Jesus gave us peace, let's pray for peace in Burma!"

Patrick, KIO

"In Buddhism it is being taught (preached) that as beings, we should spread love (metta) among ourselves, even including our enemies and those that hate us so that we can have peace of mind as well as a peaceful environment."

Colonal Sao Swy Mangrai, Foreign Affairs, SSPP/SSA

"Burma needs light to be able to avoid all the obstacles and walk through safely in the darkness of the political field. Shall we pray for that."

Henry, Kachin

Zipporah Sein, General Secretary, Karen National Union (KNU)

From a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton:

"We the Karen National Union (KNU) would like to ask you to take the lead to recognize the desires of all the ethnic groups, both armed and unarmed, to be treated as equals in the effort to establish a genuine federal union: a union that recognizes the rule of law and recognizes the equality of all."



Saw Dot Lay Mu, Joint General Secretary II, Karen National Union (KNU)

"Pray for our Karen people as well as our fellow oppressed people who are facing the same situation in Burma.

Pray for our negotiations with the current government in power. Pray that God will be with us and as we go forward we hope that both sides will agree to a genuine ceasefire in Karen state and a nationwide ceasefire especially for the Kachin who are facing heavy oppression now. We pray for the government in power in Naypyidaw to stop attacking the Kachin and we pray that we will attain a genuine federal union based on equal rights and self-determination."



Letter to the Leaders of Myanmar

Dear leaders of the Union of Myanmar,

We pray for you and encourage you to reconcile with all the people of Burma and if there is any constructive way we can help you in this please let us know.

Thank you and may God bless you,

Free Burma Rangers.



Justice vs Mercy:

Telling the Story of Jonah in Shan State

or how God reveals Himself in the unlikelyst of places

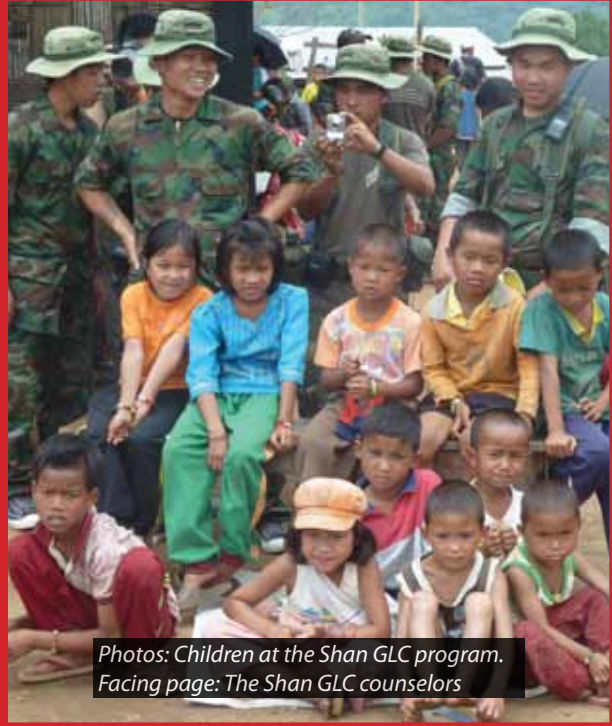
This past April we stood in a classroom full of young Shan leaders, the Good Life Club counselors of the new FBR teams - there to learn how to bring a message of abundant life to the children they would see on their relief missions. Like most people in Burma, their lives have been ones of struggle against the brutal oppression of the Burma Army, a struggle often simply for physical survival. Growing up in the midst of civil war, their own culture is often ordered by a very regimented system of military justice. Many are also influenced by animism, in which local spirits must continually be placated. There is little room for error in their lives, which are lived constantly on the edge of survival and the best they can hope for is simply to be treated fairly.

The story we proposed to be the main drama of this year's children's program was the Bible story of Jonah, the unwilling prophet of God commanded to preach salvation to the enemies of his people – adapted into their context as the story of warring step-brothers from different villages in the Shan mountains, with the message that God's mercy is greater than the justice of man. Despite vast differences in time and culture, there seemed obvious parallels to the situation of Jonah and the Shan we were working with: like many of the Shan, Jonah desired to see justice done to his enemies. Similarly, both are right in desiring to see the enemy punished. However, God commands Jonah to be an instrument of his mercy rather than judgment.

In the story, Jonah jumps on a boat to escape this command that so violates his sense of justice – the self-righteous brothers of the drama also run away, into the jungle. God brings a storm that nearly kills Jonah, while our brothers meet a tiger. God is not willing to let Jonah die a martyr to his own sense of justice and saves him with the whale, while the brothers' father kills the tiger. The gospel is preached and the wicked dramatically repent and are saved. Jonah is angry, and the brothers echo his rage: after all, **in a world where God can seemingly break His own rules, where you can strive and sacrifice to do the right thing and then watch the oppressor be saved, why live?** This is God's answer to Jonah: "Your idea of justice is based on your own suffering, what makes you uncomfortable. This is not wrong, but it's too small, too narrow. The life I have planned for you is not a chart of accounts – and it's a good thing, because you're not so good at math anyway. This city of Ninevah, which I created and know, has 120,000 innocent people you would have happily seen destroyed in your anger that could only see your own suffering. Even justice, that seems so simple, is more than you can handle." The mercy of God is greater than the justice of man.

In a deeper message of freedom, God asks Jonah – as he does us – to obey. This is a sort of surrender, but it is also the moment when the burden of justice drops, when the righteous, justified, unanswerable anger can be released, can dissipate. It's a movement from the narrow, zero-sum tally sheet of justice to the wide open spaces of a new relationship with God and man. It's a movement into spiritual freedom.

This was the message of encouragement we offered the Shan team members. It was not an easy one - it had challenged us in our own lives and we wondered how, in this moment that contained all their moments, with all the pain of the past, the injustice, so much reason to hate and so little experience of mercy – we wondered how they would respond. They listened to us describe it – and accepted it. They agreed it was a good message and wanted to use it. They gave themselves roles, they became actors, they enthusiastically practiced in the one afternoon they had available – they made it their own. **The day of the program the scenes flowed effortlessly, their dramatic humor and energy captivated 150 squirming, sun-drenched children.** The village dogs and chickens were quiet, even. The message of Jonah was brought by these Shan rangers to all of us: that, like Jonah, we are called to receive and give mercy. And, watching this message shine so clearly through the rangers, we were reminded that we are all called, and able, to be communicators of God's truth and instruments of His love.



*Photos: Children at the Shan GLC program.
Facing page: The Shan GLC counselors*



HOW TO HELP



If you would like to contribute to the Good Life Club, one way is to put together packs of essential items for children, moms and babies. Relief teams deliver these packs to displaced children.

SHIPPING INFORMATION

Thank you for your help in sending the packs to us. At this time, it is still not possible to send charitable bulk shipments to us. Please send standard household/gift size boxes with the description "household/personal goods, no commercial value" on customs form.

Send packs airmail (USA: not to exceed 79 inches length/width/girth) to
Christians Concerned for Burma (CCB),
PO Box 14, Mae Jo PO,
Chiang Mai 50290,
THAILAND.
Mark the Package: GLC

KIDS PACKS

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

MOM AND BABY PACKS

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



PRAYING WITH OUR ENEMIES



The following letter was written after celebrating the Global Day of Prayer 2011, in central Karen State. The trip included two Day of Prayer services and an eye clinic put on by visiting friends in one of the villages visited.

Dear friends,

Thank you for praying with us. We thank God and all of you who pray for us and want to report three unexpected baptisms as well as an unexpected opportunity to pray with the Burma Army. We were reminded that Jesus gives us all opportunities all the time but it takes obedience and gratitude to see them. So many times in my life I try to control a situation or opportunity and end up missing what God has.

Last week we were on the border for the Global day of Prayer for Burma and to debrief some of our FBR relief teams. In the middle of these events three of our team members told us that they wanted to be baptized. One was Joseph Htoo, a Karen FBR team member, the second was Matthew Brakeman who with his wife Jenn are a crucial part of the FBR HQ team. The third was our daughter Sahale, who looked into my eyes with a look of serenity and pure longing and then said some of the sweetest words a father can hear, "Daddy, I want to be baptized so that God will make me better and so that I can be closer to God."



Eye clinic before Day of Prayer.

I was overwhelmed with love and honor that I could be part of baptizing these three people whom I love and respect. It was also a gift to do this with Pastor Samuel, the Karen father of Eliya, our chief medic and first FBR ranger. Only a few years before, Samuel had almost died of stomach cancer but after prayer, treatment and six month stay at home he made a full recovery and is a man of action for the Lord. The next day after the baptisms we were invited to visit an area of Burma controlled by an ethnic proxy army who are allied with the Burma Army. The commander of the proxy force came to us as one of our team was treating eye patients. He told us that even though they were allied with Burma Army they did not like them. He asked us to visit their clinics in Burma and to help them. We prayed and decided to go. We ended up in the same area where 14 years ago the Burma Army shot at me as I was on a relief mission. I was now standing on the ground the Burma Army had been shooting at me from. As I looked up to the hill where I had been evading their fire, I thought, "God you are amazing, thank you that I can be here, you did it!"

We visited the clinic and a church in the area under the proxy's control. While we were at the clinic, Burma Army troops from a camp nearby came to see us. They were surprised and knew we should not be here, but as the proxy force had jurisdiction they were unsure what to do. Two of the Burma Army officers approached us and I told them we were Christians here to help - I did not tell them we were

FBR although my FBR t-shirt and hat made me not exactly covert. I told the soldiers we wanted to be friends and then grabbed one of the officers by the arms pulled him close to me and whispered in his ear, "Aung San Suu Kyi (the democracy leader) is a good leader." He looked at me and his face broke into a wide and genuine smile. I thought, "He does like her, there must be many like him who do not like the dictators and prefer Aung San Suu Kyi, it is just that they are too afraid to know what to do." Here I felt we saw a crack in the ability of the dictators to control everything in Burma.

After this we noticed that the other Burma Army troops nearby seemed to be getting more organized and were talking on a radio, so I thought we should probably leave. We said a prayer with the proxy leaders and the Burma Army officers and left. I thanked God that His ways and timing were better than ours and that we had this opportunity. The next morning was the Day of Prayer for Burma and we celebrated it in a small church on the Thai border. After this we started by back home. On the way we met some of our team members who arranged for an unexpected trip across the border to pray with IDPs who had fled fighting in this area a few months ago. Due to our limited time and large group, we had thought that we would not be able to go. By an amazing series of events all of us made it in and had the second Day of Prayer for Burma service inside Burma.

The unexpected additions to our original purpose for this trip were reminders that God's ways are more wonderful than ours. We need to listen and obey and do what He has for us, not what we think He should have for us. We need to thank God for what He does and obey His voice. **Obedience, faithfulness and gratitude help us to be ready for the opportunities God has for us and to experience the joy of being part of them.** This is not a shallow kind of joy that says, "I did it." It is an overwhelming joy that says, "God did this and I was able to be part of it!!" God gives us great freedom and we can develop in many ways, yet true satisfaction comes from obedience, faithfulness and in expectation of what God will do for, through and in spite of us.



*Top: Good Life Club program before Day of Prayer, 2011.
Bottom: Global Day of Prayer, 2011, Central Karen State.*

Praying with you all on this day of prayer for Burma helps open us to a deeper relationship of love with God who powerfully helps us to change for the better and who helps us to pray and act on behalf of others in need. In Romans 14:7-8 we are reminded that, "For none of us lives to himself alone, and no one dies to himself alone. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord."

We are grateful that we all belong to God, try to obey God, and can thank God for His opportunities.

Love,

David Eubank, family and teams

FBR



Mon FBR medic treats patients on a mission.



Lahu medics treat patients.

God Works Through Unity

This message was given by Rev. Allan Eubank to a group of ethnic leaders from Burma representing the Mon, the Kachin, the Karenni, the Karen and the Shan. It is a message that was given to encourage them as they work together to build unity in Burma amidst the oppression of the Burma Army.

"God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right." Acts 10:34-35

The almighty power that made us all and loves us all the same will bless us as we listen to Him and do what is right. We meet here for unity.

I just heard a man say that unity is: U N I and Ty. So UNITY happens when you and I are tied together.

We pray for God's love to tie us together so that we may be one with all peoples and do what is right.

We pray again for unity, peace, love, and justice for Burma and for us all.

In Acts 10, verses 27-30 point out the fact that Peter (a strong Jew) is speaking to Cornelius, a Roman Centurion, a soldier and a representative of the oppressors of the Jews. Only God could have brought these two men together: it was unlawful for them to even eat together. Yet both of them prayed to God, both listened to what God was telling them and then acted with obedience to come together in the unity that God was calling them to. And it was in that unity that the door was opened for God to move powerfully in both the oppressed and the oppressor.

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