



Myanmar Hope Christian Mission, Inc. • 308 South Oxford Road • Springfield, Illinois • 62704-1258
<http://www.myanmarhope.org> • info@myanmarhope.org • (217) 415-9187

Greetings

Welcome to our second issue of 2009. Many wonderful things **are being accomplished for God's Kingdom in Myanmar**, and many thanks go out to our faithful friends and supporters. We hope you are excited and encouraged as you read about our brothers and sisters who live in such difficult circumstances, yet continue to remain strong and persevere in their commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ!

Special Report: Cyclone Nargis One Year Later

One year ago, in May 2008, a devastating cyclone pounded the Irawaddy Delta region of Myanmar. It has been estimated that 140,000 people were killed overnight, and nearly two million were severely affected. Hundreds of thousands of people were left homeless, destitute, hungry, sick, and thirsty.

Some of you may remember that our own Kikim and Solomon lived through that terrible ordeal, and they and the rest of the immediate family came through that frightening night safe and sound.

In the frustrating and painful days and weeks that followed the disaster, thousands more died as a result of the extremely difficult and dangerous circumstances, combined with the problems of reaching the people with much-needed aid.

There was an outpouring of sympathy and support by the friends of Myanmar Hope Christian Mission. We made you all aware of the urgent need for financial assistance, and many of you responded in a very generous way. Because of your help, and because of the bravery and ingenuity of our volunteers in Yangon, we were able to identify and help two very remote villages deep in the delta.

These two villages together lost three quarters of their families and friends overnight. They also lost most of their homes, their food stores, their rice seed, their farming equipment, their farm animals, and nearly everything else. They were literally wiped out.

Adding to the sense of urgency was the fact that June and July

In This Issue:

Greetings.....	1
Special Report: Cyclone Nargis, One Year Later	1
Rat Plague Update	2
Updates from Our Churches	
New Well for Bokkan Village.....	3
New Roof for Valpabung.....	4
Bokkan Church gets an upgrade	4
Pastor Thang Lian Khup	5
Native-Language Hymnals	5
Land / Medical Clinic Project	6
Khongsai Family Update	6
Support Programs.....	7
Thank You Letters	7
A Message from Solomon.....	8

are planting season in that part of the country. If the people were not able to plant a rice crop before the summer monsoons set in, there would be no harvest. Their future looked bleak indeed. They had no hope of any help coming to them from anywhere.



Villagers survey the damage to their homes

By the time our volunteers arrived the villages were full of refugees from surrounding villages, many of whom were sole survivors. You can imagine their joy and surprise when our volunteers showed up with rice, clothing, mosquito nets, vegetables, and many other necessities. The villagers, who were all Buddhists, and had never heard the Gospel, were provided with all of these items in the name of Jesus. The volunteers were able to visit with them many times, and on one occasion took a group of village men into the nearest city for a day of Bible study and to view the Jesus film.

Also, thanks to generous donations from IDES, we were able to provide the village elders with interest-free loans to purchase and repair their tractors, and to purchase rice seed and fuel. The elders were extremely grateful for this, and were able to maintain a sense of dignity by establishing the terms of the loan and by overseeing and distributing all of the aid to the villagers themselves.



Rice paddies growing strong and healthy

Their rice crop soon grew very strong, and was able to withstand an infestation of rice-eating crabs that swept into the delta during the month of August, which destroyed many other rice crops that were not planted as early.

The crop was ready to harvest in late November and December, even earlier than expected. Villagers came from miles around to admire the rice crop, which was judged by most of them to be the best crop in the whole area.

It will soon be time to plant again, and the villagers are well prepared with seed from the last harvest and tractors that are in good working order. They hope to have another great harvest at the end of this year. With the proceeds of their harvest, **they are able to repair their homes, pay for their children's school, and many other things that would not have been possible without the help of Myanmar Hope Christian Mission.**

The villagers of Nakhongyi and Nakhonglay are well on their way to full recovery. The trauma and emotional toll exacted by the cyclone and its aftermath will be with them for the rest of their lives, but thanks to God, and your prayers and generous gifts, they now have hope for a better future and a means of attaining it!

Rat Plague Update

We want to thank everyone who donated to help the villagers whose crops were destroyed by the rat plague. We especially want to thank IDES for their generous donations, as well as a large donation from West Side Christian Church.

Our faithful volunteers once again took upon themselves the arduous task of traveling to these remote villages, purchasing and transporting the rice, and then



overseeing the distribution efforts. They left their homes on April 24th, and did not return home until May 4th.

Over 300 baskets of rice were distributed to over 440 families from 13 different villages. The distributions were organized and held in three villages: Sawbua (90 families from 3 villages on April 27), Khumnoi (130 families from 5 villages on April 30), and Tuikhingjang (202 families from 5 villages on May 3rd).

The months of April and May are "sowing season," a time of year that requires long hours of very hard work. The food that we were able to distribute to these families enabled them to work in their fields, rather than spend their time scavenging



Happy villagers wait patiently for much-needed food

for food. They are now much better situated for the near future, thanks to your generous donations.

Updates from Our Churches

A NEW WELL FOR BOKKAN CHRISTIAN CHURCH FAMILIES

We have known for a long time that the water situation in Bokkan Village was a real problem. There are few wells; most of them are shallow and dirty, and they frequently dry up, except during the rainy season.



Water from the original Bokkan well

Recently the situation got even worse because several wells were already almost dry, and the families were getting desperate for water. They were trying to run pipes from wells that were already overtaxed to supply water to more families than the wells could sustain. The owners of the wells were getting frustrated with the people, and the dry season was just upon them.

We had previously looked into the cost of digging a new well, and estimated the cost at around \$500.00 US. When the Bok-



The men lower one of the workers down into the well

kan elders approached us and asked for help, we sprang into action. One of our friends had recently donated to our general fund, and the money had not yet been allocated for other projects. We informed Pastor Jonah that we had the money to pay for a new well, and that he should proceed with the construction.

The professional well-diggers suggested a spot higher up in the village, away from the creek and the other wells, since they

were obviously already running low on water. They began digging in earnest, and we kept in close contact with Jonah for status updates.

The well-diggers reached twenty feet with no sign of water. We were all getting anxious, since we had to pay the workers **regardless of their success and we didn't have the money for another attempt.** Jonah asked if we could afford for them to keep digging deeper, even though the price would go up now that the construction was much more dangerous. We said to keep digging because it was still cheaper than starting over, but we cautioned them not to take any undue risks.

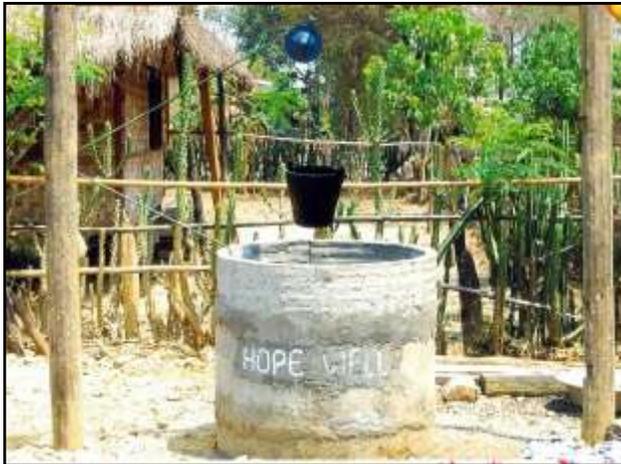


Bokkan villagers around the new well

They dug down to twenty-five feet, and still no water. The workers had to devise some clever ways to get air to the men down in the well, because of the heat and the lack of oxygen. Finally, they made the decision to dig one more section (about two and a half feet) before they gave up. Thank God for their perseverance, because when they dug down for the final section, they hit water! And not just a little water, either, but three very strong springs that all happened to be crossing right at that spot! The water rushed into the well so quickly that they could hardly get out of the well fast enough. Before they knew it, the well was half full, and rising.

Needless to say, there was much joy and lots of celebration as the villagers watched the water pour into the well. Now their problem was how to get all of the dirty water out of the well so they could use it. Over the next few days, as they finished putting in the concrete wall sections, the people began coming with their buckets and pails, to get water from the well. It seems that the water rushing into the well was so clean, that between the new water coming in and the old water being taken out, the well was completely clean in just a couple of days.

The well was opened in just the nick of time, too. As the new well was just getting “broke in,” the other wells, which are lower down in the village, completely dried up. The new well was up to the job of providing water for these other families, though! By the end of each day, after being used by so many families, the new well is almost empty, but by the next morning, it is full again with fresh, clean water.



The new well. Notice that they named it Hope Well!

We are so thankful to our God who loves us so much. He laid it on the hearts of his people here in America to give at just the right time; He provided the three strong underwater streams to come together at just the right place; and He directed the well construction workers to dig at just the right spot. Praise God!

A NEW ROOF FOR VALPABUNG CHRISTIAN CHURCH

As we have reported in past issues, it is technically illegal to build or repair Christian churches in Myanmar. However, under certain special circumstances, rebuilding and repairs can be made, as long as the central government doesn't find out about the project. We are thankful that one of the churches in our fellowship, Valpabung was recently able to complete construction



The frame goes up on the new church

tion on their new church building after several years.



The new tin roof goes on

They had already gathered all of the materials they needed for the walls and floor, by gathering wood and bamboo from the forest and keeping it stored in an out-of-the-way location. What they lacked were the funds to purchase the tin for the new roof.

Many thanks to one of our friends, whose generous donation made it possible for the elders to purchase the tin and complete the construction. We are happy to share some pictures of the construction process with you!



The new building is almost finished

BOKKAN CHURCH GETS AN UPGRADE

[Note: This story actually took place last summer, but we never had space to include the details, so we are sharing this with you now.]

The meeting house of Bokkan Christian Church, one of the poorest churches in our fellowship, was badly in need of repairs. The walls were constructed of woven bamboo, like you see in the picture of Valpabung Church, above. The walls had been up for over seven years, and because of the climate, insect damage, etc., the walls were beginning to rot and fall apart.

Normally, the men would go into the forest, cut bamboo, and repair the walls each season as a matter of course. However, there has been, and continues to be, a lot of paramilitary activity in that part of the country. The bamboo forests have been laced with landmines, making it too dangerous to venture into the forest in search of building material.

Several people have been killed or injured in the past year while trying to get material to repair their houses.



Bokkan Church with new hardwood walls

The church building was in terrible shape, and not knowing what else to do, the elders requested help from us. We made the need known, and some of our donors sent money for them to purchase hardwood lumber and nails to put up new walls.

Unlike in America, the men could not just hop in their trucks **and head down to the nearest Lowe’s or Home Depot and buy** what they needed. It is illegal to build or repair churches without government permission, and that is impossible to get. However, some of the local officials are members of the tribe, and many others are sympathetic to the plight of the Christians, so, with proper arrangement, things like this can get done—they are just never officially “acknowledged.”

Here is how the men managed to put the new walls up without getting in trouble. After they received the funds, they slowly began acquiring the building materials that they would need, bit by bit, and kept everything hidden away in the nearby woods.

When everything was ready, they talked with the local official in charge. During the conversation he mentioned that he would have to be away on business for a couple of days. As soon as he was gone, the men gathered all of the materials, tore down the old walls, and put up the new walls, all in one day. When the official returned to the village, he pretended not to notice the new walls, and no one in the church made

any mention of the new walls either—everyone just acted as if nothing had ever happened!

In this way, the church was able to continue meeting, no one got in trouble, and everyone just goes on with their lives as if nothing has changed. Such is life under a totalitarian regime!

The next time your church needs any repairs, be thankful that you can make the repairs openly, and not in secret, and without worrying about being arrested or going to jail!

PASTOR THANG LIAN KHUP OF DALAH CHRISTIAN CHURCH

In this issue of the newsletter we want to highlight the ministry of one of our most faithful ministers of the Gospel, Pastor Thang Lian Khup of Dalah Christian Church.



Baptism in a Barrel

Pastor Khup is very dedicated to evangelism and teaching the Word of God wherever and whenever possible. He recently baptized seven new believers, all of whom come from a non-Christian background. Not all of them were baptized immediately, however. Baptism of converts is very dangerous in Myanmar, so much thought and planning must go into finding an appropriate time and place. We are thankful that we can share some photos with you of some recent baptisms by Pastor Khup, as well as some photos of his teaching ministry.



Even while other churches in surrounding villages are being closed, Dalah Christian Church remains open and growing. Please pray for DCC that they can continue the work of spreading the Gospel without any undue interference.

NATIVE-LANGUAGE HYMNALS

Another great need of the churches in Northwest Myanmar are native-language hymnals and songbooks. Most of the churches own only one hymnal and one song book. When they sing together, the song-leader calls out the words for the song, phrase-by-phrase, and the people follow.

One of the first times that Kikim and Palal led us in a song, Kikim, who was holding the songbook, began calling out the words of the song to us, then we would sing, then she would call out the words, and so on.

After the song, we asked Kikim why she did this, and that is **when Palal told us this is the “normal” way that they lead worship.** We asked why, and he told us that the churches normally have one song book, which they all must share, and so this is how they cope with the lack of books.

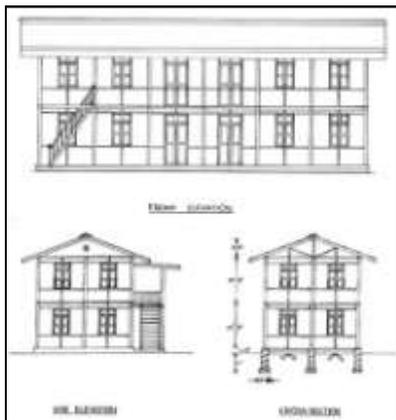
When asked how much the books cost, Palal said a new hymnal costs \$4.00 and a new songbook costs \$2.00. The hymnals contain traditional hymns of the Church translated into the Kuki dialect. The songbooks contain Gospel songs written by natives, and also some Western-style songs translated into their language.

A great idea for a VBS or small-group service project would be to purchase some hymnals or songbooks for our needy brothers and sisters in Christ in Myanmar. Please contact us if you are interested in helping to supply this need!

Land Project / Medical Clinic

We are still raising funds to purchase land upon which to build a combination school / church / ministry headquarters in Yangon. So far we have raised \$28,500.00, but much more will eventually be needed. If you would like to help with this project, please contact us.

We are also beginning the planning process for building and staffing a medical clinic in Northwest Myanmar. We estimate that we will need approximately \$20,000 for startup costs—to purchase the land, erect



Building Plans for Hope Clinic

a building, and purchase supplies. We have already received some of that amount in targeted donations, but we need to raise the rest before we can begin work on the project.

Will you pray about becoming financially involved in this project? As we have reported in past issues, inadequate health care is a major cause of sickness, disease, and death in the villages of Northwest Myanmar. This medical clinic, which will be in a central location, easily accessible to many remote villages, will be a real life-saving, Kingdom-building project!

Khongsai Family Update



Palal's Mother and Father

Many things have happened in the lives of Palal, Kikim, and Solomon, and their extended family in Yangon since our last newsletter. We will include just a few of the most important ones here.

First, there was an intense heat wave in Yangon earlier in the year, which was exacerbated by the lack of shade trees caused **by Cyclone Nargis last year.** Palal's elderly mother and father, who come from a much cooler environment up in the mountains, were suffering tremendously from the heat. Since the political situation up north has settled down to a great extent, we felt it was better for them to return to their home in Bokkan Village. They are no longer allowed to work in their field, but they can still work in their little garden outside their home.

Two young boys, who were housed by neighbors after their father was killed by Burmese Buddhists, were finally allowed to move into the house in Yangon. They had been begging to move in for a long time, but there was never enough room or funds for them to live there. They are now attending school and are very happy.



Letkholal and Letkhokham

Back here in America, Kikim has been very successful in her ESL classes. Earlier this Spring, Kikim was chosen to represent the ESL students at a rally in the State Capitol building rotunda. She was very nervous, but she did an excellent job, and proved again that she is a very dynamic speaker. Because of her great job at the Capitol, she was again chosen as the student representative to

speak during the end-of-semester graduation and awards ceremony at Lincoln Land Community College.

A video of Kikim's speech at the rotunda is available for viewing on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfg2GCsaX0U



Solomon, Kikim, Danielle, Michael, Palal

Palal was given the honor of presiding over the wedding of our good friends, Michael and Danielle (Snyder) Reynolds. It was a beautiful wedding, held at Lincoln Memorial Gardens by Lake Springfield. Michael and Danielle are very special people, and are very dedicated to Myanmar Hope Christian Mission and world missions in general. As a demonstration of their love, they instructed those who were invited to the wedding to give any wedding gifts to MyHope! What a wonderful, godly way to begin a marriage. We know that God will richly bless them for this very sacrificial act.

At the beginning of June, Palal, Kikim and Solomon began their duties as Camp Missionaries at



LSCA Camp Missionaries, 2009

Lake Springfield Christian Assembly Camp. Their website is: www.lscacamp.org.

They are having a great time, and Solomon has already made a lot of new friends. He has also learned a good lesson about wasps—never try to pick one up!



Solomon learns about stinging insects!

Support Programs

There are still a great many Christian families and individuals in Myanmar that are in need of help. These people are not lazy—they work very hard, but the reward for their labor is just pen-

nies a day. Is it right for Christians in one part of this world to live in wealth and abundance, while Christians elsewhere are suffering from malnutrition, disease, and poverty?

If you are ready to be a part of changing this situation for the better, give us a call at (217) 415-9187, or email at info@myanmarhope.org. Your help can vastly improve the lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ! Just \$30.00 per month is all it takes to help provide a family with life-saving rice, medicines, clothing, and other necessities. **\$60.00 per month will help provide a pastor's family with food and necessities**, and will also allow him to spend time doing the work of ministry.



Pahat with her new mattress, blankets, and pillow

OTHER WAYS TO HELP

There are many things that you can do to help our brothers and sisters in Myanmar. Here are some ways:

- Pray for them! (free)
- Purchase one or more Kuki Bibles (\$5.00 each)
- Purchase one or more Kuki hymnals (\$4.00 each) or song-books (\$2.00 each)
- Purchase a bicycle (\$80.00)
- Purchase a mattress (single: \$50.00; family: \$100.00)
- Purchase a short wave radio (\$35.00)
- Purchase a pig (\$150.00) or a piglet (\$40.00)
- Purchase a mithun cow (\$500.00)
- Fund the construction of a new well (\$500.00)

Thank You Letters

Some of you may have wondered why you have not received a thank you letter from your sponsored family in Myanmar.

First, poor people in the rural villages usually do not have easy access to paper and pens like we have in America. In Myanmar, a sheet of 8.5 x 11 paper costs about 10¢. That may not sound like a lot, but it would be about \$25.00 to \$50.00 for us. When there is hardly enough money for food, such a luxury seems out of reach for them. MyHope often sends funds for them to purchase paper.

However, after letters are written, a volunteer has to take the letters across the border to India to an internet café, as it is



Myanmar Hope Christian Mission, Inc.
308 South Oxford Road
Springfield, Illinois 62704-1258

Place
Stamp
Here

Place address label here

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

<http://www.myanmarhope.org> Email: info@myanmarhope.org Phone : (217) 415-9187

Myanmar Hope Christian Mission, Inc. is a federally recognized, not-for-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Illinois.
All donations made to this organization are 100% tax deductible according to the Internal Revenue Service Code, Section 501(c)(3).
Federal Tax Identification: 26-0324244. NGO License Number: BU-1679.

(Continued from page 7)

too dangerous to scan and email the letters from inside Myanmar.

Emailing the letters from the India side can be dangerous, too. There is always the possibility that the volunteer will be stopped at the border, searched, and possibly arrested or pressed into the military. Also, the phone lines are very bad, and scanning and emailing large images takes a lot of time and bandwidth, which the Internet café does not have a lot of. Once Palal receives the scanned letters via email, then he translates them into English, and we send them on to the family sponsors.

Of course, one of our long-term goals is to move families away from having to receive monthly support as soon as possible. We do that by helping them find ways of generating an income on their own by using farm animals, micro-finance loans, etc.

It is always very touching for us and the sponsors to read thank you letters, but we hope you understand that it is not an easy process to send them, and you will not become discouraged in your giving. The families and individuals are extremely grateful for your help!

A Message from Solomon

I come to America to see my Daddy, Pupu [Grandpa Chuck], Pipi [Grandma MaryAnn] and Schatzie [our dog]. I like American food: hot dogs, pizza, chocolate, ice cream, strawberry, watermelon, and chicken. I like pet. I like dog and cat.

My favorite song is "rains come down and up." I like blue, red, and green colors. I have a bike and a scooter. I like our house in America. It is very nice.

Solomon's Prayer: "Lord, Thank You for my Daddy. Thank You for my Mommy. Thank You for my Doggy. Thank You for my Pupu. Thank You for my Pipi. Thank You for my school and my friends. Lord, can You give us food? Thank



You for the children at the camp. I pray for them and I pray for new friends who come tomorrow. Thank You for my teachers, Ms. Kelly and Ms. Susan.

Thank You for Daddy, Mommy, Pupu and Pipi that they have teeth. Thank You for Dr. Rob.

In Jesus' Name I pray, Amen."