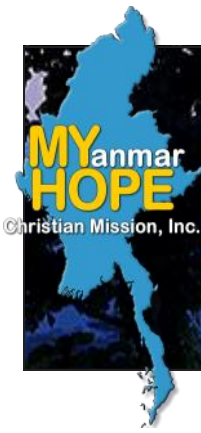


"You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving"
- Amy Carmichael



MyHope Newsletter

Volume 8 Issue 1 January 2014

Myanmar Hope Christian Mission, Inc. • 624 Garvey Lane • Chatham, Illinois • 62629-5086
<http://www.myanmarhope.org> • info@myanmarhope.org • (217) 415-9187

Happy New Year

We pray that God will bless all of you in 2014 even more than He did in 2013! Please read on to learn about what has been happening since our last newsletter. We have some great news to share.

December Trip to Yangon

Chuck and MaryAnn Cherry were accompanied by Robin Pickett and his two daughters, Maggie and Annie.



The December trip team. From left: Annie Pickett, Robin Pickett, Maggie Wiant, MaryAnn Cherry, Chuck Cherry

Robin Pickett's Report

Making a trip to Myanmar and the surrounding area is certainly a journey. We each logged about forty-four hours of actual flight time, fifteen hours in a van to the area villages, and participated in three full Christian convention days. It was a rewarding trip, but also very demanding. Sharing this experience as a family was a plus. Maggie and Annie (my daughters) have both been on mission trips of their own (youth group related), but both saw and experienced things on this trip they have never witnessed before.

The people we visited have a level of trust in God that I'm not sure we Americans would measure up to if we faced the difficulties they experience. They 'have to' rely on God for their everyday survival. In most instances, the absence of a stove, refrigerator, electricity, clean water or extra food is the

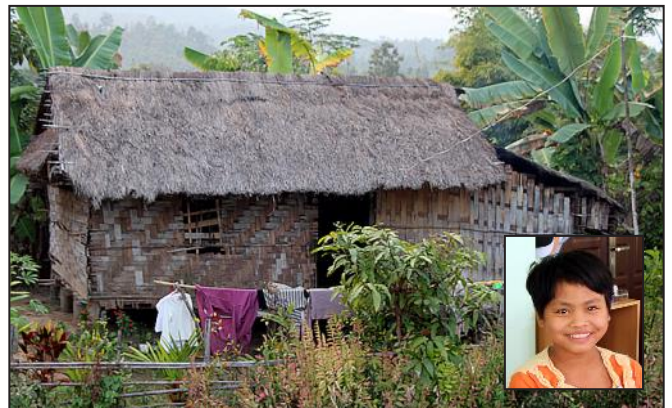
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norm there. Eating two meals a day is a good day (mostly rice).

This is my second trip to Myanmar, but witnessing some of the living conditions in the northwest, especially in the villages, remains a hard fact of life to accept. It is something you think you are prepared to witness, but seeing it first-hand gives you an entirely different perspective.

During part of our visit we interacted with the 33 children at Hope Boarding School. Many of you reading this update sponsor one or more of those children. Your generosity is going to a good cause. More importantly, it is directly impacting your sponsored child and/or this ministry in general.



The family home of Miss Vah Kho Nei, a student now at Hope Boarding School

Before getting the chance of a lifetime, these kids lived in unspeakable surroundings such as in the villages we visited. Thanks to your gifts, they now live at Hope Boarding School in conditions they could only dream about compared to their previous homes. Their recently constructed three story home is both practical and functional, but to them it's like living in their own castle. It's impressive the amount of "house" that can be built for \$110,000. The cost in our area would be several times that amount. So, your gifts are being multiplied in that sense as well.

To these kids, considering where they came from, they are experiencing life in a way they could only imagine when they lived in their villages. For the first time in their lives they have regular food, clean water, adequate shelter, electricity, security, Bible classes, and house parents that love them like their own. They know all of this is provided to them in the name of Jesus. Because of that, their prayers and behavior are unlike anything we experience from kids in our culture. We did our best to serve them, but I think we were the ones who went away with the greatest blessing.



Robin teaching an object lesson with Mr. Lun Gin Mang doing the translating

The three day convention in Tamu, which we were privileged to be a part of, went very well. Our team led teaching sessions and shared in worship with the people who live in the northwest (some of the poorest of the poor). About six hundred men, women, and children participated. Some of them walked or rode on a bus for long distances on road conditions that we would consider unacceptable. I was told that, last year one bus was so full, more than three dozen people had to ride on top of the bus. Part of that trip was on roads that we would close in America. Long story short, our team was just as blessed by the convention as the Myanmar people were.

About three years ago our family made a practical gift to a family in one of the villages. I don't mind sharing that fact because, by our standards, the size of the gift was relatively small. However, for them it turned out to be life changing.



Myint Aung and Nyo Lah in front of their rebuilt home

This family's tiny little "house" had a thatch roof and some very flimsy "walls" made of rotting bamboo. Temperatures in their winter season can dip into the high thirties and low forties, but more problematic, are the insects and rain during the monsoon season. Our small gift enabled them to have a new home rebuilt with lumber floors and pillars and new woven bamboo walls with shutters over the windows. I never imagined getting the chance to meet this family, but one stop at their village gave us that opportunity.



The previous house

The picture doesn't reflect it well, but Myint Aung lives with the effects of leprosy. He lost all of his fingers and toes, and now only has partial eyesight. In addition to living in severe poverty, he also is an outcast in his village, due to fear and superstition on the part of many of the other villagers, even though he is not contagious.

The blanket Myint Aung is holding was a small gift we included for those cool winter nights. Meeting this family turned out to be a highlight of my trip and it further demonstrates



Maggie, Nyo Lah, Annie, Robin, and Myint Aung

how even a small amount of American dollars can do so much in an area that needs our help.

Let me conclude by saying that Palal and Kikim are doing amazing things with the resources you share with Myanmar Hope. I urge you to continue your support toward this ministry, and even increase it if possible. Their work ethic, love, and amazing results all point toward effective, biblical stewardship.

Updated videos and pictures can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/MyanmarHope>. Again, thank you for partnering with this ministry and assisting people who have needs unlike anything we see here. It was good to witness first-hand the many ways our donations are being used for His Kingdom in Myanmar. We also appreciate your prayers for our team while we were traveling. Knowing you were thinking about and praying for us was a great encouragement.

- Robin Pickett



Annie Pickett, Tin Nei Lam, and Maggie Miant

I want to thank all of you who prayed so faithfully for our trip, and I thank God for using us to grow His kingdom in Myanmar. I may have been apprehensive when we left, but by the time we came home I had seen God work in some really cool ways and knew that the prayers had been answered.

MyHope provides a safe and loving home for over thirty children, but it also gives them so much more. They receive an education, nourishing meals, and a solid foundation in Christ. Though they have so little by our standards, their joy is infectious. While the kids back home were tearing open new Xbox's, the kids at MyHope were receiving pictures of their sponsors and being served at a restaurant (some for the first time ever), and I was blown away by their gratitude.

They were patient with us as we tried to learn Burmese (which is impossible) and they never stopped smiling as we sang and played and praised God together.



Maggie and Annie led some structured play time for the convention kids

Much of our time was spent at the Kuki Christian Convention and visiting villages in the northwest part of the country. There is hostility among different denominations of Christianity there, but the convention is a chance for them to all come

Online Donations can be made securely at our website: <http://www.myanmarhope.org/Donate>
 Checks can be made out to "MyHope" and sent to:
Myanmar Hope Christian Mission
624 Garvey Lane, Chatham, IL 62629

All donations are tax deductible and 96 cents of every dollar goes directly to the people of Myanmar.

Maggie Wiant's Report

If you had asked me before we left for our trip how I thought God would use me in Myanmar, I wouldn't have known. I had asked myself (and God) that a dozen times. As I packed my bags, trying not to think about getting sick or lost on the other side of the world, or how to stay sane during twenty-two hours in flight, all I knew was that God had plans for me and I would find out when I got there.



Maggie hanging out with some of the girls at HBS

together and put aside their differences while they learn and praise God.

In its fourth year now, this was the first time that programming was provided for the approximately one hundred children who attended. (The previous conventions were held in Kalay, which prevented the children from attending.) We played some American games (Duck, Duck, Goose anyone?), lost at some Burmese and Kuki games, and taught each other handshakes and songs.

It's easy to feel blessed when I have so much, but I found myself thanking God again and again as I was reminded of how He provides. Even where they are so poor, He provides for them through the love and generosity of His Church. Before I went, I was most nervous about not being able to speak the language. I quickly found out that language isn't all that important when you're connected by faith to the Body of Christ, which I now know is alive and well in Myanmar.

- Maggie Wiant

Annie Pickett's Report

Tamu, Myanmar. I am sitting in a blue plastic chair singing words that I do not know the meaning of. I am looking around, taking it all in as these Kuki/Chin people sway back and forth, side to side, praising their Savior.



At the convention in Tamu

As I am stumbling through and mispronouncing all the different Kuki words, I am struck by how different this worship service is from the way in which we worship in America. There is a man over there flapping his arms up and down and side to side as he makes his way across the front of the building (dancing in traditional Kuki style).

Near him is a woman with her eyes closed tightly, fists extended in the air, her voice carrying at a volume that everyone can hear—even in that loud atmosphere. There is a child sitting behind me shouting words of worship to her Maker and not caring if she is being too loud or making the other children uncomfortable. There is so much passion in this room! Is that what we lack in our worship? Passion? My mind wandered through these thoughts on our ride back to Kalay. Then we hopped on a plane which took us all the way back to Yangon

and Hope Boarding School.

The next morning we participated in a Christmas service with the children at MyHope and the little congregation of Hlaingtaiya Christian Church.

My eyes welled up with tears as the music started. These people needed no "warm up" or anything to prepare them for worship. They were all in, right away. Young children, some ten or eleven years old, worshipped the Lord with a passion that I have not seen from many people in the American church. This was care-free, "reckless abandon" worship. They pray to God as if they are begging for Him, and as if they are nothing without Him.



Worshipping God in Tamu

As I sat in my plastic chair feeling humbled and convicted, I wondered to myself, "How often do I lose all thoughts of what others are thinking of me? How often have I worshipped the Lord with this same reckless abandon?"

These people adored us, almost to the point of embarrassment. We were treated like royalty. Everywhere we walked, people stared, people pointed, people laughed, and people smiled. It is so funny to me that they think we are so beautiful and rich and favored, when it is we who need to be taking lessons from them. While we have much to offer them, these beautiful people have so much more to teach us.

- Annie Pickett



Two strangers getting their pictures taken with the "celebrities"

Note — You can watch a video of what Christian worship is like among the Kuki people by going to this link :

<http://goo.gl/TzxLo4>

You can watch a video of how the HBS children pray by going to this link: <http://goo.gl/hpKtxG>

MaryAnn Cherry's Report

On this, our fourth visit to Myanmar, God opened the way for us to go further northwest than on the previous three visits. The Fourth Annual Kuki Christian Convention was held at the town hall in Tamu. The convention started Friday evening and went through Sunday night. Over 600 people were present on Sunday, including almost 100 children. There is no way that words can express the incredible blessing the convention was for all of us! All of the pictures and videos cannot begin to do it justice. Once again, we left a big piece of our hearts in north-west Myanmar.



Kikim and her father in their family home

As wonderful as the convention was, we were even more grateful for the opportunity to visit the villages that Palal and Kikim grew up in and to be in their family homes. We had the privilege of meeting Palal's father and both of

Kikim's parents on our first visit in 2010, as well as many of their extended family. However, to drive through the villages where they grew up and to stand in their childhood homes with friends and neighbors around was like a dream come true!

On the drive from Kalay to Tamu, we stopped by Kikim's family home in Canaan Village. Kikim's father's health has declined since we first met him in 2010, which was sad to see, but he is still able to walk and greeted us as we entered their yard. (He is 85 years old, which is pretty old for a man in NW Myanmar.)

After many hugs and handshakes with those that had gathered, they invited us into their house. What a joy to see Hoi Kho Nei Lam (Lam Si, Kikim's niece) again! She and I were both in tears as we hugged each other. As we sat down with numerous extended family members, Kikim's father stood to share a few words and then prayed over all of us. What a blessing!

Then we went to Bokkan Village, where Palal grew up. Palal's father's health has also declined but he, too, is still able to walk and visit with guests. Fun note: He was wearing the same wildy flowered velour pants that he was wearing the



Palal's extended family. His uncle and father are in the front, sitting down.

first time we met him four years ago. He is such a delight!

We also again met his older brother, Palal's uncle, who is the oldest man in the village, and a former Animist priest. He asked Chuck a question, which led to an interesting "theological" discussion.

Next to the family home is our very first well project, which the people christened as "Hope Well." It is still serving the community with clean, fresh water. It was fun to yell down the well, "Praise God!" and hear the echo.

On the way back home from the convention we stopped by Kikim's family home once again. Everyone came out to greet us, and there were many hugs and tears all around.



NuKha (Kikim's mother) and Lam Si

At one point, I noticed Kikim had walked out of the yard and was standing by the side of the road, tears welling up in her eyes. I asked Palal if there was anything wrong. He replied that Kikim was reminiscing about many years ago, when she was a little girl. She remembered that her father had proclaimed, in a prophetic sort of way, "One day the foreigners will stand in our home." The people in their village thought he was crazy. And she herself had doubted that this would ever come to pass. Now she was in tears thinking about her father's words and that he had lived to see the day when they were fulfilled.

It is amazing to us that each time we visit our home-away-from-home, Myanmar, it is an even greater blessing than the time before.

It was wonderful to see Semte and Lum Kho Gin again, Kim Boi (now happily married and expecting their first baby), Lam Kho Neng, Khai Jung, Miss Pha Hat, Pastors Jam Let, Then Kho Mang, Jam Pau, Ngam Hao, Lun Kho Thang, and many more. While in Bokkan, we were privileged to stop by the

home of Myiant Aung and Nyoh Lah (how I love that lady!) to meet Myiant Aung for the first time and do lots of hugging on Nyoh Lah.

To see so many of the villages we've heard about, seen pictures of, and prayed for, was such a blessing. But for me, the highlight by far of this latest trip was being in the homes of our extended, beloved Family!

- MaryAnn Cherry



Hugging on Nyo Lah at their home in Bokkan Village

Chuck Cherry's Report

So much has already been said about our convention and our time in the northwest, that I will focus on some of the time we spent in Yangon with the HBS kids.

Of course we had a great time getting reacquainted with the older students, and we loved getting to know the new students who just came down to Yangon last March. They all have such lovely smiles, and it was great fun learning more about each one and watching them interact with each other. I am so proud of how Palal and Kikim have taken them in and are raising them as their own children.

I was especially proud of our kids when we took them on their annual field trip day. We first took them to the world-famous Shwedagon Pagoda, with its huge golden spires that dominate the Yangon skyline. Most of the children had never been inside the pagoda, and they were very interested to see first-hand this monument that has been such a large part of Myanmar's culture and history.

The students were all very respectful as we removed our shoes and walked into this sacred Buddhist shrine. It was wonderful to watch as they all stayed together, quietly following directions, and never running off or being disruptive in any way.

After a short time at the pagoda, we headed over to a



Group picture inside the Shwedagon Pagoda

small amusement park where we would spend the rest of the day. Most of the children had never been to a place like this before, so it was an entirely new experience for them. Others had been on our field trip last year and rode on the old Ferris wheel and broken down bumper cars that are over by Inya Lake. The rides in this park, though not up to American standards by any stretch, were at least in serviceable condition.

It was great fun just watching the kids on the various rides. Their smiles were infectious, and they were obviously all having a great time. At various times during the day, some of the kids would come up to us and say, "I am so happy!" and "Thank you, PuPu and PiPi!" (PuPu: Grandpa; PiPi: Grandma)



Thang Len Mang (Ma Mang) and Tong Cin Mang (Tong Mang) hold on for dear life as they round the corner on the roller coaster

Again, I was very proud of how well they all behaved. I have been on field trips with American kids, and usually it is all the adults can do just to try to keep the kids in order and not lose one or two. Not so with these kids. They are so polite, and they are very good at following directions and taking care of one another. Palal and Kikim really are doing a wonderful job parenting them.

After the amusement park, we ended the day at our favorite restaurant, the Golden Duck, where the kids ate their fill of seemingly endless supplies of rice, noodles, and meat in vari-

ous combinations, washed down with soft drinks. It was a great day for all of us, and we were all pretty much exhausted when our heads hit the pillow that night.



Having a blast on the water ride

Another fun day we had with the HBS kids was the “game day.” The kids ran foot races, which they love, and sack races, three-legged races, played with silly string, and enjoyed various other games. We got out a big box of sidewalk chalk and, after a bit of hesitation, the kids set about decorating the street with pictures, messages to friends in America, and Scripture verses.

We *absolutely love* spending time with the kids at HBS, and look forward to it every year. I have to admit that I am very jealous of my wife, who will be going back to spend an entire MONTH with them in April/May.

- Chuck Cherry



The sack races were such great fun!

Upcoming Trip to Myanmar

We are already in the planning stages for our next trip to Myanmar at the end of April. MaryAnn will be going for one month, primarily to teach conversational English to our HBS kids while they are on their summer break.

Also, we are very excited that Missy Farley, Susan Cormeny, and Luke and Laura Crater will be joining MaryAnn for one week to help with English tutoring and also to provide the children with another super-fun day of Vacation Bible School! Luke is looking forward to spending some quality time with Palal, learning more about how the ministry works and what life is like for the believers in Yangon.

This will be Missy and Laura’s second trip to Myanmar, and Luke and Susan’s first trip.

Please pray for them all as they prepare for this life-changing Kingdom adventure on the other side of the globe!



Top to Bottom:
 Luke and Laura Crater
 Missy Farley (with Ma Mang)
 Susan and Tyler Cormeny

Khongsai Update

Unfortunately, we have run out of room, but everyone is doing great! Here is the latest family photo, from December:

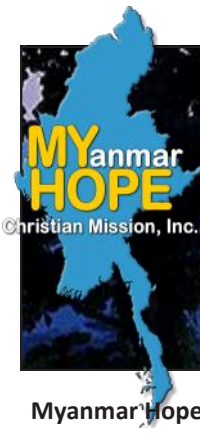


Kikim, Cherry, Palal, and Solomon send their love and greetings to all friends and supporters in the U.S.A. Mingalaba!



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