



Myanmar Hope Christian Mission, Inc.

“You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.” - Amy Carmichael

April 2016

Greetings

So much has happened with Myanmar Hope Christian Mission since our last newsletter. We hope that you are following us on Facebook, where we post up-to-date photos and news items as they happen. The page is public, meaning that no Facebook account is required. The address of the page is:

<https://www.facebook.com/myanmarhope>

Sustainable Agriculture Project Update

God is blessing our East-West Garden in amazing ways! As we visited the sugar cane farm and walked up and down between the towering stalks, we reflected upon the goodness of God and the generosity of his people. We are still in the very early stages of this long-term project, but already it is bearing much fruit for the Kingdom of God.



Chuck, Solomon, and Palal inspecting the sugarcane crop



Looking west down "Main Street"

Many people are coming from great distances to look at our amazing crop, taking photos and asking how the crop was planted, cultivated, and so on.

This year we hope to expand the farm by 20 acres, and add some much-needed improvements to the little village that will be springing up at the East-West Garden. The three boys from Hope Boarding School who have just completed 11th grade will be coming to work on the farm. They will need living quarters. We also need another well, and toilet facilities.

The cost to clear, cultivate, and plant the 20 acres across the main road is only \$1,500.00 per acre. It is less expensive on that side of the road because all of the large trees have already been removed.



Palal and Solomon on the corner of the 20 acres which need to be cleared and cultivated

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We are asking God for \$40,000.00 right away for expanding, cultivating, and improving the farm. If you sense the Holy Spirit nudging you to help us with this important long-term development project, please contact us as soon as possible. The planting needs to be done by the end of April / middle of May. The workers only need a few weeks to clear and plant, so there is still time to make this project a reality in 2016!

2016 Piglets Project

In January we received a generous grant from I.D.E.S. to provide pigs to families living in extreme poverty. Palal discussed this with some of the leaders in northwest Myanmar, and together they came up with a plan to make the project more sustainable, and hopefully more effective.

In the past when we have given farm animals to poor families, some did not know the proper ways to care for the animals, or could not afford medicines for the animals if they got sick. Some families sold their animals to pay off longstanding debts, or to pay for unexpected medical costs.

These families had legitimate reasons to sell their animals, but once the animal is



This widow from Tingkaya Village received one of the first piglets in our 2016 Piglets Project.

gone there is no more chance for income. Palal and his leaders wanted to find a way to help these poor families with lasting solutions to their financial problems, and also to help them when issues arise with the health of the animals.

With that in mind, Palal contacted a Christian veterinarian in Kalaymyo, who has agreed to work with these families to train them how to best care for the animals, and to help when animal health issues arise.

We hope that better education and training will help the families to maintain and expand their livestock herds. Also, we believe that partnering with them to help other poor families in their villages will help sustain this project for the long term.



A young mother in Bokkan Village is very happy to be part of our 2016 Piglets Project

Church Rebuilding

In the fall of 2014, Myanmar Hope hosted a dinner to raise money for the construction of at least two new church buildings for our brothers and sisters in northwest Myanmar. Since fundraising began for this project, **SIX** new church

buildings have been completed!

Completed Churches:

- Tingkaya Christian Church
- Khamphat Christian Church
- Namihan Christian Church
- Valpabung North Christian Church
- Canaan Christian Church
- Joljam Christian Church

Joljam Village is so remote, the only way to reach it is by boat, so all of the construction materials had to be transported up the river from Homalin. Everyone in the church helped out, even the ladies and young children. When it was finished it was the only brick and concrete building for several miles around!



The ladies of Joljam Christian Church helping to unload bricks from the boat. These ladies and many others helped out with every step of the construction process.

This year we are hoping to provide funds for the construction of new buildings for the following congregations:

- Jangnoi Christian Church
- Homalin Christian Church
- Valpabung South Christian Church

Palal is on his way to Jangnoi Village as this newsletter is being written. It is a very remote village, and it takes a long time to get there from just about anywhere. The few roads in that area are very dangerous. Of one of the roads, Palal said, "This is the most dangerous road I have ever been on." That is saying a lot!

The believers at Jangnoi Village have prayed and waited for years to have a real brick and concrete building of their own—not just a temporary structure made of lumber and bamboo, which can be easily torn down by the government. They are very excited to be next on our list!

Also, the congregation of Valpabung

South Christian Church is so excited to get a new building that they have already begun building the foundation with funds and materials they have been collecting for years. Of course, they need our help to finish the entire building.

Thank you for your donations to help our brothers and sisters have a safe and secure place to worship God. If you would like to help with the other churches, please send any amount to the address listed on the back page.

You can also give online at: <https://goo.gl/9dVjbo>. **Thank you!**

2015 Village Christmas Meals Program

Thanks to your extremely generous outpouring of support last fall, we were able to provide Village Christmas Meals to a record number of people in December! Our goal was to provide meals for 30 villages. However, because of your generous gifts and a favorable exchange rate, we were able to provide meals for 38 villages! Praise God!



Believers in Tongkyaw Village enjoy a Christmas feast. Tongkyaw is very remote and poor. This is the best meal that some of these folks have ever had!

2016 Annual Kuki Christian Convention

Thanks to God and thanks to you, our 6th Kuki Christian Convention at Namihan Christian Church was a great success!

Hundreds of Christians from various denominational backgrounds and dozens of villages and towns came together for a weekend filled with joyful fellowship, biblical teaching, heartfelt worship, and good food. This was our larg-



Christians from all over worshipping God together in freedom! The youth choir did a wonderful job of setting up and decorating the shelter.

est convention yet, with over seven hundred people attending.

These conventions still amaze us, knowing that just a few short years ago it was illegal in this area for a large group of Christians to gather. God is certainly at work opening up the hearts and minds of people in all levels of the Myanmar government to allow more freedom to worship God.

Thanks to your generous outpouring of support, nearly all of the many convention expenses were covered by donations, allowing the believers living in extreme poverty to join in without worrying about a thing. Thank you so much, and we know that God is already at working returning the blessings to you!



Jang Boi and the Kuki Youth Choir leading a time of beautiful worship on Friday evening

Five New Wells and Two New Bathrooms

Thanks to a generous grant from I.D.E.S., several villages have new wells, and the Namihan church has two new bathrooms. The original grant was for three wells and two bathrooms, but the congregations used volunteer labor and were also able to save money in other ways. Because of their good budgeting, they were able to make the money

stretch and to renovate two additional wells, for a total of five.

The old wells were muddy and dangerous. The wooden structures over the wells were mostly rotted and falling apart, and the area around the wells was muddy and slippery. As a result, the water was constantly dirty.

The grant allowed the churches to build brick and concrete structures and decks around the wells, making them much safer and cleaner. Thank you to anyone who has ever donated to I.D.E.S. Your generosity enables them to be a great blessing to poor believers in Myanmar and around the world.



Palal and Solomon at one of the five newly renovated wells

Hope Boarding School Update and Plans for Next School Year

The students have all finished their annual exams now, and are anxiously awaiting the results, which will be released sometime between mid April and June.

Five of our students (two girls, three boys) took their eleventh grade matriculation exams, which will determine whether or not they pass high school and can go on to university. We are all hopeful, but not confident, that they will all pass. The exam is extremely hard and only a small fraction of students actually pass each year.

The three boys, To Thong, Let Tin Pao, and Tong Mang have all said they want to work at our new farm project,



Our 11th grade students: To Thong, Let Tin Pao, Tong Mang, Lhing Neo, and Nei Boi

so they will be moving there over the summer. We hope to raise some funds soon to build a hut for them to live in on the farm.

Lhing Neo will be going back to her home village, Bokkan, to take care of her elderly grandfather, and Nei Boi will go back home to her family in Valpabung for a while.

New Students Coming!

Palal and Kikim want to bring more students down from the northwest for the upcoming school year, to bring the total number of students up to fifty. This means that we will need more student sponsors!

If you would like to sponsor one of our new students at \$50.00 per month, please contact us right away. We will be getting their names, pictures, and stories from Palal sometime in the next couple of months.

HBS Pressing Needs

Hope Boarding School has several needs to be met, some more urgent than others. We need to build bunk beds for the boys dorm in order to make room for the new boys coming down for the next school year. We also need to tile the floor in the dining area, as well as finish tiling the stairs in the girl's dorm. There are other needs, too, but these are the most pressing now. Thank you!

Save the Date! The Khongsai's Are Coming to America!

We are excited to announce that the entire Khongsai family will be coming to America in 2017! We are in the early planning stages of a fundraising dinner to mark the occasion of MyHope's tenth



Palal, Kikim, Solomon, Cherry, and Noah

anniversary and the visit of the Khongsai family. The specific day is still undecided, but it will be sometime in mid-late March, 2017. Between now and then we will need to raise the funds to purchase their airline tickets and to pay for their expenses while in the States.

They will spend time in Springfield, IL, as well as several other places in the U.S.A. We will announce their travel schedule when the time gets a little closer. If you can help with their travel expenses, please let us know via email or give us a call at (217) 415-9187. Thank you!

December and February Trip Team Testimonies

Since our last newsletter, three different groups of people visited Hope Boarding School in Yangon, and our February team also visited northwest Myanmar. In addition to spending time with the HBS students, the December teams were able to work together to provide a great VBS experience for over 250 children!

The December teams consisted of the Johnson family, the Crater family, and Missy Farley. The Johnsons share their experiences in this edition; the Craters

and Missy will share in our next edition.

The February/March trip team spent time at HBS in Yangon and also in northwest Myanmar at our Kuki Christian Convention. This team consisted of Chuck and MaryAnn Cherry, Jami Friend, and Sunny Dahlquist.

From Paul Johnson:

I really enjoyed our trip to Myanmar. It was great to have most of our family join us. It was fun to see our kids interact with the HBS students. The smiles on all faces were priceless.

Being able to sit down and talk with Palal and Kikim allowed us to see their hearts and vision for the ministry. We could see that the students are very well taken care of and loved. They are being taught many life skills as well as attending much better schools than they would have in the northwest.

Palal showed us the places where they first lived. They live in a nice location now. It is close to the school, market and a good hotel for guests to stay at.

We were there over Christmas and were blessed to see the students serving the Christmas breakfast, getting extra excited when their teachers from school came. It was interesting when the Buddhist monks sat down to eat. I was impressed that the students treated them the exact same way they treated everyone else. They even handed each monk a piece of candy and a paper with some

Bible verses on it.

If you have the opportunity to go visit Palal and Kikim, don't hesitate. Go. You will be blessed and a blessing to them.

- Paul Johnson



Paul gives the HBS kids a fun science lesson

From Kim Johnson

Of all the memories in Myanmar, one stands strong above the rest – singing praise songs with the children in the upper room. These children are not different than American children – they love games, their eyes shine with a mischievous glint, and they don't always like to study. But when they sing their praise songs, they truly sing to an audience of One and trust in Him with their whole heart. No picture can adequately capture their joy and love for Christ, and we were greatly blessed to be able to witness it.



Mitch, Linsey, Paul, Kim, Tyler, and Kristi Johnson. Linsey was unable to make the trip because of work.

We struggled with the decision to bring five of our family to Myanmar, questioning God as to whether the money would be better off directly donated to the ministry. But we felt Him calling us to go. As a result of going, we truly feel a connection with these wonderful people and with their ministry. We now feel like partners with them in giving and in prayer.

While we were in Myanmar, Palal went out of his way to graciously share with us his country, culture, and background. His love for his people and his desire to change their future shines through in all he says and does as he strives to be the hands and feet of Christ.

Palal and Kikim's vision and passion for their ministry opened my eyes to the needs of the people in Myanmar and hand of God at work there. And the children's joy and songs of praise opened my heart to the reality of God's love and the difference it makes.

- Kim Johnson



The Johnsons with some HBS Kids at Bandulah Park

From Mitch Johnson

As I write this, half way across the world my brothers and sisters in Christ are waking up to a new day. The children at Hope Boarding School captured a place in my heart. They had such a heart to serve, whether that was greeting people at the Christmas breakfast, helping set up chairs for worship time, or running to fetch the badminton birdie I accidentally hit into the sewage ditch.

These kids are shining the light of Jesus for the world to see and their servant heart was contagious. You may see their smiling faces in brochures and on Facebook, but that can only capture a fraction of the joy that they live out on a daily basis. Palal and Kikim are raising

the future leaders of Myanmar, and through their leadership Hope Boarding School is rightly named.



Cha Chan and Lhing Neo serving a group of Buddhist monks at the Christmas Outreach

With news of conflicts around Myanmar, we can find hope that the Holy Spirit is at work at Hope Boarding School and He has big plans for these kids. Palal and Kikim are truly incredible people and their humble leadership and hearts of service show their willingness to trust in the Lord and the power of prayer.

I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to get to know these wonderful people, and I know the Lord will continue to work in big ways through MyHope.

- Mitch Johnson

From Tyler Johnson

Hope Boarding School is changing Myanmar with every child they take in, with every outreach program that they undertake, and with every encounter they have with the people around them.

Palal and Kikim have done a remarkable job heading their school, and their influence is evident in the community.

The children in the school are perhaps the most joyful people I have ever met, and always looking for opportunities to serve. They simply overflowed with life, wanting to play badminton or ping-pong or jump rope for hours in



Playing soccer in the street

their free time.

Their smiles were also quite contagious, but it was their passion for singing songs of worship in their native tongue that inspired me the most. They belted out their songs of the saving grace of Jesus with a wonderful volume so that the entire neighborhood was graced with the sounds of their young voices.

They really seemed to be living out the message in Philippians 3 where Paul says, "Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.' Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life."

- Tyler Johnson

From Kristi Johnson

I liked going to Myanmar, meeting the kids and playing with them. VBX was lots of fun. I liked helping lead worship. It was fun to go new places and eat new foods. I would like to go back!

- Kristi Johnson



Kristi (in the pink skirt) playing with the HBS girls

From Jami Friend

Before visiting Myanmar I thought I was prepared for all that I would experience. The sights, sounds, smells and great cultural differences – they were very apparent the moment we stepped off the plane in Yangon. But my desire to visit Hope Boarding School, reacquaint myself with Palal, Kikim, and Solomon, and to meet Cherry and Noah was so exciting for me, so I knew I would be able to cope with all the differences I would experience.

Meeting all the students and staff at the school was such a great blessing. It is hard to put into words. The students

are obviously so cared for and loved that love flows out of them and spills over onto everyone in their path, whether a stranger like myself, or old friends like PuPu Chuck and PiPi MaryAnn.

They willingly and eagerly want to learn anything you want to teach them or share with them and approach every task with a smile. This left me amazed every day I spent with them. I will never be able to forget any of them. I may never see them again but I know that each student there was hand-picked by God to receive all the education and love to take back to their own village, in hopes of bringing growth and hope to those in the northwest.

I was also able to visit the northwest and meet so many of those pastors and the villagers that we pray for. I visited Hope Preschool and met the teacher and her helpers. She is truly a beautiful, gracious woman, and she lovingly cares for so many children.



Jami with Pastor Jonah and his family

Here's an interesting fact: The pastors who do receive support will pool their resources to help the needs of those who do not receive aid if a need arises such as medicine or a doctor's visit.

The burden that I thought I had for the HBS kids, whom I love so much, has really become a burden for the northwest village pastors and their families, and also for the elderly who have so little.

So, I would ask that you pray and consider supporting a pastor and his family, to ease some of their financial burdens, so that they can better serve their congregations.

I was so blessed for the opportunity to go to Myanmar. Praise God, my life will never be the same!

- Jami Friend

From Sunny Dahlquist

Palal, Kikim, and Solomon greatly impressed Carl and I during their summer at Lake Springfield Christian Assembly as they shared with campers, staff, and in our home. Carl and I wanted to visit the family we'd grown to love and respect. Lakeside Christian Church later began assisting Myanmar Hope Christian Mission and, as Lakeside's Mission Team leader, I felt a high degree of responsibility for investing our mission offerings well....another reason to visit.

God opened the door for the visit and I

prayed for open eyes, a teachable and loving heart, a willing spirit to do "whatever assigned" and wisdom to understand the Myanmar people from God's eternal perspective. Thank you for praying for us all during the trip. God answered!

I stood amazed at the golden Buddhist pagodas as people meditated and left their offerings. The Buddhist chanting woke me early in the mornings. Even the quiet countryside evening was disrupted by the same. Yet in the midst of such heavy influence, Myanmar Hope ministry brings the Good News of Jesus' love.

Palal and his family provide excellent leadership in Myanmar, with their influence reaching into the Yangon community as well as into the northwest area. Palal casts vision before his people and anyone who might partner with them. Then he steps out to learn, encourage, teach, and invite. Whether through the Yangon students, the northwest Kuki Christian convention, sugar cane farm, response to a disaster, development of a preschool, or an animal project – Palal's heart is for giving the Myanmar people opportunities to live, know the love of God, and share God's love with others.

While Palal carries a great load of responsibility, he patiently made time to include us. He, Kikim, Solomon, Cherry and even little Noah helped us understand the Myanmar culture, people, and their joys as well as their needs. The Khongsai family's kindness, openness, gentleness, and generosity gave me new



Jami shares her testimony at the convention

I really want to impress on you, the reader, the need in the northwest. The Pastor Support Program has so many pastors who need a little extra support for their families to enable them to spend more time serving their congregations' needs.

It is fairly easy to find supporters for children, because most of us can look at our own children and wonder what it would be like for them if they had less than what we consider good enough. But imagine your pastor trying to support his family on what he earns working (maybe \$20.00 or \$30.00 dollars per month) and then also take care of the needs of his church members, and others in the village. The extra support we can provide (\$60.00 a month) will ease their already burdened situation.



Sunny at the Shwedagon Pagoda

glimpses into God's nature revealed in his people. I felt like I received so much more than I ever gave!

The precious Myanmar Hope Boarding school students, though poor by material standards, demonstrate the richness of God's love in their daily lives.

They exhibit discipline in study, cooperative attitudes, willingness to work and to serve, and real interest in learning! Each showed creativity, energy in participating whether making sponsors a card or playing badminton in the hot sun, unusual engagement and passion in their worship, and a true joy of spirit in the midst of their circumstances.



Sunny teaches a health lesson while Solomon translates for her

I could teach a health lesson in the heat or be taught by them to do bead work, make popcorn or listen as they laughed with each other and stoked the fire, sit and enjoy cold water as they brought a dish of fruit, or slip downstairs to hear their evening devotional time. To be with them is to love and respect them and to appreciate each donor who makes the boarding school a possibility for them.

The northwest Kuki Christian Convention provided another highlight. What an amazing, lifetime privilege to share with the Myanmar folks during days of praise, worship, Biblical teaching, Kuki dance, fun, games with the children, prayer, and fellowship. Where languages might create barriers, God's love permeated from their hearts to ours.

What an honor to visit them in their homes, too. How dare we complain of lack of space, comfort, or provisions! I came away challenged to pray more,



Sunny giving her testimony at the convention

love more, thank God more, trust Him more, and live more simply.

I absolutely cherish the memories of my time with the northwest Myanmar folks, the HBS students, those in the household, and the Khongsai family. I highly recommend Myanmar Hope Christian Mission! Chuck and MaryAnn Cherry provide the perfect match for this mission. Those of us who come "alongside" the Myanmar Hope team are favored with this God-given opportunity to invest our mission offerings! Don't hesitate, give generously!

- Sunny Dahlquist

Ewan Keith, V.I.P.

Here is a story about a young man who loves Jesus and has a real heart for missions!

Last Fall we held a Bake Sale to raise funds for an upcoming trip to Myanmar. A young boy, who is in first grade, came up to the table and delivered a card with the following message: "This is my Christmas money. I don't need it but the kids in Myanmar do. Please give it to them." **Inside was a \$100 dollar bill!**

Ewan had been saving this money since the previous Christmas. He knew then that he wanted to give the money for the children at Hope Boarding School, but he didn't know how to write a card yet. However, last fall he was in first grade and he knew how to write, so he wanted to give the card during the bake sale. This boy is beyond awesome!

Well, a month or so later, we received another card from Ewan. He was at it again! His parents say that he

has been fired up about Myanmar Hope, telling everyone he knows all about the children at Hope Boarding School. He knows their names, all about where they come from, what their lives were like in their home villages, and more.

He has a passion for telling other people about them. One gentleman was so moved by Ewan's message that he promptly pulled a \$50 bill out of his wallet and handed it to Ewan for the children at HBS. Our little fundraiser went home, put the \$50 bill in a card and sent it to us with the following note: "I was telling people about Myanmar. Someone gave me this for Myanmar. Please send it to them."



Ewan Keith, V.I.P., with some of the beef jerky he collected for Hope Boarding School

Then, before our last trip to Myanmar, Ewan's mother contacted us to ask if there was anything Ewan could collect at his birthday party that the kids at HBS would like. We told her how they all love Beef Jerky. So, in lieu of gifts, Ewan asked his birthday party guests to donate Beef Jerky for HBS. His mother, Jennifer, shared how Ewan has learned so much about Myanmar and HBS through the HBS/SCS partnership program!

Ewan is excited to share with his parents and anyone who will listen all that he learns about Myanmar and HBS.

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



MyHope Newsletter

April 2016

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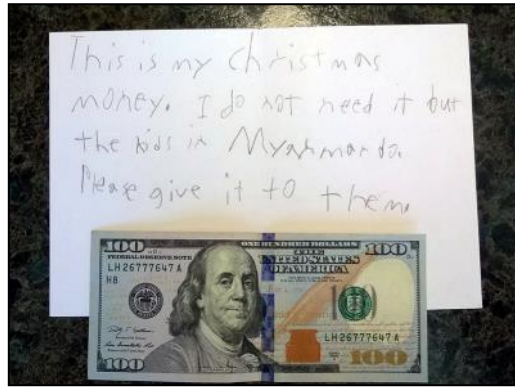
**Bringing the eternal hope of Jesus Christ to the people of Myanmar in a holistic manner
by addressing their spiritual, physical, emotional and educational needs**

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Thanks so much to our friend Laura Crater for initiating the partnership between Springfield Christian School in Springfield, Illinois and Hope Boarding School in Yangon, Myanmar. Through this partnership, little hearts are being shaped daily with a love for God and a love for his people all over the world!

"Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of Heaven." Matthew 19:14



The card from Ewan containing his Christmas money

Current MyHope Needs

Here are some of the most pressing needs for Myanmar Hope Christian Mission at this moment.

- Monthly Pastor Sponsors (15)..... \$60.00
- Jangnoi Christian Church \$10,000.00
- Homalin Christian Church..... \$15,000.00
- Volpabung Christian Church ... \$15,000.00
- Agricultural Project (per acre) ... \$1,500.00
- Electrical Meters for HBS.....\$300.00
- Refrigerator for HBS \$2,200.00
- Palal & Kikim's Budget \$Any Amount
- General Fund Donations.... \$Any Amount

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO GIVE SACRIFICIALLY TO MYANMAR HOPE EACH MONTH!! Your regular donations are what make this work possible.

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