

Myanmar Hope

Christian Mission, Inc.

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

December 2016

Merry Christmas!

How can it be Christmas already? Time seems to fly by so fast it is hard to keep up. But now it is Christmas, and a new year is just around the corner.

As the end of 2016 comes into focus, people will look back in review on all that has happened over the past twelve months. I think most everyone will agree that this has been a very eventful year, to say the least!

We praise God for how He has continued to provide for our family in Myanmar through your prayers and love gifts. Your willingness to be used of God to spread His blessings to those who are most in need is what makes this ministry possible. **Thank you!**

Khongsai Family Update

Merry Christmas to you all from Myanmar. We praise God for His love, provision and care for us for the whole year of 2016. Our family, students, staff, and co-workers are praising and thanking God for all of our friends in America who are praying for and supporting Myanmar Hope Christian Mission.

Our family- Kikim, Solomon, Cherry, Noah, and myself- are well. Solomon is doing great in his studies. His lessons are very good and I really like them all. He also works very hard. He spends most of his time studying and reading.

Cherry is also doing very well in her school work. The teachers appreciate her success in study at the school. She is working hard to get an achievement award again this year. Please pray for her health and studies.

Noah is growing well. He can stand by himself but cannot walk yet. Hopefully, he



Noah, Solomon, and Cherry Khongsai

will be walking soon.

We are so excited about our upcoming trip to America to spend time with friends and churches! It so amazed us that Springfield Christian School children raised the funds for many of our trip expenses. We are so thankful to Laura Crater and her friends who promote the relationship between HBS and SCS. I shared with the congregations in the Tamu area about how SCS is involved in the ministry. It is a great encouragement for the Christians and churches in the northwest. We will see you soon!

We suffered a great loss when Nu Kha (Kikim’s mother) passed away on November 9, 2016. She raised many children and helped our family so much, and also the ministry of MyHope. Nu Kha’s father was a Baptist church pastor. As she grew up in a pastor’s family, she loved God and enjoyed helping the needy. She was a mighty pray-

In This issue

- Greetings1
- Khongsai Family Update1
- Sustainable Ag Project3
- Church Rebuilding3
- SAVE THE DATE!.....4
- Pastor & Family Support5
- Blanket Distribution.....5
- Where’s the Love?5
- Phillippe’s Trip Report6
- Village Christmas Meals.....7
- Piglets Project.....7

er warrior and full supporter of us in the Lord’s ministry.

We have many memories of Nu Kha in our lives. Many friends in the Tamu area attended her funeral and burial services on November 10, 2016. Even many Buddhists from Kanmaygyi village paid homage to Nu Kha on the funeral day as she had given prescriptions for many sick people and healed the sick in the villages.



Palal and Kikim Khongsai

[Editor’s note: Palal and Kikim celebrated their thirteenth wedding anniversary in November while they were in Tamu.]

Our HBS students are doing well too. This season, we have to count three great blessings for which we have prayed for a long time: a 2,000 liter capacity water tank for our girl students, a big refrigerator for food storage and a smaller size freezer for HBS.

This year, our HBS students had a great reputation as some of our students performed a Kuki traditional dance at the government school's annual Parents and Teachers' Association (PTA) meeting and awards day on November 11, 2016. Our students were so well received that the School Board requested us to perform the dance again on January 7, 2016 for the meeting of all high schools in North Dagon Township.



HBS students performing a traditional dance at the annual Parent Teacher Association awards day.

I would like to request you to continue praying for and supporting MyHope. It is slowly growing in many ways and reaching many people's lives. We are very happy as we are working together in the ministry of our Lord Jesus.

God bless you all in the New Year of 2017 as He blessed you in 2016.

God bless you, Palal and Kikim

HBS Update

New Refrigerator and Freezer

We have a new fridge! And a new freezer! Praise God! The staff and students at HBS have been waiting so long for this, and now their prayers have been answered.

Over one hundred students at Springfield Christian School participated in the #Move4Myanmar #Kid2Kid program and raised the necessary funds to purchase a commercial refrigerator and a freezer.



The new refrigerator and freezer

These new additions to HBS will make life so much easier for everyone. No longer will there need to be daily trips to the market for fresh vegetables, meat, and dairy products. The new refrigerator is large enough to store several days worth of food without spoiling, and the freezer will store meat for much longer.

Not only will the new appliances make life easier for the staff, the food will be much healthier for all the kids, since there is no longer any danger of spoiling.

Thank you so much to everyone who participated in #Move4Myanmar!!!

New Water Tank



New 2,000 liter water tank

Thanks to another very generous donation, we were able to purchase a second water tank for the girl's dormitory. The only tank we had was 500 liters, and that wasn't enough for everyone (girl students, staff, and Khongsai family) living in the building. Now we have

an additional 2,000 liter tank. Praise God!

Christmas Outreach

Every Christmas since Hope Boarding School was founded in 2010, we have held a Christmas Outreach program in our neighborhood. The students go around the neighborhood and pass out invitations to all. Then, on Christmas Eve, the students and staff stay up late preparing the tables, hanging decorations, cleaning, and getting everything ready for the big morning.



The students were up late hanging decorations and preparing for the Christmas morning outreach.

The Christmas morning outreach consists of a special breakfast of mohinga (the national dish), Christmas music, fellowship, and a Gospel tract.



The students work hard preparing, serving, greeting, and cleaning up during and after the breakfast.

Of course most of the families around HBS are Buddhist, but that doesn't stop them from coming! They all love mohinga, and they all love our students, who have a very good reputation both in the neighborhood and at the government



Pao Pao and the decorating team painted this large banner to hang in front of the building.

schools where they attend classes. Many of their teachers attend the outreach as well.



Some of the students posing with their teachers who came to the Christmas Outreach breakfast.

Thank you for your generous donations which allow us to share a meal with our Buddhist neighbors on Christmas morning, and share the Good News of Christ with them.



An elderly Buddhist monk decided to enjoy some delicious Christmas mohinga!

Sustainable Agriculture Project Update

Our farm (the “East/West Garden”) continues to grow well, on both sides of the highway. Palal is already planning on how to make use of the sugar cane when they harvest it next year. Not all of it will be able to be sold raw, and so they are planning on distilling the sugar cane juice and making candy for sale in the local markets.

Sugar cane candy is very popular and should sell well, but some day we hope to have a big enough operation to be able to refine sugar for resale to businesses and manufacturing.



Volunteer workers from five different churches came to help out at the farm.

One of the real benefits of the farm to the local people is jobs. During planting and harvesting we are able to employ up to thirty people who would otherwise be unemployed. During the rest of the year we employ a smaller number to keep the ground clean and to maintain the crops. This is in addition to the two families who actually live and work at the farm.

So far, we have nine acres of sugar cane and two acres of rice (used for the two families who live on the farm).

Recently we had some work days at the farm, and about fifty people came from five different villages to volunteer their time and labor to help out. They mainly spent time going up and down the rows, stripping off old dry leaves and then burning them. This helps the sugar cane plants to be more healthy as they mature.

Now, thanks to your generous donations, this winter our workers and volunteers have cleared and cultivated two more acres! These two new acres will grow bananas.

Each year we hope to add more acres to the farm and eventually build it up to a size where the farm can be self-sustaining. If this sort of project interests you, please get involved by helping us to develop more acres.

It costs about \$1,500.00 to initially clear the forest and plant one acre of crops. After that, the costs to maintain that acre are minimal.

If you would like to visit the East/West Garden to see it for yourself, please let us know! Thank you and God bless you.



Clearing two more acres of land. We hire this backhoe and driver from Kalay town.

Church Rebuilding Update

Jagnoi Christian Church’s new building is complete!

Thanks to many generous donations from individuals and churches, this long-needed project has finally been completed.

The remote village of Jagnoi (pronounced “yong-NOY”) is located in northwest Myanmar and is very difficult to reach for outsiders. It is a two day journey from Yangon even in the best of times. Part of the trip requires traveling by boat on the dangerous Chindwin river, where at least a couple of times a year boats capsize and people drown. Earlier this year an overloaded ferry capsized and over one hundred thirty people died.

When Palal visited there in early 2010, just after returning to Myanmar from America, the congregation asked him for help in constructing a permanent building in which they could wor-

To make an online donation go to <http://myanmarhope.org/donate> and click on the “Donate Today” button.



The original Jagnoi Church building.

ship. At that time MyHope had no funds for such an endeavor, so he tabled their request.

When MyHope began our church building project a few years ago, Jagnoi was one of the churches on the list to be constructed. However, due to the remoteness of the village and the small size of the congregation, other churches were higher in priority.

Finally, construction began earlier this year on the new building. Palal visited once to get the project started and to instruct the leaders on how the building should be constructed, to acquire the initial supplies, and to encourage the congregation.



The congregation of Jagnoi Christian Church is very happy with their new brick, concrete and steel building.

The people of the village are very excited, and their many prayers for a new church building have finally been answered.

Pastor Support & Family Support Programs

We are so thankful for the regular gifts received for our poor families and the pastors in northwest Myanmar. The monthly food support that these folks receive really makes the difference between having enough to eat or being hungry.

The funds for the Pastor Support Program enable our leaders to spend time doing the work of ministry, rather than spending six days a week trying to put food on their tables. The amount they receive is not enough to meet all of their needs, but it is enough to give them some much needed margin in their lives so that they can spend time ministering to their flocks.

Unfortunately there are many more pastors and elders who need our help, but we are unable to help them. As it is, we are sending funds each month from the General Fund because there are not enough sponsors to cover the costs. And in those months when the General Fund is short, we have to cut the amount we send for Pastor Support.

Will you pray about sponsoring a Pastor and his family? The amount is only \$60.00 per month. That is enough to provide them with rice and other daily necessities, and allows them time to study their Bibles, prepare sermons, visit their church members, and so on.

If this is something you are interested in, please contact us right away. We can provide you with photos and information about your sponsored pastor, and answer any questions you might have.

This is also a great missions project for a Sunday school class, small group, or even a homeschooling family.

Thank you and God bless you!

Save the Date! The Khongsais 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 anniversary and the visit of the Khongsai family. The dinner will be March 31st, 2017 at the Crown Plaza in Springfield, IL. Between now and then we will need to raise the rest of 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



The Khongsai family will be in America from the end of February through the beginning of May.

U.S. We will announce their trip 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!

Blankets Distribution

Earlier this fall Palal sent a request for funds for blankets. Winter was coming, and the weather was already getting much cooler. The villages where we primarily do our work are up in the hills, at a much higher elevation than Yangon, where Hope Boarding School is.



Winter in Yangon is very pleasant, with temperatures ranging from the low 90's in the day to 60's and low 70's at night. Winter in northwest Myanmar is very pleasant during the day (at least to someone who is used to a mid-western winter) but can be quite cool at night. This is especially true for the native people, who are used to very warm conditions the rest of the year.

The cool night temperatures are especially hard on the elderly. The bamboo huts do not have any sort of climate control such as we are used to in the west. When it is cold outside, it is cold inside. The only fires allowed inside the huts are for cooking, and they are not allowed after a certain time because of the danger of fires. Also, they are not near enough to where the people sleep to keep them warm.



Mrs Lhai Hat, who is over one hundred years old, was very happy to receive a new blanket.

A nice, thick, warm blanket can make a real difference when sleeping on a thin bamboo mat on a floor made of wooden slats. Unfortunately many families are too poor to afford even a warm blanket.

Thanks to your generous donations, we were able to send Palal enough funds to purchase **two hundred new blankets** to distribute to the poor and needy in our villages.

The first blankets went to a group of widows in Tamu and Namihan, close to



The elderly are so thankful, not just for the blankets, but that believers in the West remember them and care about them.

where they were purchased. One widow, Mrs. Lhai Hat of Namihan Village, is over one hundred years old. She is blind and unable to walk, and she was very happy to receive a new blanket. Palal said she prayed for and blessed the donor who gave her the blanket. You can see a short video of her offering thanks and praying for her donor at our public Facebook page.

The blankets will all be distributed by the time this newsletter reaches you. On behalf of all the recipients, we say "Thank you!"

Where is the Love?

[Editor's Note: our new home church, Rainier View Christian Church, recently went through a teaching series titled "Where's the Love?" As part of that series, the leadership encouraged the congregation to share stories of love and hope. MaryAnn and I shared this wonderful story from northwest Myanmar.]

This love story is about a couple that we know in rural northwest Myanmar. His name is Mr. Myint Aung, and her name is Mrs. Nyo Lah. They are former Buddhists who converted to Christianity some time ago.

While they were still Buddhists, they had a thriving business selling hand-woven baskets in the local markets. Relatively speaking they were pretty well off, at least compared to most of their neighbors. Then, after they converted to Christianity, they were abandoned and shunned by their families and their Buddhist neighbors, but their business continued to do well.

As they became familiar with Christian teaching, they began to be very generous with the many poor Christians in their church and village. Myint Aung also became an elder in the church.

Then tragedy struck and Myint Aung was diagnosed with leprosy.

He quickly began to see and feel the effects of this dreaded disease. And even though his form of leprosy was not contagious, everyone in the village was afraid to be near him, even those in the church.

His wife, Nyo Lah, was urged to leave



Myint Aung and Nyo Lah in their old house.

her husband before she, too, caught the disease. Her family blamed the disease on their conversion to Christianity. Others believed that someone had put a curse on Myint Aung. However, she was now a believer in Christ, and she knew that God wanted her to stand by her man.

As his disease progressed, it became increasingly difficult for him to make baskets, fix their house, or do much of anything. After he lost his fingers and thumbs, he could still hold his long knife between his wrists and cut the strips of bamboo, which his wife would then weave into baskets. But this was slow and painful, and the amount of work they could do was much less than before.

Perhaps worse than all of the physical hardships were the emotional and social difficulties. Since everyone in their congregation was afraid to be near them, they were asked not to attend church anymore. This was a severe blow to their faith, yet they remained faithful. They loved attending church, and it was unthinkable to them not to be there to worship God. So, instead of going in through the front door and sitting inside, they would sit behind the church on the ground while they sang, prayed, and listened to the sermon.

At one time during this period, a



Their old house was literally falling down around them, and could not keep out the weather.



Robin Picket and his two daughters, Maggie and Annie, visit with Nyo Lah and Myint Aung outside their new house.

medical group came through their village, and someone gave Myint Aung some medicine for his leprosy. Unfortunately, the instructions for taking the medicine were written in English, and no one knew how to read English. He took the medicine, but in his naiveté he took it all at once, instead of over several months. He nearly died, and when he recovered he had lost most of his eyesight and now walked with a severe limp.

Through all of this his loving wife, Nyo Lah, stayed faithfully by his side and tenderly cared for him, though the voices all around her were continually telling her that she would be better off without him.

By 2011 Myint Aung had become increasingly weak and sick. He was always cold, and their broken down hut could not keep out the wind and cold. He would sit as near to the fire as he could, but since he had lost feeling in his extremities, he was always burning himself, and then his burns would become infected. Nyo Lah had heard that we (my wife and I, along with our ministry partners) were holding a convention in Kalay, a city about fifty miles south of where they lived.

Even though they were desperately poor, and even though she was afraid to leave her husband alone, she made the trip down to Kalay to ask for our help.

She knew that without help her husband would soon die.

When we saw her, we were overjoyed to finally meet this woman whom we had heard so much about. She and Myint Aung had been on our Family Support Program for a few years, receiving a small amount of monthly food aid, so we knew of them and their story. But it was wonderful to meet her in person.

She shared the dire situation with us, and with the other Christians who had gathered there for the convention. Everyone there was moved with compassion for them, and we took up a special collection for them. It was a very emotional and moving time for everyone.



Mrs Nyo Lah, a great example of a godly woman and a testimony of true love.

When we got home we shared their story with our friends and ministry partners, and one of our friends donated the money to rebuild their home. Dr. Nehkholal, our ministry partner in Myanmar, arranged for the youth group in their village to donate all of the labor to tear down the old hut and build a new one.

Since then we have visited with them at their new house several times. Myint Aung has been getting healthier, and now he is even able to again help cut the bamboo for the baskets, using his wrists to hold the knife.

The love that Nyo Lah has demonstrated by faithfully staying with and caring for her sick husband all these years, through extreme poverty, emotional and spiritual pain, and social stigma, is a powerful testimony and a great example of true love.

P.S. We plan to have some of Nyo Lah's baskets at our Ten Year Anniversary Dinner at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield, Illinois on March 31st. If you are in the area, please make plans to attend!

Trip Report from Tim & Mary Fern Phillippe

What an amazing trip we had to Myanmar! We saw and experienced so many amazing and exotic things. It was wonderful to experience God moving in this ancient and beautiful land.

Who would have thought, several years ago, that we would have the opportunity to see the people and churches that Palal and Kikim had told us stories about?

We visited in the home of a family where the husband, Myint Aung, had suffered from leprosy and lost his fingers. It was an inspiration to see he is still cutting strips of bamboo for his wife to use to make beautiful baskets.

It was like a step into another time as we traveled over roads and bridges built by the British during WWII and saw mithun, water buffalo, and oxen pulling carts with wooden wheels. We remembered Palal had told us that our antiques were his country's tools.



Mary Fern and Hat Si (a.k.a. "Wonder Woman")

It was so fun to greet the sweet Tamu preschoolers in their Sunday best and faces painted with thanaka, and to show the teachers what Play-Doh is. You could see how excited they were and how loving the teachers are.



Tim taught the pastors and elders up in Tamu while Palal interpreted for him.

We visited several of the Christian churches in the Northwest and were honored to meet some faithful ministers who serve with such joy in spite of very difficult situations.

Palal's vision has already brought so much to his people. The hospital/clinic, which was built on land donated by MyHope, brings healing to the area. The East West Garden, where the best sugar cane in the area is being grown and harvested, speaks to the hard work and expertise of those

working there.

We also saw many fascinating things in Yangon. But the best part was the children at Hope Boarding School. The whole atmosphere of the campus, staff and children was delightful. It is obvious they love being there and are well-loved and cared for. Their beautiful voices at services and their eagerness in Art classes were heartwarming.

We thank God for the staff at HBS for giving their hearts to this mission and their service to God. We are so blessed to have a small part in this!

Tim and Mary Fern Phillippe

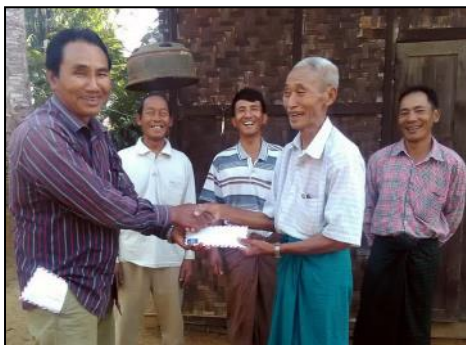
Village Christmas Meals

You set another record! This year we received enough donations to cover forty-three (43!) Village Christmas Meals! That is the most we have ever received yet.

And when we say "Village Christmas Meals" we are talking about **forty-three villages or churches**, not forty-three meals :-)

Actually, the number of villages may be less than the total number of VCM's because some villages are larger and require more food, and some villages are very small and require much less. In those cases the local leaders decide how best to distribute the funds so that as many people as possible get to take part in the Christmas feast.

The total number of villages helped will be announced in January and will be reported here in our next newsletter. Suffice it to say that **hundreds(!) of**



The elders of Valpabung South Christian Church joyfully receive their Christmas Funds from the Believers in America.

families will be able to take part in their annual village or church Christmas feasts this year because of your love gifts. THANK YOU!

Piglets Project

The 2016 Piglets project was started back in the spring of this year as another means of helping the local people to work their way out of poverty. Through I.D.E.S., MyHope received a generous donation from an anonymous donor who wanted the funds used for purchasing farm animals for poor families.



One of the spring piglets has now had her first litter of five—two females and three males.

Palal came up with a plan to make the project more sustainable. His idea was to give the piglets to families who would agree to receive instructions and help from a veterinarian about how to best care for the animals. Then when the sow gave birth to her first litter, two of the piglets would be given back to MyHope. Those would then be given to two more families. In this way the project would be ongoing for a long time.

Now, this winter, the project is starting to bear fruit (or should we say, "piglets")! One of the piglets we gave back in the spring has now given birth to her first litter—two females and three males. When they are old enough, the two females will be given to two other families.

We hope to be seeing a lot more piglets being distributed this winter! Thank you so much to IDES and to the anonymous donor whose gift enabled this project to get off the ground.

We also have received individual donations for piglets to be given to

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- Amy Carmichael



MyHope Newsletter

December 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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poor families. This Christmas, one donor asked that three families receive piglets as gifts, in honor of members of her family. What a special way to celebrate the birth of Christ!



If you would like to make a gift of a piglet for a poor family, you can do that at any time, not just at Christmas. One piglet costs just \$60.00, and will make an incredible difference in the life of a family living in poverty. The average family in the rural northwest lives on \$20.00 per month or less, so purchasing a piglet on their own is out of the question. But you can make a huge impact in their lives by helping them!

Please contact us if you would like to take part in our piglets project.

Thank you and we pray God's blessings upon you and yours in the upcoming new year!

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Current MyHope Needs

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

- Monthly Pastor Sponsors\$60.00
- Homalin Christian Church..... \$15,000.00
- Valpabung Christian Church \$13,000.00
- Agricultural Project (per acre) ...\$1,500.00
- Piglets\$60.00
- Electrical Meters for HBS.....\$300.00
- Tiling for HBS..... \$Any Amount
- 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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