



Myanmar Hope Christian Mission, Inc.

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

Spring 2018

Greetings

It's Spring again in the beautiful Pacific Northwest and we are finally beginning to enjoy some glorious weather and stunning views of Mt. Rainier. Most of the Winter the mountain is shrouded in clouds, so when someone says, "The mountain is out," it means the weather is great!



Beautiful Mt. Rainer as viewed from Spanaway, WA

We hope that you are enjoying a beautiful Spring where you live, as well. Spring always reminds me of the words in Revelation 21:5, "And He who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.'" The beauty of Spring helps to remind us of the new life we have in Christ!

Spring Trip Recap

The MyHope team was blessed again this Spring to lead a trip to Myanmar. This time we had eight people on the team, four of whom had never before been to Myanmar. Our team was made up of:

- **Steve Stewart**, Director of Missions, West Side Christian Church (Springfield, Illinois)
- **Mary Stewart**, Cardiac Nurse (also Steve's daughter), Springfield, Illinois

- **Randy Jones**, Project Manager, IDES, Noblesville, Indiana
- **Ed Sanow**, Director of Training, IDES, Noblesville, Indiana
- **Caren Hughs**, wife of MyHope Board member Kevin Hughs, Springfield, Illinois
- **Missy Farley**, Director of Children's Ministry, Valley View Christian Church, Dallas, Texas
- **MaryAnn Cherry**, Secretary/ Treasurer, Myanmar Hope, Spanaway, Washington
- **Chuck Cherry**, Director, Myanmar Hope, Spanaway, Washington

Following are some reflections on the trip from some of the team members:

Steve Stewart

I always had a lot of respect for Palal as a strong Christian and as a good husband and father. Visiting MyHope confirmed that he is an effective and trustworthy leader and that he is deeply respected and honored by the people he serves. Our financial gifts are converted to effective ministry with eternal significance.

Caren Hughs

My recent visit to Myanmar was truly life-changing for me.

On our way up to the northwest for the Kuki Christian Convention we were able to see many projects that have been finished. Churches built, the New Pathway Home for widows completed, and New Prison ministry established. Many wells built to

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supply clean water. More land has been cleared and planted at the East/West Garden. God is glorified through all of this and I marveled at all that has been accomplished since my last visit four years ago.



Caren at Lallim Christian Church

It was also amazing to see God working in the hearts and minds of so many who attended the Kuki Christian Convention. I think the thing that stuck in my head the most was how grateful all the people were for just being there and how thankful they were to us who attended from America. It was humbling to me to have them thank me for things that I felt were such a small sacrifice for me. In America we have so

much. I don't think we realize what true sacrifice really is. And the message that God wanted me to hear was to understand what true sacrifice is in my life. This is a struggle for me and one that I will be constantly surrendering to God.

I would ask you to join me in surrendering one thing to God so that you can give something to someone who really needs your help. I don't know if that is time, or money, or something else for you.

I promise you it will be rewarding in ways that you never expected.

[Editor's note: Caren is the wife of MyHope Board Member Kevin Hughs, and the mother of Joseph Hughs. Last Summer Joseph married his wife, Rachel, and together they decided to ask for donations to build a church in Myanmar in lieu of wedding gifts. The result was a new building for Lallim Christian Church! We praise God for this wonderful family, all of whom are dedicated to the Lord and his people.]



Caren and Missy in front of the recently completed Lallim Christian Church building

Missy Farley

Wow! My time in Myanmar was absolutely amazing! God taught me so much through this mission journey, my team, and the people of this beautiful country. My life will forever be changed because of this trip and I want to say thank you for your prayers, encouragement, and financial support.

This was my fourth trip to visit Yangoon, Myanmar. However, during this

visit I was also able to visit the northwest region. Our team saw firsthand how God is moving in the northwest through the East/West garden, New Pathway Home, New Hope Outreach Service, the 7th Kuki Christian Convention, Christian churches, and wells that provide clean drinking water in several villages. As Americans, we can learn so much about the concept of community from Myanmar. Wherever we traveled the people were actively seeking to help someone in their community on a daily basis. The way they care for and love one another is truly inspiring and represents the way Jesus lived his life on earth.

Join me in praying for the Gospel to continue to take root so that the Kingdom of Christ can grow in the midst of a place that is often forgotten.

Mary Stewart

I had the opportunity to visit Myanmar Hope Christian Mission this year for the Kuki Christian Convention. I have heard of the work this ministry has been doing for years, but it was such a privilege to be able to witness in person all that God is doing through Palal and Kikim Khongsai in Myanmar.

I was able to grasp the long term vision and plan of MyHope to transform lives in Myanmar through their boarding school, churches, prison ministry, widow's home, among many other community development initiatives.



Steve Stewart and Mary Stewart visiting the New Hope Prison Outreach guest house

The ministry is currently raising funds to build a much-needed fourth floor for the boarding school. It has been so fun to be able to share more about the ministry with my friends and family who are participating in *Move4Myanmar* this year. I can tell them all that MyHope is doing and how much the kids at the boarding school need and deserve this additional space to learn! I feel grateful to be a small part of this amazing ministry.



Palal, Ed, and Randy next to a very successful water project in Canaan Village

Randy Jones, IDES

I was able to spend time with Palal from Myanmar Hope on a recent trip to Southeast Asia. Learning about the ministry and how many things Palal is involved with throughout the country was an eye-opening experience.

The prison ministry and widow's home are two ministries I knew little about before my trip but was impressed by them after spending some time with the ministers and staff.

I was encouraged to see the kids at Hope Boarding School and know that they are being well fed. They are getting an education and an opportunity to learn about Jesus.

As we traveled north to be a part of the Kuki Christian Convention, we also got to stop at churches and homes that IDES has been able to help rebuild after various disasters. Many wells that we've been able to help fund have been installed to provide clean drinking water.

The poor and forgotten in Myanmar are the focal point of this ministry. I saw firsthand the desire to help and provide hope through Jesus.

Ed Sanow, IDES

I spoke with a group of East/West Garden farmers about the dangers of unexploded ordnance, that is, mortars, grenades, mines and other explosive devices that have not exploded. Workers find these devices on the farm, located on the India/Myanmar border, as they clear the jungle for cultivation.



Ed speaks to some of the farm workers concerning the dangers of unexploded ordnance

They consider the metal in these devices as very valuable, without fully realizing the dangers. Since the reason the device did not explode is unknown, the danger of explosion remains. At any rate, the objects still need to be re-

moved from the tillable ground. I told them not to touch, disturb or dig around them, instead to rope them off and call the local authorities. April 4th was the UN International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.

[Editor’s note: Ed is a former Sheriff’s Lieutenant and SWAT team leader.]

7th Kuki Christian Convention

The 7th Kuki Christian Convention was held on the grounds of Namihan Christian Church on March 2-4.

This was a record year for attendance at the convention, with over 1,300 people from various denominations coming from all around to worship God, listen to preaching and teaching from the Bible, and to fellowship with one another.

The theme of this year’s convention was “Witnesses of the Lord”. The biblical foundation came from three main passages of Scripture. First was Isaiah 44:8, “Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? **And you are my witnesses!** Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any.”

The next passage was the familiar

verse from Acts 1:8, “ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and **you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Finally, the third verse that formed the foundation of our convention was Acts 5:32, “**And we are witnesses** to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”



The team gathered for a photo at the convention

Steve Stewart, Caren Hughs, Randy Jones, Ed Sanow, Chuck Cherry, MaryAnn Cherry, and Dr. T. Lunkim preached and taught on the above passages throughout the weekend sessions.

In between the teaching and preaching there were many special songs, presented by both by the Kuki Youth Choir and many individuals and groups from the area churches. There were several performances of traditional Kuki dancing by various groups of children, and of course there was much congregational singing and dancing as well.

One aspect of the convention that everyone looks forward to are the community meals, which are provided for all the people who attend. This is made possible in part by the many donations from you in America.

One great thing that set this year’s convention apart was that the rice for the meals came from our own East/West Garden!

This was a wonderful blessing and a



The outdoor stage for the Seventh Kuki Christian Convention at Namihan Church

great encouragement to all, and perhaps a foretaste of what will be in the years ahead. Everyone at Myanmar Hope Christian Mission is dedicated to helping the Christian family in northwest Myanmar to become self-supporting, no longer relying on donations from the West to help feed, clothe, and care for the people. Initiatives like the East/West Garden will help to make that vision a reality, along with your ongoing help and with the blessings from God.

Thank you for your prayers and donations which helped the 2018 Kuki Christian Convention to be such a success. Our next convention will be held in 2020, and we hope that it will be even bigger and better!

New Hope Prison Outreach

On the main road that runs north and south between Tamu and Kalay, located about ten miles north of Kalay, is a large prison called the Mawlaikalay Prison. It houses approximately 2,400 inmates, of which about 400 are Christians or from Christian families (meaning they are not Buddhist or Muslim).

Many of the Christian prisoners are from villages and families that Palal knows well, and some are even close relatives of students at Hope Boarding School. Most of the men in the prison

are there because of opium addiction, or because they were caught selling or carrying opium. However, some are in because of obvious miscarriages of justice, or because they were set up by malicious neighbors.

Palal has passed by that prison hundreds of times, and each time he thought about the prisoners and their families. However, last December, as he was passing by the prison, he says he felt such a strong urge to do something for the prisoners and their families that he had to pull over to the side of the road and pray.

The Lord gave him a vision for a new prison outreach that would serve the prisoners and their families. He meditated on the passage from Hebrews 13:3, "Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the Body."

The villages where the Christian prisoners come from are far away from the prison. In addition, there are no hotels or restaurants nearby, and the bus from Tamu only passes by once per day. Since there is nowhere for visitors to sleep or cook food, the prisoners and their families rarely get to see each other.

Palal had the idea that if a guest house was made available near the prison for visiting families, where they could sleep overnight and have a place

to cook food, many more families would be able to visit, and also bring food and clothing to the men in prison. (The conditions in the prison are very bad, and the prisoners do not get enough food to eat. Most of them rely on gifts from their families to sustain them).

It so happened that the man who used to be our van driver for trips along the main road, who is a Christian, owns an old house on a small plot of land, just a mile or so from the prison. Palal found out that he had recently put his land up for sale and moved into a house in Kalay.

Palal contacted him about selling his house to us for use as a guest house and headquarters for a new prison ministry. He was very encouraged about this and was happy to sell his land for such a purpose. He agreed to sell for \$20,000, which is less than the market price.

He also agreed to allow us to move in right away, but said he needs to have the funds no later than August of this year because he needs the money for his home and business. Myanmar Hope gave him a down payment of \$4,000, and is paying \$50.00 per month for rent in the meantime. We have \$3,000 in savings for this project, so we will still need to raise \$13,000 by August.

In preparation for the new outreach, Palal gathered the church leaders for a retreat, where they prayed and discussed the new ministry. He also went with some church leaders to visit the prison on a number of occasions, discussing his plans with the prison officials. While there he preached to over two hundred Christians gathered for a Christmas service. After the service many of the prisoners thanked him for coming, asked about their families, and requested Bibles and other Christian resources.

In January, Pastor Sei Kho Lal, along with his wife and children, moved from



Palal with families and ministers in front of the house we hope to purchase for the new prison ministry.



Pastor Sei Kho Lal and his wife

their village near Tamu down to the guest house. They will be leading the New Hope Prison Outreach ministry. One of their first official acts as leaders of the new ministry was to begin distributing Bibles to the prisoners who had requested them.

Since January, many families have stayed at the guest house, from where it is an easy walk to the prison. They are so very thankful to finally be able to visit their men (and women) living in the prison, and to bring them food, clothing, and other gifts. Some of them had not seen each other in several

years!

Please pray for this important, new ministry. A small church has formed inside the prison, and they are urgently requesting more Bibles and training materials. As word is getting around to the villages that it is now possible to visit their relatives in prison, more and more people are coming.

We need to raise the funds to purchase the land as soon as possible, and for sure, by August at the latest. Please help us with this task, as we cannot do it without you! God bless you, and please remember to pray for the prisoners.

[Editor's note: Some time in the future I will write about why so many Christians are caught in the terrible trap of opium addiction. The situation is tragic, as thousands of families in Myanmar, India, and Thailand are caught in the crossfire of trafficking illegal drugs and guns around the world.]

New Pathway Home

MyHope partnered with Christian Horizons, Inc. to build and staff a senior home in Northwest Myanmar called the New Pathway Home.

It is the first home of its kind in this area. At the dedication ceremony people came from all around to see it. Many



community leaders, pastors, and others, including leaders from the Buddhist community, were very interested about this new way of helping older widows living in extreme poverty.

Many elderly widows live in poverty for various reasons. Some because their children's families have left their villages for other places in order to find work. Others, because their children have all passed away, or are unable to care for them because of their own poverty. The extended families of these women are usually far away, because the widows left their home village when they married. The reasons are varied, but the end result is the same—these widows are suffering and need help.

When Palal was in the U.S., he visited several senior care facilities that were owned and operated by Christian Homes (now Christian Horizons). He was amazed at the level of care provided to the elderly in America, in addition to all of the government programs designed to help meet their needs. He developed a vision of providing something similar for his people when he got back home.

While it took several years to come to



The New Pathway Home in Tamu



New Pathway Home Residents

fruition, with the help of Christian Horizons, the new care home was finally built toward the end of last year.

The initial plan was to provide a home for six widows and two caregivers (husband and wife). The six were chosen from different villages, some of them very remote. The pastors of the churches from those villages got together and agreed as to who they thought was the most needy.

After the six widows arrived and settled in, we arranged for a local doctor to give them all a checkup. Every one of them told us that this was the first time in their lives they had actually spoken to a real doctor. None of them had ever been to a doctor's office or to a hospital. Thankfully, they were all relatively healthy, considering their ages and backgrounds.

It was soon evident that the women did not like sleeping in rooms by themselves. At night they would bring their mats into the main room and sleep on the floor, together.

Their rooms were large enough for two beds, so we quickly added four more widows. Now the women could sleep more comfortably in their beds and not be lonely or scared.

Every time Palal visited the home, the women expressed such joy and thanksgiving. They were amazed at the fact that they had enough food to eat every day! They all said their lives were peaceful now, and they felt secure and

at home. They even jokingly called Palal their "Father" because he was providing for them the way a father provides for his children.

In March the trip team from America visited the New Pathway Home and spent time with the women living there. It was a moving experience for all.

After the team returned to Yangon, some of us were hanging out one evening in Palal and Kikim's home at HBS when Palal received a call from the pastor of Valpabung South Christian Church regarding the New Pathway Home.

"Please, I will sleep on the ground outside, or on the veranda. I am homeless and I have nothing to eat."

He said that an elderly widow had walked from her village, several miles from there, and came to his home. She said she had heard about the New Pathway Home and begged him to let her stay there.

"I am sorry, but the home is already full, there is no more room," he told her.

"Please, I will sleep on the ground outside, or on the veranda. I am homeless and I have nothing to eat. Please just let me have food to eat each day, and I will not take up any room," she pleaded.

Pastor Jam Pao then got on the phone

with Palal and asked what he should do. Palal told him to wait while we discussed the matter.

What should we do? We did not have a sponsor for her, to cover the extra food and medical expenses for another resident. There was no room to add an extra bed, and we certainly were not going to allow her to sleep on the ground.

One of the trip team members quickly said he would cover the fifty dollars per month to feed her, or find someone who would. Palal said they could find the extra funds necessary for her medical care when needed. So that part was taken care of. But where would she sleep?

Palal said, "There is a storage closet that is large enough to hold a small bed and table. The caretakers can move the items in there out to the bamboo hut." The original house on the property, which is no longer fit to be used as a home, is still standing and is now being used for storage.

So that took care of a room for her. The next question asked was more hypothetical. "If we allow her to stay, the word might get out that the New Pathway Home is taking in new residents. They might be overwhelmed with widows coming and asking to live there."

How would we handle that? The building is not big enough for any more residents. It was finally decided that MyHope would cross that bridge when we come to it. But for now, it was decided: we had to allow this homeless and hungry woman to stay.

So, the New Pathway Home now has eleven widows, almost twice what we originally planned for. With the exception of the extra fifty dollars per month pledged that evening, the home is still operating within its original budget amount of \$1,000.00 per month. This covers food, clothing, medical care, fur-

niture and equipment, transportation, and salary for the caretakers. Any funds left over at the end of the month are saved for future medical emergencies or other needs that might arise.

East/West Garden

The East/West Garden continues to grow, thanks to your generous help. So far there are eighteen acres under cultivation, two houses, several outbuildings, and two wells.

The farm has also been adding to the livestock herd, and now there are four cows and two calves. We hope to add more cows this year, so that by the end of the year we will have at least ten total.

This spring the farm was able to hire enough workers to replace several acres of sugar cane. The previous crop produced three harvests, and it was time to dig it up and plant new. The workers were paid with funds received from the previous harvest. They were very glad to have the work, since unemployment in the area is very high and jobs are scarce.

Palal and the men living and working on the farm are exploring different ways of bringing water to the farm. There is a small stream that flows by the farm, but it usually runs dry in the hot season.

They are looking at various options, such as using solar pumps to get water from our wells, but also at a lower-tech solution of piping water down from the hills across the border in India. There is a good stream up there that would pro-



Some of the East/West Garden workers

vide more than enough water, but Palal needs to negotiate with the chief of that area for water rights. Please pray for him as he enters negotiations later this Summer.

The farm also needs to have another family live on the north end of the west side of the farm. This area is out of sight of the other houses, and there has been some theft of our fence posts and even some fruit trees. These items are stolen by people who are addicted to opium and then sold for cash. If we had another house and family on that end of the farm, it would discourage people from coming on the property to steal.



It costs about \$2,000.00 to build a house on the farm. Will you please consider helping to meet this need? Thank you.

Many New Wells

Thanks to the generosity of I.D.E.S. and a good friend who is very passionate about clean water projects, there have been several new wells installed at churches and villages, and even one at the Bokkan High School.

One especially encouraging story reminds us of the very first well that was provided by funds from MyHope. The villagers are calling it a "miracle well".

When the diggers got to the village and chose the spot for the well, the people told them they would have problems. "You won't find water there unless you dig down at least forty-five feet."

Our well diggers do not like digging down past twenty-five feet or so, because it is very dangerous. Deeper than



A new well showing the concrete sleeves

that it becomes hard to breathe, and in case of a cave-in it would be nearly impossible to pull the worker out.

They had to put the well in that place, though, so they decided to take their chances.

They dug down to twenty-five feet and did not hit water. The villagers basically said, "We told you so." But our guys were not ready to give up, so they decided to dig down a few more feet.

When they got to twenty-seven feet, they hit a spring! In fact, the water started filling up the well so fast that the worker could barely get out. Once the water calmed down, they had to continually fetch the water out of the well so they could at least level out the bottom in order to put in the concrete sleeves.



A recently completed well

Once the sleeves were in place, they measured the depth. The well was thirty feet deep and the water in the well was ten feet deep. They are quite sure that this well will continue producing good water, even during the dry season. The whole village was amazed at this new "miracle well"!

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- Amy Carmichael



MyHope Newsletter

Spring 2018

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Hope Boarding School Update

The school year ended in March, and now the students are on Summer break. Most of the ones who finished high school have returned to their villages to await the results of their final exams. The rest of the students stayed in Yangon this year for extra studying, instead of going home to their villages.

Palal and the pastors and elders have been going through the selection process for new students, and they have finalized the list of children who will be

coming to Yangon for the start of the next school year. The new students will be arriving in May, in time to prepare for the start of school at the beginning of June.

Soon there will be twelve new students at HBS! If you are currently sponsoring one of the students who finished this year, MaryAnn will be contacting you to ask about sponsoring one of the new students. If you have never sponsored a student and would like to, or would like more information, please call or write to us as soon as possible.



L-R: Cherry, Noah, Palal, Solomon, Mary, Kikim

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