



Myanmar Hope

Christian Mission, Inc.

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

Summer 2020

Greetings

Wow, what a year! And it’s just barely half over now! So much has happened to disrupt our lives already and, looking forward to the months ahead, it seems like things could get a lot worse before they get better. This year, 2020, will definitely go down as a year to remember.

No matter what happens, though, we can take comfort in the fact none of what has happened has taken God by surprise. His love never fails, his tender mercies are forever, and we know that He always has our best interests in mind. As the Psalmist said:

“Sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name. For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.” Psalm 30:4-5

Along with all of you, we are looking forward to that joyful morning!

COVID-19 Hunger Relief

In our previous edition we put out a call for help for the many remote villages affected by the strict COVID-19 lockdowns implemented by the Myanmar Government. We are happy to report that many of you responded with extreme generosity!

In April of this year, the Myanmar central government in Naypyidaw began issuing lockdown restrictions across the country in an attempt to slow the spread of the latest coronavirus pandemic. These re-

strictions and self-quarantine orders were particularly hard on the rural people, most of whom are day laborers.

The villagers were restricted to their homes and not allowed to go out to work. The vast majority of these people live in poverty, and have no savings to fall back on in an emergency.

To make matters worse, there are no government stimulus programs, no unemployment insurance, and no such thing as community food banks. A few areas did receive some help from the government, but most of the people living in the areas where we work received nothing at all.

It was not long before the people were experiencing extreme hunger. Any extra food that anyone might have had was quickly gone. The people began to get desperate, risking arrest to go into the forests to forage for whatever food they could find.

In This issue:

Greetings	1
COVID-19 Hunger Relief	1
IDP Camp Relief	2
New Pathway Home	3
Sulpi Coffee Project	4
East/West Garden	5
Fire Victims Update	7
IDP Camp Pictures	8

Many local pastors and village leaders began calling Palal, asking if there was anything MyHope could do to help.

We started informing people of the situation right away, both through this newsletter, through our website, and through social media. The response was both overwhelming and very encouraging!

During the period from April 15th through June 30th, you all donated enough funds that we were able to help over 1,500 households in sixty-three different villages. These are people who would otherwise have not received any help at all.



The families of Bangala Village are so happy to have food!



Bringing food to the remote villages

Our volunteers risked life and limb to distribute over 1,350 100 lb. bags of rice. Some of the villages were so remote that the only way to get close was to use motorized canoe boats. The villagers would meet the volunteers at the river bank, then carry the rice on their backs the several miles back to their villages in the hills.

Some of the villages were high in the mountains, and the rice had to be transported on motorcycles. The roads to these villages are very dangerous.

We are so thankful that there were no accidents among the many boats, trucks, busses, motorcycles, or cars that were used in the distribution efforts!

Our volunteers, many of them young men and women, were so happy to be the ones delivering the much needed food to these desperate villagers. They said, "We cannot afford to help with



They are saved! Now they can eat again!

money, but we can use our strength to help." We could not have done this relief without them, and without the local leaders, like Pastor Jam Let of Joljam Village, who helped coordinate and plan the effort.

And of course, none of it would have been possible without your very generous donations! Thank you and may God bless you!



Happy to have food again!

Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp Relief Project

In late May, Palal received a call for help from several families that had fled the fighting in the western part of the country. They had settled into a temporary village, and had been officially designated as "Internally Displaced Persons". We cannot give the name or location of the camp due to security reasons, but there are 125 families from six different townships in Rakhine State.

Half of the families are Buddhist, and half are Christian. A group of people in a township on the outskirts of Yangon allowed them to set up a temporary camp.

Palal and Kikim visited the camp several times to assess the needs and establish the necessary connections with the camp leaders and local government officials.

After several visits and many discussions, both in person and on the phone, Palal requested the following help:

- Immediate food aid for all families
- A bamboo school building for the children (165 children grades K-10)
- 13 new bamboo houses for the poorest families

After additional consultations, it was determined that the families needed more help in the form of drinking water and electricity. The camp only had three hand-dug wells and no electricity.

Families were using candles for lighting at night. This was barely sufficient for cooking and other activities, but it was also dangerous in terms of the possibility of fire breaking out among the dry bamboo and thatch shelters.

There were no generators or electrical lighting at all in the camp, which also made for a dangerous environment just for walking around after dark.

We finally settled on how much money was needed to meet these basic needs, and issued a call for help on our Facebook page. We also requested a grant from IDES.

The response from our friends on Facebook was good, and IDES generously provided a grant for the additional funds needed. **[Note: since this was written, an additional 132 families have moved into the camp, for a total of 257. Our grant was for 125 families, so there are still many families**



This woman's temporary house is typical in the camp



Receiving a new solar power and light system

in need. Please help these families if you can by making a donation of any amount.]

Work was begun immediately on the new houses, digging a new well, and purchasing solar lighting equipment for all of the homes in the camp.

In early July work was begun on the new school building and, at the time of this writing, it is nearly completed.

The families were overwhelmed with gratitude and joy at the help they received from MyHope and IDES. Whereas before they were completely hopeless and in despair, now they have hope that maybe they will pull through this terri-

ble disaster.

Thank you to everyone who gave for this project, and thank you to IDES for coming through again to help the needy people of Myanmar!

Please check our Facebook page for more photos and videos of this project, and all the projects discussed in this newsletter. (A link is at the bottom of the previous page.)

New Pathway Home



The coronavirus pandemic forced the lockdown of the NPH, which in turn prevented our newest residents from coming there to live. Fortunately, in mid-June the restrictions were lifted enough that some of our widows who have been waiting patiently were finally able to move in.

During that time we were able to finish up the remaining plumbing and electric work on the second floor, and to purchase some custom made furniture for the new rooms. Here are the newest residents that have been able to move in. More will follow.

Ms Hat Nei

Ms Hat Nei is 52 years old, from Namihan village near Tamu. She married Mr Peter in 1987 and together they had five children. Unfortunately, he died



Ms Hat Nei with her daughter Miss Cham Kim

of a lung disease in 2003. Two sons and one daughter are married.

She was forced by her husband's relatives to leave home after her husband's death. (This is an old, cultural tradition that goes back hundreds of years. It is one reason there are so many homeless widows.)

Hat Nei did not have any way to live on her own, so she went to her brother's house with her youngest daughter, Miss Lam Cham Kim (Cham Kim) who is now in 5th grade.

Ms Hat Nei could not stay very long with her brother as his family is large and very poor. She was doing laundry for another family for a small income, but it was not enough to allow her to live on her own with her daughter.

She and her daughter, Miss Cham Kim, came to live at the New Pathway Home on July 1st, 2020. Now they are very happy and they praise God for this great opportunity for them!

Ms Mong Nei Chong

Ms Mong Nei Chong is 38 years old, from Nanpalong in Tamu. She married Mr Ngul Za Thang in 2000 and together they had five children. Her husband suf-



Palal is preparing to distribute rice to the families at the IDP camp

fers from mental illness and tried to kill her several times. Finally, they got divorced.



Ms Mong Nei Chong and her son, Thong Mang

She took her two younger children, Thong Hao Mang (boy) and Lam Then Hoi (girl), to live with another family in Yangon in November 2019. Tragically, her daughter died in April 2020 when she fell into a water tank and drowned.

Mong Nei Chong then came back to Tamu with her son to live with her parents. Her ex-husband found out, and starting causing many problems for her all the time. Unfortunately she had no job and no way to move to a safer place to live.



Mrs Lhai Kho Neng

She and her son lived in great fear of her ex-husband, so much so that they were afraid to go to sleep at night.

They moved into the NPH in early July, and now they can finally sleep peacefully at nights, knowing that they are in a safe place.

In addition to their physical and emotional safety, they now have plenty of food and all of their other basic needs are being met.

Thank you to everyone who gives generously to help all of the widows, and now children as well, at the New Pathway Home!

Mrs Lhai Kho Neng

Mrs Lhai Kho Neng, age 72, is from Bangala village in Layshi Township. Her husband died in 2001 and she lived with one of her son's family in Bangala village.

Her son's family is very poor and cannot provide for her needs. She has many difficulties for her living.

She came to the New Pathway Home during the Covid 19 restriction and we sent her back to her relatives in Tamu Township to wait until the situation settled down.

Finally, she came to the New Pathway Home on July 19, 2020. She now has all of her needs met and she is very thankful for this great opportunity to stay at the New Pathway Home.

Mrs Kim Kho Vah

Mrs Kim Kho Vah is 55 years old. She and her husband had five children and they all grew up and got married. Her husband died about 30 years ago, and then she was forced by her husband's relatives to leave her children. (This is because of an old, cultural tradition dating back hundreds of years.)

She has no job and has no income. She was in a great need of help for her housing and everyday living. She never



Mrs Kim Kho Vah

could sleep at her brother's home, and she lost a lot of weight.

She came to the New Pathway Home on July 1st, 2020. Now she is comforted and very happy, as she is surrounded by many friends. She enjoys singing, praying and fellowship with the other residents.

Sulpi Village Coffee Project Update

The coffee project at Sulpi Village is going very well. In May and June Palal began purchasing and collecting the coffee saplings to be delivered in late June. Over 11,000 saplings were needed, and so it took some effort to collect them all.

During this time, the families participating in the project continued the massive effort of clearing the forest around the village and digging the 11,000 one



Coffee seedlings ready for planting



Coffee seedlings ready for planting

meter square holes in which the saplings would be planted. I'm not sure if they have finished digging all 11,000 holes, but they have made great progress.

There are eleven families in the project, and each family gets to farm one acre of forest. Each acre can support up to one thousand coffee trees. It takes an incredible amount of effort to prepare an acre of steep mountain forest for planting coffee, but the families are used to hard work and are very eager workers!

We look forward to watching the pro-



A future coffee farm

gress of the new coffee trees as they grow and begin producing fruit over the next few years. During that time we will be working with the leaders of Sulpi Village to determine the optimal way of bringing the coffee beans to market.

Please pray for wisdom and discernment through this process. It is a learning experience for all of us, and we need as much guidance from the Lord as He will give us. Thank you to everyone who has given generously to fund this project thus far. We pray that God will richly bless you for your gifts and prayers!

East/West Garden Project Update

There has been a lot of activity at the East/West Garden since our last newsletter. A couple of new calves were born, and our little herd was outgrowing the original cowshed. So, using some of the remaining funds from our doTERRA grant, we built a new cowshed that should be big enough for a few more years.

A Cashew Orchard

In May Palal received a gift of cashew seeds from a friend of his who grows cashews near Yangon. He brought them to the farm, where they were planted in growing containers and put into a shaded enclosure. The seeds grew very well, and in July land was cleared to plant a new cashew orchard. A total of 770 cashew trees were planted.

There were more cashew seedlings than we would plant at the East/West Garden, so Palal gave out the extras to local farmers in the area, with instructions for planting them.

The cashews will take a few years before they are mature enough to produce fruit, but we look forward to another potential income stream for the farm and farm families.

Most people in the west are only familiar with cashew nuts, which can be one of the more expensive of snacking nuts. However, the cashew tree produces a fruit along with the nut, called a



Some of the HTS students preparing the cashew seeds in the growing medium for later replanting

“cashew apple.”

The cashew apple, also called cashew fruit, is the fleshy part of the cashew fruit attached to the cashew nut. The top end of the cashew apple is attached to the stem that comes off the tree. The bottom end of the cashew apple attaches to the cashew nut, which is encased in a shell.

The nut is used in Asia and Southeast Asia in many forms and in many delicious culinary dishes. It is ground into a paste, chopped up, or used whole.

The cashew apple can be eaten fresh, cooked in curries, or fermented into vinegar, as well as an alcoholic drink. It is also used to make preserves, chutneys, and jams in some countries such as India and Brazil.

Care must be taken during the harvesting of the cashew fruits and nuts, because the fruit produces an oil which can react on the skin like poison ivy or poison oak. Because of this, Palal will hold some training at the farm for the



The cows are at home in their new barn



Laying out and planting the orchard

workers and local farmers on the proper methods for harvesting and processing the fruits and nuts.

Lychee Fruit and Stink Beans

In addition to the cashew trees, Palal and the farm workers planted 260 lychee fruit trees and an additional 40 “stink bean” trees.



Lychee fruit

Lychee fruit is a tropical fruit that grows on trees mainly in China, India, and Southeast Asia. The outside of the fruit is pink-red, roughly textured and inedible, covering sweet inner flesh that is eaten in many different dessert dishes.



“Stink beans” (jonglha)

Stink beans, sometimes called “Monkey Cry Fruit,” is another popular tree fruit that is common and highly regarded in northwest Myanmar and northeast India, especially in Manipur state. The Kuki people call it “jonglha” and they really love it. The botanical name for the tree is “parkia speciose.”

The tree bears long, flat edible beans with bright green seeds the size and shape of plump almonds, which have a rather peculiar smell, similar to, but stronger than that of the shitake mushroom.

Sometimes the stink beans are called “monkey cry fruit” because monkeys also love eating them. The branches of the trees on which the beans grow are very high above the ground, and are quite fragile and break easily. When a monkey is brave enough to venture out onto one of the branches to grab the beans, sometimes the branch will break, sending the crying monkey tumbling to the ground.

Agricultural Meeting

In July Palal invited the village chairmen from several different regions to come to Tamu for a discussion and planning meeting to address the many issues plaguing farmers these days.

The Kabaw Valley has experienced climate changes over the past decade, with summers becoming drier and rains being less predictable than before. This has been devastating to the local farm-

ers who only know how to farm in the traditional ways that they grew up with.

New farming methods and even new and different crops, including more drought-resistant varieties, are needed in order to combat the losses sustained due to the changing climate.

The leaders discussed the leading issues and shared the situations in their local areas. Most of these leaders are looking to Palal for solutions, as he is the most educated among them, and he also has the most formal agricultural training, having attended training seminars in both Myanmar and Thailand.



Agricultural meeting at the NPH

Additional Training Needed

Palal is seeking additional training opportunities, especially in areas such as aquaculture, aquaponics, and hot-house growing techniques.

These types of training are generally not available in Myanmar yet, so some travel will be involved in order for Palal to attend these trainings.

In particular, there are some organizations in Israel that are pioneers in advanced agricultural methods that provide training, and we are looking into the feasibility of getting Palal into some of these sessions.

Israel has proven to the world that her farmers know how to turn deserts into gardens. These farmers and producers are keen to share the invaluable knowledge they have acquired, both in terms of techniques and technologies, to developing nations all around the world. For instance, one group provides training in the following courses:

- Advanced Agriculture Methods
- Farm Management
- Biological Pesticides and Pollination
- Food Safety and Security
- Water Management
- Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship
- Organic Farming
- Aquaculture

If you are interested in helping the farmers in northwest Myanmar in general, and the East/West Garden in particular, please consider a generous donation to help fund more training for Palal and the local farmers. Thank you!

Fire Disaster Update

In our last newsletter we mentioned that in April, several homes had been destroyed by fire and that IDES had generously provided a grant to help the affected families to rebuild.

The new houses were finished in May and, at the dedication service held by the pastors and elders, the families were also provided with new household items, cooking utensils, farming supplies, and five bags of rice.

The families are very happy for their new houses and for all the other supplies which they would never have been able to collect by themselves. All the villagers were so amazed because of the blessings given to the fire victims. They all praised God for His provision.

One of the victims, Mrs Neng Ja Lhing (wife of Mr Mang Min Len) shared that she was pregnant while her house burned down, and she was so distraught,

depressed, and hopeless when they lost their house to the fire. She did not know what they would do or how they would survive.

However, now she has delivered a healthy new baby girl at the Tamu Hospital, and she also now has a new house for her family! She is so thankful to God and to IDES for being so good to her and her family.

All of the families were overwhelmed at the help they received. Everyone in the area said they had never seen this kind of relief before. **Thank you, IDES!**



Two fire victim families, before and after



The home of Mr Hol Kho Pao destroyed by fire



Ms Vei Lhing, blind and deaf widow, before and after



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



MyHope Newsletter

Summer 2020

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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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IDP Camp Relief Pictures



Happy families receiving gifts of food



New temporary school building for the children living in the IDP Camp



Lighting provided by the new solar kits



New water tower for the new well

Most Pressing Needs:

- IDP Camp Relief\$30
- Monthly Sponsors for Widows\$50
- Monthly Sponsors for Families\$30
- Monthly Sponsors for Pastors\$60
- Motorcycles for Pastors\$800
- Monthly Sponsors for Khongsai Family
Suggested Amount.....\$50
- Monthly Sponsors for General Fund
Suggested Amount.....\$50
- Agricultural Training Any amount

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