

Rice Bowl

MISSION



Global Mission's Myanmar Newsletter

July 2019



PCANZ Global Mission Coordinator Phil King with sponsored students at Tahan Theological College. These students all come from the troubled area of Paletwa in the southern Chin State. Financial support for their fees eases the pressure on their families who have been hit by severe disruption and rising food costs, due to conflict in their region. Read more about the situation in the Rakhine and southern Chin State inside this latest edition of Mingalaba.

Global Mission Coordinator Phil King visited Myanmar in June for a Round Table meeting with the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar (PCM) and several other church partners. While he was there, he checked on projects supported by the Ricebowl Mission, and met with Wayne and Helen Harray at Tahan Theological College. Although it was a short visit, it was vital in keeping the relationship with the PCM up to date, and it was also valuable meeting with other church partners who support the mission of the PCM. Wayne and Helen Harray are well-settled in their new home on campus and making good progress in their respective roles as Partners in Mission. Myanmar. There is lots to celebrate in our partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar. Read on for more news ...



Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

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News from the Harrays at Tahan Theological College (TTC)

The PCANZ's Wayne and Helen Harray have been serving at TTC in Myanmar for about a year now. Wayne is developing TTC's land into a demonstration farm that will also serve as a food and income source for the College. Helen has been appointed head of the College's B.A. English programme. This is keeping them both very busy as they serve in their respective areas and also fulfil other roles on campus. These photos give a brief insight into some of their projects. See the back page for information about donating to their work. You can keep up with Wayne and Helen on their blog, <https://helenharry.com/>



Top: The new guesthouse that Wayne and Helen are living in on the TTC campus. They had a lot of input into the design so they feel at home in their new accommodation.
Above left: The first-fruits of the sasha inchi bean that Wayne has planted as a cash crop for the farm.
Above right: Inspecting the sasha inchi vines.
Below left and below right: In July, TTC students were given a day off their studies and helped with a day planting timed to catch the benefits of the rainy season.

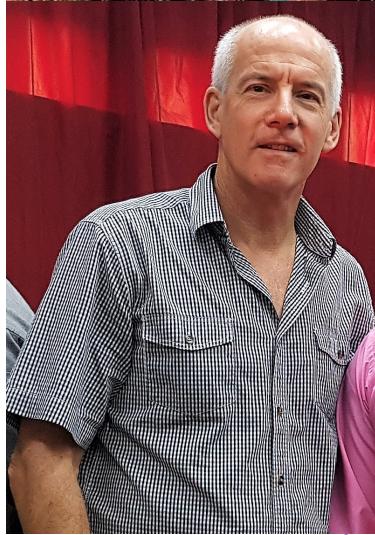


These photos:

Looking towards the Chin Hills from the TTC farm; Helen beside a concrete pad funded by a PCANZ congregation. This provides female hostel students with dry ground when doing their laundry; Wayne inspects the farm; some of Helen's English students; farm workers weeding in the hot sun; Wayne and Helen's mode of transport around Tahan.



Projects and People Supported By Your Donations



Top Left: Augcheng Church in the Chin State has been completed, supported by Global Mission.

Top Right: Young adults outside Canbong Church in Matupi, Chin State; another building project supported by Global Mission.

Above left: Rev Chawng Siam Liana, a sponsored M. Divinity student in Yangon. Above right: Nurse Aid students from the Chin State receiving Global Mission sponsorship. Their studies give them hope for the future and keeps them from being trafficked to other parts of Asia as migrant workers.

Left: PCANZ funded a water project at TTC several years ago. The water was flowing when Phil King visited in June.

Below: Members of the PCM Partners Round Table meeting observing the tailoring training project that Global Mission sponsored several times. Scores of women have benefitted from this training and are now earning an income for their families.



Going Global to Myanmar January 2020

You are invited to visit Myanmar in January. There is still time to apply for the Going Global programme that was originally aimed at young adults, but is now open to all ages. The team will learn about the PCANZ's relationship with the PCM, and the work of Wayne and Helen Harry; and support the English programme at Tahan Theological College. Contact Global Mission Coordinator Phil King for more information,



PCM Partners Round Table meeting

Phil King was asked to chair this meeting which included partners from several churches around the world. The PCM gave an overview of their current mission context and shared some hopes for future development. The partners will try and maintain contact with each other to help build momentum and efficiency in their support for the PCM.

Rakhine State and southern Chin State

One of the issues that church partners were eager to learn more about was the violence and unrest in the Rakhine State involving the Rohingya Muslims. This has been a hot topic in world media with a lot of criticism levelled at Myanmar's leaders as a result. The meeting learned about the complexity of this situation. The Rakhine State is a very complicated situation involving a cocktail of ethnic unrest. While not denying the scale of violence and impact on innocent victims, some militant Rohingya have been perpetrators of violence. The unrest involves disputes between three armies: the Arakan (Rakhine) State Army who are Buddhist separatists seeking independence for the Rakhine State; the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, and the Myanmar military. These three have caused much violence in the Rakhine and in the southern Chin State (here the fighting is between the Arakan Army and the Myanmar army). In the southern Chin State, some PCM members and missionaries have had to evacuate due to the fighting. Travel is restricted and food costs have soared, making life very difficult. The Presbyterian Church of Myanmar mission field of Paletwa is in the southernmost area of the Chin State where these problems are occurring, so the PCM has significant involvement there. Here the problems are with the Arakan Army, not the Rohingya, as the Arakan Army camp is located near Paletwa. Both Christian and non-Christian civilians have been indirect victims of fighting that has occurred. Further comments were made that the Rohingya issue has decreased and the Arakan Army was the biggest concern, and that the problems in Paletwa have increased. The situation is complicated by the fact that the members of the PCM are themselves an ethnic minority in their own country (they are all Chin people) who have experienced oppression and restrictions by Myanmar's government. When asked for any advice from the partners, Presbyterian Church of Ireland delegate Pip Florit acknowledged the difficult challenge of sectarian violence from Ireland's history, and encouraged the PCM to find ways to act as peacemakers.

A Handful of Rice

A handful of rice is a tradition supported by Christian women in Myanmar. Each time they prepare a meal they set aside a handful of rice, and this is collected each week or month and donated to the church. It is then sold with the funds raised contributing to local church projects. In this way, the women of the church play a significant role in helping to support their church's mission and outreach. This photo shows the rice being collected at the PCM's Chin Synod church in Yangon.



Global Mission Coordinator Phil King with members of the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar's project committee meeting, after meeting to discuss the projects being recommended for support from the Ricebowl Mission. Second from right, PCM Womens Conference Secretary Sangi is leading the way as one of the few women in leadership. Change is gradually coming as more male leaders acknowledge the need to include women in leadership roles.

Thank you to everyone who financially supports our partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar. Donations are always welcome and allow us to achieve more. Donations to the farm development project that Wayne Harry is managing, or personal support for both Wayne and Helen, are also invited. Online donations can be made to 02 0500 0086963 10, or send cheques to Global Mission, P.O. Box 9049, Wellington 6141. (Please send an email or add a note confirming which project you would like to support).

*If you would like more information please contact Global Mission Coordinator Rev Phil King,
email: phil@presbyterian.org.nz*