

Rice Bowl

MISSION



Global Mission's Myanmar Newsletter

November 2019



These nurse aid students who were sponsored by Global Mission have successfully graduated from their course at Wesley Hospital in Tahan. They are pictured with Hming Sangi, the secretary of the PCV Women's Department who oversees the scholarships, and Rev. Za Nei Thang, the Associate General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar. With special thanks to the youth of St. Helier's Presbyterian Church in Auckland who raised the funds for their scholarships.

The students above are all from a remote part of Myanmar called the Chin State. When Global Mission Coordinator Phil King visited Myanmar in June he had the opportunity to meet the students and through an interpreter (Hming Sangi, pictured) they shared about their lives. The nurse aid course has given all these girls the opportunity to have a career and an independent future. If they were not studying, they all said they would be back in their villages doing basic agricultural labouring. Their involvement in the nurse aid programme also protects them from being trafficked as migrant workers into other parts of Asia. In thanking the PCANZ for the sponsorship, PCM Women's Secretary Sangi wrote, "We once again are very grateful to PCANZ who love and support PCM women. This is our prayer that PCANZ and PCM partnership ministry will go on by the grace of God. We also want to request you to pray for all the students who are now going back to their hometowns to continue their healthcare ministry wherever they are."

Myanmar Adventure

Kathy Boyland is a secondary school teacher from Rangiora. She recently visited her friends Wayne and Helen Harray who are serving at Tahan Theological College. She shares her experience with us.

There's a bit of controversy over short-term mission trips these days. Questions about whether a visiting team building a house takes jobs away from locals, or whether a short term stint in an orphanage disrupts children who become attached then lose their friends again.



Kathy and Helen with some of the B.A. English staff on the in-service teacher training programme.



With Wayne and Helen at the local market in Tahan.

My trip to Myanmar during my October school holidays was not a "mission" but an adventure to visit my long-term friends who really are missionaries there. They've committed years, not days, to their posting- doing the hard yards of adjusting to what is culturally alien to them, being tactful in their partnership with Tahan Theological College to bring sustainable income and skills to the team of lecturers and students there. Helen, currently developing and heading up a BA English programme with several staff to manage and a range of classes, had already paved the

way to make sure I could be useful. She had set up a block course to coincide with my visit so I could "teach the teachers".

This was a fabulous opportunity to meet locals from a range of schools and, of course, Helen's wonderful staff who are the exact ages of my three sons. We adapted and greatly simplified some fabulous material developed by the Myanmar Ministry of Education and aimed for interactive and inspiring sessions to provide a pedagogical model for the teachers to follow. I got at least as much as the teachers from the experience - as I said to them, "It's so wonderful to have people who want to hear what I say!" (My current teaching role is in a secondary classroom!)

Because of the rules in Myanmar, I had to stay in a hotel - which made the whole thing a wonderful holiday for me. Much needed air conditioning, free cooked breakfast, daily room service meant a whole fortnight without doing housework, and all for \$35 a night! The restaurant was also a fabulous place for networking with other visiting Christians - and I had a wonderful day exploring with two women from Volunteer Service Overseas as a result.

The best part of the trip had to be connecting with the people of Myanmar. The district where Helen and Wayne live is right on the edge of the Chin State. It is full of Christian churches and the people are mainly Christian or Buddhist - both religions cherish kindness. The kindness of the people, the smiles and waves as I travelled on the back of a scooter or by tuktuk, the depth of faith of the TTC faculty and of my friends made the whole experience a spiritual shot in the arm for me.

And the difficult parts? Long term I'd find the heat oppressive. You have to start really early to be able to spend any time outside at this time of the year. (But I hear the Winter - our Summer - is much better). Fortunately NZ is seven and a half hours ahead of Myanmar so early starts are not difficult.



Wayne and Helen Harray have been serving at Tahan Theological College in Myanmar since mid- 2018.

There were a few bugs (I got a couple of nasty stings), but nothing like the plague Helen and Wayne had experienced earlier in the year.

There are no footpaths - just broken up edges of roads and open drains - and the traffic rules are rather different - so walking or being driven is harder for the faint-hearted. And most people only understand Burmenglish. It has been so long since native English speakers lived amongst them that the English they learn bears little resemblance to the English we speak. Google translate to the rescue!

Right: Kathy, Wayne and Helen with some of the staff of Tahan Theological College.



The staff on the B.A. English programme who participated in Kathy's training programme, with their certificates.

Other than that, and the long flight to get there, I'd recommend this kind of visit. Helen and Wayne value the help of those with teaching experience or willing to lend a hand on the land, who can slot in and help out, look after themselves and relish the differences. And the people of the Chin State still treat foreigners as VIPs!

If you are interested in learning how you can support our partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar, email Global Mission Coordinator Phil King, phil@presbyterian.org.nz



Team Visit to Myanmar

A team from Leith Valley Church in Dunedin will be travelling to Myanmar in January to visit Wayne and Helen Harray, and to learn about their work at Tahan Theological College. They will also gain insights into other ways the PCANZ supports the life and mission of the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar. Their dates of travel are January 8—22. Richard Dawson, who visited Myanmar during his term as Moderator, will lead the group.

Leith is Wayne and Helen's sending church—Helen is an ordained PCANZ minister and was on the pastoral team with Richard at Leith for several years. During this time, Myanmar couple Anna Sui Hluan and Henry Van Thio worshipped at Leith Church. Henry entered politics and is now Second Vice President of Myanmar—hard to believe, but true. The team hope to meet with Anna and Henry on their trip.



Left: Augcheng Church in the Chin State, with the clouds rolling in. This is one of the churches that was recently completely with Ricebowl mission funding. Augcheng is high in the mountains in the Chin State.

Below: The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand is acknowledged on the sign on the front of the Hakha stallrooms in Hakha, Chin State. This is an income generating project supported by the Ricebowl Mission. The stallrooms are leased to retailers and artisans, providing income for the local branch of the church.



Tailoring Training Continues

The Ricebowl Mission is continuing to sponsor tailoring training courses for women. Another three-month course was held recently, providing ten women from the Chin and Phai synods (these are urban based members of the church, living in Tahan), with the opportunity to develop a vocational skill. For many women this gives them the first step towards economic independence. Further funding remains in place for more courses next year.

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 Harray 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. (If donating online please send an email with contact details for receipts.)

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