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### **IN THIS LETTER:**

#### ***Passover and Unleavened Bread in Myanmar***

Dear Friends and Fellow Laborers,

Gloria and I arrived back in Thailand from Burma (Myanmar<sup>1</sup>) last Thursday. We observed Passover and Unleavened Bread with about 40 Church of God brethren from Kachinland, Central Burma, and Rangoon (Yangon). We also had one lady who came back from Thailand to keep the feast in Burma and visit family and friends. Ah Jar Shan, a graduate of Legacy Institute in Thailand, accompanied us as interpreter.

I am astonished at the development taking place in the country now called Myanmar. Last year we came for Passover. Everything is changing dramatically. New cars pack the streets in Rangoon. We traveled to Taungoo, the site of our Unleavened Bread celebration, on a modern four-lane toll way. I visited a modern mall in Rangoon that rivals the malls in Los Angeles and Dallas. There is a lot of money coming into Myanmar. People with disposable income are buying new cars, fashion designer jeans, and modern household items. High-rise apartments and condos are going up all over the city! Internet is available pretty much everywhere. It is amazing what has happened in just one short year. The downside is that almost everything is now much more expensive in Myanmar—even more than here in Thailand.



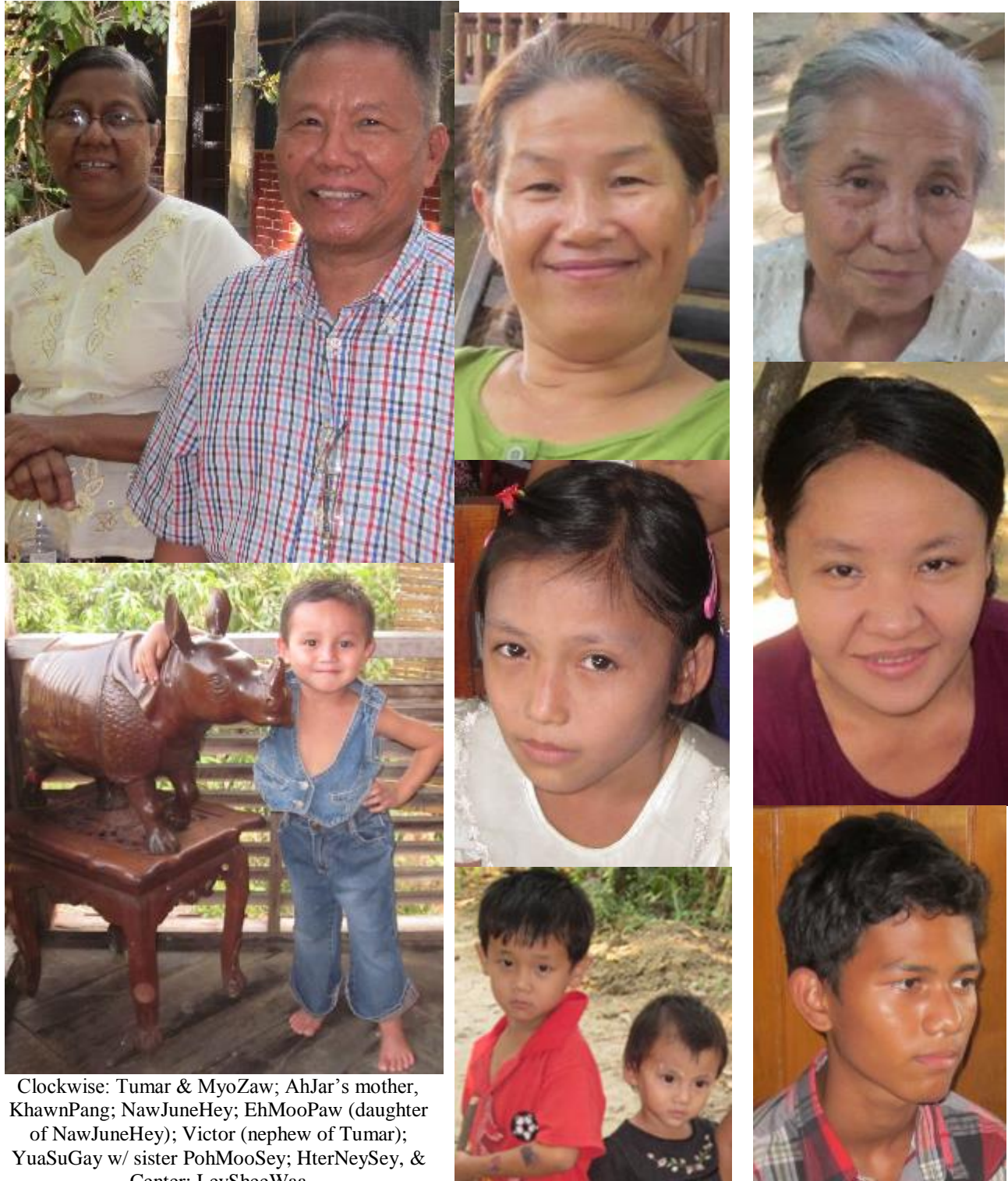
***“People want to live in  
peace...real lasting peace...  
the peace that comes from  
independence of the state  
and being able to  
run your own life,  
spend your own money and  
make your own choices.”***

**Baroness Margaret Thatcher<sup>2</sup>  
1925 – 2013**

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<sup>1</sup> Myanmar is a closer pronunciation of the old name for the country than the British invention of “Burma.”

<sup>2</sup> Photo courtesy Wikimedia Commons.



The place we chose for the Passover and Unleavened Bread Feast is in central Myanmar. It is in a large city on the main rail line going north and south, so it makes it easier for brethren to reach the feast site. In Kachinland, Northern Myanmar, there is continuous fighting between the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the Burma Army. Most of the fighting is taking place along the border with China in the east. Those who traveled from western Kachinland had no trouble, though





Worship services in Taungoo with visiting brethren and AhJar as translator (R).



EhEhKoo ready to go into the watery grave.



MaHtaNoot just coming out of the watery grave.

it took one day in the back of a pickup truck over the mountains and then two days by train. Counting children, we had approximately 40 in attendance, and 25 of whom took the Passover.

I baptized two ladies and even performed a wedding ceremony. Gloria, Ah Jar, and her cousin Khawn Yee made sure the bride was beautiful. After the ceremony, we all ate ice cream and performed tribal dances and sang songs. Gloria and I (with dramatics and a bit of funny acting) sang “Daisy, Daisy.”

During the Days of Unleavened Bread, we all stay at the same location and eat all our meals together. One member donated a goat: and so we feasted on that for the Night to Be Much Observed and the rest of the Feast. All meals were prepared by the ladies and young girls. The food was traditional Karen or Burmese food with lots of vegetables and, of course, rice. Our Rangoon deacon’s wife, Tumar, was invaluable in overseeing everything from bargaining for food, purchasing, meal planning, cooking, and other important responsibilities that came up.

It is difficult to explain unleavened bread to people who eat mostly rice and seldom eat bread. But they do know what the Indian flatbread called “roti” is, so that helps.

Gloria’s and my time was spent counseling, fellowshiping, and teaching the Bible, and of course, preparing for a wedding. We held services twice each day (afternoon and evening), with the exception of the last Holy Day, because people had to prepare after sunset to leave for home the next day.



I wish I could get to Myanmar more often. But once or twice a year is the best I can do for now. Running the school, teaching, and preparing sermons, letters, and booklets for translation is very time consuming.

We need help in Myanmar. More and more are coming to repentance, but we have no pastors to feed and protect the sheep. Without a shepherd, the sheep will be scattered. Or with very little or no spiritual food, they will wither and die. That is why we are working in Chiang Mai to train young men and women to be leaders in the church in Myanmar. We can train, but it will be Jesus Christ Himself who will choose. We seek to follow His will.



Rejoicing is shared by all—even the angels in heaven.



### ***“The Wedding”***



L.: GinTin, Leon Sexton, MaHtaNoot; hair & makeup by AhJar (Center) & her cousins LuLuSeng & KawnYee

### *More Wedding Celebration*



Clockwise: Dancing four—NawMya, EhHlaHtoo, NawJuneHey, & AhJar's grandmother (HtuShan); wedding dessert w/ NO leavening—strawberry ice cream!; SawSeyPoh dancing with his wooden left leg. He was amazing.

Legacy is now sponsoring two young ladies to go to Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) schools in Myanmar. If we find a responsible family with whom they can stay, it costs about 300 to 400 dollars per year. We have found that those who attend SDA schools in Myanmar do much better at Legacy, because they already have some English language training.





L. to R.: BhooMooHtoo w/ her four daughters HtuSeng, DoiBhu, LuThoi (who will be going to SDA school in Taungoo & living w/ SengNan), & KhawnYee, who is living with Tumar & MyoZaw and going to SDA school in Yangon.

There is still very little opportunity for further education or employment in Myanmar at present. But that is rapidly changing. Myanmar—now a part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — has money pouring in from Thailand, Singapore, and other ASEAN nations. In 2014, Myanmar will assume the chairmanship of ASEAN, whose states are shooting for full economic integration in 2015 as the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). China has been investing in Myanmar heavily for at least a decade; and with the visit of former Secretary of State Clinton, and now President Obama, the U.S. will be investing in Myanmar to counter the Chinese. It is a little known fact that Myanmar is rich in Rare Earth Minerals (REM's) such as gold, platinum, and uranium as well as reserves



AhJar & SengNan (teacher at SDA school in Taungoo, w/ her son. Her husband (not pictured) is also a SDA teacher.

of oil and gas. It is a country with a wealth of natural resources.



Local Taungoo scenery all around during soybean harvesting.

In addition, Aung San Suu Gyi, the Myanmar politician who is a Nobel Laureate, is gaining in power and worldwide prestige. There is a very good chance she could be President of Myanmar at the next election in 2015. Aung San Suu Gyi is a 67 year old Burmese politician and Chairperson and General Secretary of the National League for Democracy (NLD) the main opposition party in Burma. She has been under house arrest for 15 of the last 21 years. In 1992 she was awarded the *Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding* by the Indian government; the *International Simon Bolivar Prize* from Venezuela; and in 2007 was made an *honorary citizen of Canada*. In 2007, she was awarded the *Wallenberg Medal*. In 2012, she was awarded the *U.S. Congressional Gold Medal*, the highest award given by the U.S. Congress; the first recipient in U.S. history to receive the honor while imprisoned. Aung San Suu Gyi was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** in 1991.



AUNG SAN SUU GYI (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.)

Dramatic change is sweeping the country. What that will mean is uncertain, but what is sure is that opportunities for preaching the Gospel will be increased manifold.

Please pray for God's Work in Myanmar and the rest of South East Asia. The formation of the AEC will open new doors for the Gospel because communication and travel will become much easier.

In Jesus the King's service,

T. Leon Sexton

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