



HOPE!

² And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

³ Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope.

⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

⁶ You see at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. — Romans 5:2-8



Kent Odor

I just returned from a trip to the Burmese refugee area of Mae Sot, Thailand along the Thai/Myanmar border. In this issue of our newsletter, UPDATE, we will show some ways ACS is bringing hope to many people in SE Asia. My trip started in Chiang Mai where I explored new friendships and potential new partnerships. I visited with key leaders at the Jesus Film Project office for Asia, the Free Burma Rangers office and the working property of Echo Farms. These are three wonderful organizations that are also bringing hope to the people of SE Asia.

Next, I went south to Mae Sot. I joined a seasoned ministry team of mPower Approach that came to train refugee evangelists how to extract teeth to bring healing and hope to people living with serious pain. The trip concluded with a wonderful experience dedicating the "Floating Church" -- a new building in a refugee village that had gathered both Seasoned Christians and over twenty brand new sisters and brothers who have just been baptized. There was excitement and delight in the new life they were experiencing and a great hope for the future. For all of them this year their world had been turned upside down and they had physically lost everything they owned. Our ACS teammates had been able to find tangible ways to share with them the love of God and the hope there is in Jesus.



Moses at the Floating Church

Hope is the message that we are so excited about this Christmas! Hope may be the very best one-word summary of the Christmas Story. As the apostle Paul said, “we boast in the hope of the glory of God!” That hope comes to all of us because, “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

The hope of forgiveness of sins and the presence of the Creator God in our midst is for many a new and unexpected message. Whether it is hearing about Jesus for the first time on a small or large screen in one’s own language or native tongue, or it is shown through the offer of a new home and safe place to live in a foreign land, hope changes everything! Hope shows up and then peace of mind follows closely behind, then joy to the world is the result. That is the Christmas story, and it is what we have for everyone. Merry Christmas!



Opening Celebration

A Year-end Matching Grant Opportunity — Kent Odor

An ACS supporter has generously offered a year end matching grant opportunity for the Jesus Film Project. This is to fuel an extension of the good work already begun over the past two years. In 2023 and 2024, ACS placed 160 tablets loaded with the Jesus Film into the hands of our evangelist Teammates that serve near the border of Thailand and Myanmar and to those just inside Myanmar's Shan State on its eastern side. Each tablet was given with the instructions and the requirement that the evangelist needed to show the film to audiences at least 25 times followed by a presentation of gospel. The results have been incredible. There have been hundreds of decisions to follow Christ and be baptized.

First, the timing of this ACS initiative corresponded with the massive displacement of many unreached people throughout Myanmar. The military coup has upended and displaced Almost 3 million people. Most of them were Buddhist or Animist and most have never heard or been interested in the gospel message. Now it is as if their eyes have been opened and they are now a "white harvest field!" This message is what they have been waiting for!

Second, the evangelists have felt an added energy and determination to share the gospel to new unreached people.



This is in spite of the destruction and dangers of the war around them.

They have responded by sending streams of photos to us of those watching the film and the following baptisms. They have never had a tool like this to use to explain who Jesus is and what he did for all of us. Their joy in sharing the gospel is unprecedented and contagious. For that, we are exuberant with joy!

Our hope this year is to double all we have done so far or more. We have previously delivered 160 loaded tablets to be used in small groups and homes. We also gave three battery operated solar charged projectors for audiences of 100. So far, we have worked through only two of the thirty-three Evangelism Committees that have been established across Burma, NE India, Thailand and Bangladesh.

The matching fund goal this year is to double and distribute at least 160 more tablets loaded with the Jesus Film and other gospel programming AND provide one solar projector to every Evangelism Committee (33 total) in the four countries we serve. The tablets are now about \$300 each and the Solar Projectors are about \$1500 for each kit. Our ACS general fund will need to fuel the administration and the logistics of training, travel and distribution negotiating everything through the maze of a country at war so it will need to be funded as well.



Baptism

With this opportunity comes several new challenges, but the reward will be absolutely worth it! We have not had a tool like this to put into the hands of most of our workers ever before. And the wildly successful track record of our past one year and one-half experience is the greatest motivating factor. Please consider a significant year end gift. Because of the matching fund grant opportunity, your gifts will be doubled. Together we will extend the boundaries of the kingdom and populate heaven with many new people. Thank you for being a teammate with Asia Christian Services in our ongoing ministry of hope!



Watching the Jesus Film

Matching Grant Giving Deadline: December 31, 2024

Jesus Film Project

New Distribution Targets

- 33 Evangelism Committees in Myanmar
- ▲ Bangladesh Outreach
- Thailand Outreach
- ◆ N.E. India Outreach

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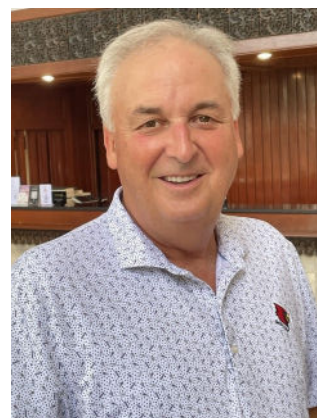


Six Newly Trained Tooth Extractors — Kent Odor

For ten years ACS has enjoyed a partnership with a medical mission called mPower Approach from Louisville, Kentucky. This group's mission is about transferring skills to transform communities. It's about training and equipping men and women in developing countries to empower indigenous believers to serve their communities through dental care, vision, sewing, dental hygiene, leadership development, pastor training, wound care and basic medical skills.

Their teams have generously traveled at their own expense to NE India, Myanmar and Thailand to train ACS evangelists to do a very needed medical work to extract rotten teeth. Untreated tooth decay is the most common health condition globally, and oral diseases cause pain, discomfort, disfigurement and even death. Poor oral health can also increase the risk of developing chronic diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The tribal people we are serving have never had any oral health training. They have never had a toothbrush. Sugar always rots teeth, and pain and suffering always follow. mPower has now trained about 100 ACS evangelists to do this very important ministry. These evangelists through the years have extracted thousands of teeth to show God's love and care; then, they preach the gospel.

This October I had the privilege to assist Dr. Tim Williams (a dentist), Dr. Curt High (an oral surgeon), and Board Chairman Norm Schenk as they trained six "refugee" evangelists in MaeSot, Thailand. These trainees--five men and one woman--were all originally from Myanmar, but as escapees from the violence in Myanmar they are now refugees in a foreign country. Three of them escaped as Christians, but three were Buddhists and now are followers of Christ. All of them have been discipled in Thailand and are prepared to be church planters.



**Norm Schenk —
mPower Board Chairman**

The first mission instruction Jesus gave to his 12 disciples happened when *"he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, 2 and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick"* Luke 9:1-2. With these new dentistry skills, our church planters can bring healing to hurting bodies. And best of all, they can



Doctor Curt High (oral surgeon) giving instruction



Training a student first



Receiving Diploma



The Graduation

give new life and hope as new believers are baptized into Christ.

My job on this trip was to work with the sterilization table and keep the dental tools clean and ready to use. I also prepared the injections to numb their mouths before extraction. The students pulled over 150 teeth as they practiced and learned this new skill. They prayed for each patient and shared the gospel. Very few patients came alone, so there was usually an audience for each procedure. The kingdom of Christ was

presented with love and each patient went on their way healed and encouraged. The week ended with a graduation and presentation of the dentistry tools that would be needed for a lifetime of ministry. This is a ministry that produces hope. We are very grateful for this important ministry partner and look forward to many further trainings. Thank you mPower Approach!



Going Home — A mission well done!

The Floating Church Dedication — Kent Odor

A sweet conclusion to my October trip to Thailand was the dedication ceremony of the Floating Church building at the new Emmaus Village near MaeSot, Thailand.

This past year about five acres were purchased to build a new village for refugees. The plan allows the land to house about 300 refugees and give them a safe space to refocus and begin a new life in a foreign land. By placing an evangelist and a teacher in the community, there is a great opportunity to care for children, lead many to Christ and disciple both young and old. A key part of land is a pond. Every part of the village design centered around the pond. The team that designed the acreage use determined that the Church would partially cover the edge of the pond to maximize the number of plots that could then be filled by refugees' homes.

Hence, the name "Floating Church" became the catchphrase describer of the new building. As the local government got involved things changed, and everyone agreed to move the building onto the land and build a much less expensive structure that would stay within



The Floating Church

the budget. The building

was dedicated on Saturday, October 19. Maung Myint, the new pastor, guided the service. He was himself a refugee several years ago and was discovered and led to Christ by Moses. Moses has disciplined and trained him for several years and Moses has now sent him to lead this new work.



Maung Mying, the new Pastor

Everything began with a ribbon cutting and a procession into the building. The program was lovely with worship accompanied by an acoustic guitar and a box drum. The front of the church was decorated with wildflowers and carnations. There were songs performed by children, teens and two ladies groups. A drama was presented by the youth group on the power of Jesus over evil spirits. I was the speaker. Moses gave a prayer of dedication and then the group enjoyed a banquet of celebration.



Preparing for the Dedication Service



Floating Church Dedication Service

A cow had been butchered on the site to provide the banquet. Everyone fellowshiped into the night as there were a few lights supported by a solar panel battery. The fellowship was indeed sweet. Maung Myint and Moses have baptized over twenty new believers. There are now twenty-eight homes in the village. That number will double as the authorities allow the leaders to expand the village. There are now two wells and numerous toilets. Seven homes are occupied by young couples from Myanmar who are SIL staff (Summer Institute of Linguistics Bible translators--a large international Bible translation organization) working on eighteen new Burmese translations of the Bible. These young adult couples had to escape the new conscription law in Myanmar. It required men and women being under 35 years old to become soldiers and be at war against their own countrymen. Here they are continuing their translation work. Their compound has solar power, and they can use their computers on the property. This new village project is a wonderful opportunity to provide a practical redemption of lives upended by war. The future is uncertain, but the love of God shown to the hurting by the church is bringing hope.



Children Singing



Women's Choir



Fellowship Dinner

Join
Global Shores Initiative
in their
International Day of Prayer for Myanmar
November 24-25, 2024



In Memory Of

Morse Family

Diana Thomas

Be sure to check out our website:
asiachristianservices.com

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