

Kawthoolie Karen Baptist Bible School and College

Subject: Gospel Team Report

Date: 1.1.2008

Dear partners in Christ,

First of all we would like to say words of thanks and gratitude to all those who love and participate in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. We give thanks to God for His grace and mercy that He has bestowed on each and every one of us. Through His grace, we are chosen to participate in His glorious ministry. The month of December is preserved as the month of outreach mission for our school. This year December, 2007, eight groups were sent to various mission fields. By the grace of God, our group was sent to the area of internally displaced Karen people. Our team comprises of 16 students and 2 teachers, therefore altogether 18 people. We started our gospel trip on November 28, and we are back on December 28. Therefore the duration of our gospel trip is 30 days.

The main activity that we involved in this gospel trip is, celebrating Christmas with internally displaced Karen people. By the grace of God, though the situation is risky and uncertain we could celebrate Christmas in many places. The activities that we did during Christmas celebration are; In the morning we had thanksgiving worship service, and right after which we had Christmas feast. After Christmas feast we had recreation (games and sports). In the evening at six o'clock we started worship service once again and followed by Christmas concert. During Christmas celebration both believers and non-believers participated, therefore, we got chance to preach gospel to both believers and non-believers.

The physical life situation of internally displaced Karen people is full of fear and uncertainty. The moment we entered the area of IDPs, we started hear fighting around us. At first we were scare to continue our gospel trip. Some of the lady students even asked me to come back. Since I am team leader, I encouraged them not to fear any thing, because God is under the control of the situation. We continue our gospel trip with the hope that God will do His best for us. Why the physical life situation of internally displaced Karen people is full of fear and uncertainty? The main reason is that, Burmese military army set up their army base on mountain top. From this vantage point, they launched and attacked on the village below by using artillery and rocket fire. Without warning, sometimes you will hear big noise/sound near you gwa..... This risky and uncertain situation forced hundred and hundred villagers to desert their houses and hide in the jungle. There are many people who got sick in the jungle and have to live without medicines and enough food. Military army set up the camps in many places. Some of the army camps are in the paddy fields of the villagers, therefore there are many villagers could not harvest their crops. In this situation, villagers live the life of love and sharing. For those who could harvest their paddy fields shared with those who could not. That's why in time of hardship and difficulty no Karen people get starved. Karen people have the spirit of community, they have the sense of belonging, they feel they are part of one another. What I can say is that, Karen people can bear hardship and difficulty they don't give up easily. They love education, wherever they go, they set up schools. School teachers have got no salary, but can sacrifice their lives for the children. In the morning at 6-8 o'clock teachers go to paddy fields, at 9 o'clock go to school and come back in the afternoon 3 o'clock, and right after they come back from school they go to paddy fields and come back home after sun set. There are many teachers could not harvest their paddy fields because of the

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presence of the army camps. This is the physical life situation of the internally displaced Karen people.

The spiritual life situation of internally displaced Karen people is like sheep without shepherd. There are many places, that believers have no pastors. There are many small groups of believers do not have chance to worship on Sunday. Believers cannot live in one place with big numbers of people due to the fear of the attack of the military army. That's why they have to separate themselves into small groups and hide in deep forest. One amazing thing that I found in the area of IDPs is that, the people here, whether they are believers or non-believers, are very receptive to the message of the gospel. At the Christmas worship service, both believers and non-believers come to church for worship.

There is a man in the village, he is non-believer, but asked me to arrange one evangelist for the village. This really surprise me for the non-believers are thirsty for Gospel. This is the spiritual life situation of the internally displaced Karen people that I found in our gospel trip.

According to my personal observation, I can say that, internally displaced Karen people are in need of two needs that we should help. The first need, what I call "real need" that we should help. The real need is what is real we can see with our naked eyes and can touch with our hands.

The real need such as food, clothes, medicines, and the gospel.

The second need that internally displaced Karen people need is, what I call "genuine need". Genuine need is the need to be liberated from the inhuman treatment and atrocity of the evil military government of Myanmar. These two needs can be ignored none of them. If we help internally displaced Karen people to meet only the real need, it will be like pouring water on sandy ground that cannot hold water back. I would like to encourage whoever wants to help internally displaced Karen people, to consider the two needs that they are in need.

In His service

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