

Mission Report Myanmar by Cherith International

November 2023

It is amazing to see how the Lord has been touching and transforming lives in an unreached animistic community in the jungles of the Shan State in Myanmar since 2021.

The Shan State is known as the Golden Triangle. This is the place where the second largest volumes of opium are produced next to Afghanistan. Most of the opium (95%) is exported to western countries via Thailand. Since the location of the animistic community is very remote and mountainous, they are isolated from the modern world in their way of living, education, and transportation. There has been armed conflict in this region for many decades, which is adding to the isolation of this animistic community.

Moreover, the worship of spirits plays an important role among people in the Shan religion. Much time and effort is devoted to appease the spirits, to ask their guidance for every aspect of life. As a result, people live in constant fear.

Hereafter follows in brief what the Lord is doing in this unreached community.

Pastor Z., Cherith International's counterpart in the Shan State of Myanmar, together with a team of students from his Disciple Training School brought food items to an unreached, impoverished animistic community in 2021 thanks to funds from donors. Through this program, the team started building relationships with the villagers. The village headman and animistic priest were so impressed that this team was willing to take a hazardous trip through an area affected by armed conflict, that they told, *"you can always come back and share about Jesus"*. During this trip the team observed that hundreds of people from three villages had access to only one small water pipe for drinking water, bathing, and laundry. Pastor Z. proposed to build a sanitary facility that will provide bathing and laundry areas for men and women with protection against the elements, and a tank to store water.

The proposal for a sanitary facility that Cherith International submitted to a donor organization was approved in 2022 and the project was implemented in the same year. The building of the sanitary facility was a real community effort with participation from young and old. Moreover, during the building project the team of Pastor Z. had ample time to share about the Good News of Jesus Christ with the villagers. Through this, some people came to know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

In one of the community meetings, the villagers expressed their concerns about the lack of education of their children. The community didn't have a school building nor a teacher. In response to this critical need, Pastor Z. proposed to build a simple wooden school structure. In addition, he was going to recruit a graduate from his Disciple Training School to become a teacher once there was a school building.

Cherith's proposal for a village school was approved in 2023 and funds for the school furniture and educational materials were raised earlier this year at the Café of Community Church Oshkosh. A team of students from the Disciple Training School and carpenters traveled to the project location to build the school.

The villagers provided lodging for the team and unskilled labor throughout the building process. The team had ample time to share about the Good News of Jesus Christ and ministry to the villagers in the evenings.

The school has been completed and classes have started. **Bible lessons are part of the curriculum and this Sunday there will be a fundraiser at the Café to collect funds for materials for Bible lessons at the school.**

Since 2021, the Lord has been transforming lives in this animistic community as Pastor Z. testified in the following mission update.

Since we started our outreach to the animistic villages in 2021, many of them were touched and changed their lives by the merciful love of God. Before they did not experience love and acceptance and they were living just for food and wages to survive. People from the outside treated them like slaves, but when we reached them with the Word of God and shared about God's love for them, their faces and countenance were changing. Their fear and insecurity to face outsiders completely changed and they became bolder. They now feel being loved and valued.

Many have decided to accept Jesus as their Lord and savior. They ask us many questions and began to have retrospection while surrounding villagers come to visit this village to see what is happening.

Pastor A. and his wife have decided to serve as missionaries in this impoverished area, and they are fully committed to further the Kingdom of God. Through the prayer of Pastor A., a demon possessed woman was freed from evil spirits.

Three boys from these villages were sent to our Discipleship Training School for Bible Study and future leadership training.

Up to now 25 people have taken water baptism and boldly claim that they become children of God instead of worshipping evil spirits in fear. Many more are preparing and seeking the Word of God daily from the teaching of Pastor A. The Holy spirit is starting to breakthrough in one of the darkest places in the world.

Please pray for our missionary Pastor A. and his family. Pray also for a church building as they are currently worshipping in a small bamboo hut.

“Then He said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest”. Matt 9:37-38.

*Together for the Lord's Kingdom,
Pastor Z.*

The Lord cares for His children, through His children!

Serving Him together,

Harry & Jenny van Burik



Serving the Lord in fulltime missions since 1994.

Follow the activities of Cherith in Sri Lanka and Myanmar: http://bit.ly/Cherith_update and in Oshkosh: http://bit.ly/Cherith_Center



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