

IMPROSOS in Myanmar

SEPTEMBER
2019

Dear Faithful Partners and Friends,

“Will you convert me to Christianity, Sir?” our summer English class student asked me with curiosity as I went deep into showing him the True Light. Toward the end of our conversation I responded to the student that everyone needs the Savior before any change takes place. Knowing the Savior opens up true understanding of the purpose of life, not only today but for eternity. This is the True Light, the true enlightenment.



Caleb leading the youth

Our outreach plan was to offer a month of intensive English grammar and conversation classes. However we had to add another month for another batch of interested learners. The first batch had 4 and the second, 5. English classes are great chances to make connections with individuals that lead to presentation of the gospel. One of the 2nd batch of students became interested to the point of enrolling in our Bible training course as he takes secular classes on weekends.

These classes were the first to use our newly built temporary hall and living quarters as a learning facility before the Bible training was started on June 10. We were excited to enjoy its air-conditioning system, since it was a really hot summer, averaging 42° Celsius (107°F) throughout. However, many power outages got us back to manually fanning ourselves. We realized one emergent ministry during summer is ministering to the sick and needy. Living in an extremely hot climate aggravates hypertension and other complications that result in weakness of the body. Pastor Mawi lost a very close relative, who was also pastoring a church, due to heat stroke. Some of the men in our church suffered illnesses related to the climatic heat. This condition brought us another way of ministering by personally visiting, praying and setting aside some finances to help with their medical needs.



Pastor Mawi leading Resurrection Sunday at Inya Lake Park

Our ministry has met with many challenges. There was a challenge of settling in a new place where we could create a church atmosphere without disturbing our neighbors during worship. TCM sent financial help to put up a temporary hall which we tried to sound-proof as best we can. It is also used for the training with MGTS (Myanmar Grace Theological Seminary). So far, none of the neighbors has complained. In fact we have already established friendships with most of them.

Another challenge resulted from a rumor spread around that we are a false cultic group due to our Grace teaching. Pastor Mawi, our national leader, was the first to get hit most. He lost friends, and was even turned away by his relatives because of the message. As leaders, we have none but the calling of the Lord and the encouragement with each other to keep going on. Every two weeks we meet to share Biblical principles on leadership and pray for encouragement and determination.

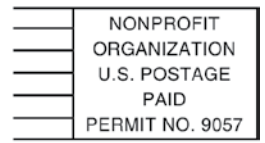


Leadership prayer meeting

The downpours were heavy as the Monsoon season took over. Flood waters are unhygienic at the beginning of the rains from an extremely hot summer. When the climate takes a sudden extreme turn, there are alarming concerns with outbreaks of various illnesses. All our trainees fell sick at the end of June and July. Everyone in Pastor Mawi's family, except Pastor Mawi himself, has experienced viral and infectious diseases, including their newborn baby. The rains also caused flooding in the southern states of Myanmar, and we are participating in collective prayer for those who are affected by landslides and those who may not be able to harvest their crops.



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We have a very important prayer request to share with you. In countries where religious organizations cannot be granted registration, we rely on work with secular institutions like schools and businesses in order to get a resident visa. Although we still have adequate time for ministry after commitments with our visa provider, we need control over our time for ministry as TCM missionaries. Recently, we have witnessed an influx of various NGOs who were granted registration. Something that appeals to the government is putting up institutions with a focus on education, such as preschools, English instruction for all ages, and some vocational and skills training. One of the vocational education heads told me the government encourages private schools and training programs since they don't have adequate financing to provide enough public schools for those who cannot afford a quality education. In order to participate in the process of recognition we need a more spacious facility of our own to hold classes, especially to open a preschool. We can use our Bible school training facility for English classes, but this space is limited since it only has one hall. We need a bigger facility to meet the physical requirement for a recognized training institution, and we need resources to afford this need.

It is amazing that we've already passed the middle of the year. Although things are challenging, we never cease to see marks of God's special working when we need Him the most. We never stop appreciating your impact, not only with our ministry but in our calling. It is one of those "fire fans" that truly keeps us motivated to bring the wonderful message of God's grace to Myanmar.

Your partners and friends in the Lord,

Gardner and Ledith Improso