

IMPROSOS in Myanmar

FEBRUARY
2019

Dear faithful friends and partners,

Happy New Year from Myanmar! What can be more meaningful this time of the year than glancing back at what the Lord has done and gazing forward to what He is going to do? This must be what New Years are for. How was yours?

We were relatively quiet for most of last year but that does not mean we were inactive. We were just taking on challenges, particularly with our language study. You may notice we keep mentioning this, but getting ourselves to listen and speak their words is a much needed service for the Master. We must not only understand what the Myanmar people say, we must also understand what they mean in order to build a bridge. While on a public bus traveling to preach at a funeral I (Gardner) happened to sit beside an elderly monk who was attracted by my 20-year old silver watch. By the look in his eyes, he seemed fascinated with its workmanship and said something to me about it. Was he interested? Simply commenting? Appreciative of it? I really don't know. He realized I was a foreigner as I responded with broken Burmese. Then that was it. He was unresponsive the rest of the trip. We both hit a wall instead of passing over a bridge of communication. I missed the opportunity and can only pray that somehow he will get another chance to see the true Light.



Pr. Mawi & Family

Our year started with an organizational separation. The Myanmar Grace Gospel Church decided to part ways with TCM Team Myanmar due to leadership issues. It sounds undesirable, but it has actually made way for more opportunities. The first Sunday of 2019 marked the beginning of **Grace Believer's Church**—made up of one national leader, Pastor Mawi and his family, the TCM Team (Banan family and ourselves) and some new contacts—in the living room of our newly rented house. By our fourth Sunday 30 adults could barely squeeze into our living room.



Ledith's co-workers attend GBC

A new beginning can be exciting but it also causes a problem—a good problem. Now we need to pray for a bigger place if we intend to grow from a fellowship setting to a typical church congregation. In Yangon, this challenge is gigantic. First, renting commercial halls is outrageously expensive. One that holds 100 people could cost as much as \$500/month and only a few of them would allow use for church purposes. The neighborhood location is also crucial. Technically the local authorities restrict churches in houses or non-commercial halls not recognized by the government. Often the next-door neighbor determines if worship continues. We always have to be careful that none of our church activities causes them to complain to the authorities.



Pr. Mawi translates for Gardner

We also had to rescue the English-medium program of our Bible School from closure due to the split. We are training the 4 remaining students during weekdays in our living room. We are expecting more new students to come for the next intake. We are thankful our landlord gave permission and TCM granted us funds to build a 26.5 x 16.5 ft. temporary hall in a small space inside this currently rented property. It will have a classroom area downstairs and dormitory rooms for Bible school students upstairs.



Construction project



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■ ပင်လယ်လှိုင်းလုံးရယ် မိုးကြိုးထန်ချိန်၊
 When the oceans rise, And thunders roar

လေဟုန်စီးအဖနဲ့ မုန်တိုင်းကြားထဲ၊
 I will soar with you above the storm

ကိုယ်တော်အုပ်စိုးရှင် လှိုင်းလုံးတွေအပေါ်၊
 Father, You are King over the flood

Worship in Myanmar involves heartfelt singing of traditional



hymns and contemporary music. Our desire is to join their musical passion by creating and providing quality. Currently we have two acoustic guitars but feel we need a keyboard in order to produce programmed accompaniment. The model pictured will cost more or less \$800 for its quality. We do not only transfer Bible knowledge, we also transfer skills to the next generation. Musical abilities applied to

the cause of the gospel can be a life changing ministry. Please pray for this need, so when the Lord provides, we can all *Sing the Wondrous Love of Jesus* with great music.

Ledith reopened her weekend English classes for children. Currently she has six students, mostly non-Christians, and more are expected to join. She works closely with Esther, one of our Bible school students who handles translation, invitations and advertisement of the classes for the children in the neighborhood. It is important that we establish the secular and social value of our stay in this field. Not only do these classes connect to the secular interests of the country, they also generate more opportunities of presenting the gospel to the parents.

This new year brought abounding opportunities to share the exclusives of the Grace message to provinces beyond Yangon. One cause of nominalism among Christians is lack of foundational teaching from the Word. As we share *the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery* we get this feedback: "How did you come to this understanding?" or "Never heard a teaching like this before!" Our mission is to serve as instruments of God's desire to save all men and bring them to the knowledge of the truth. We are praying for flexibility in order to reach more to know more. As usual but always special, we appreciate your faithful partnership in prayers and support. We look forward to the greatness of God this year with you. Great things He has shown us, great things He has done.



Ledith teaches English

Passionate for God,

Gardner and Ledith Improso