

SUMMER
2018

on location



NEW LIFE CENTER FOUNDATION: Celebrating 30 Years

BY KIT RIPLEY, IM MISSIONARY

THE ROOM SPARKLED WITH A TAPESTRY OF COLORS. People dressed in their finest outfits were chattering away in a variety of languages. All around us was heard a rich panoply of English, Thai, Lahu, Akha, Karen and Burmese. Friends had come from Connecticut, Hawaii, Sweden, the Netherlands, England, Myanmar and Thailand. There were board members, donors, police officers, social workers, church pastors and representatives from our NGO (non-governmental organization) partners. New Life Center graduates and former staff came from near and far. We were there to celebrate the New Life Center's 30th Anniversary.

We had come together to celebrate the legacy handed down to us by the faithful and visionary leaders who laid the foundation for what the New Life Center is today.

We were also looking forward with great anticipation to the unveiling of an exciting future.

The vision and hope of the New Life Center is "an exploitation-free society for tribal people throughout the Mekong Sub-Region" of Thailand. In the last 30 years, we have made great strides toward achieving that goal. We have seen improved access to education in rural areas. We have seen improvements in Thai anti-trafficking law. We have seen capable women moving into powerful leadership roles in all sectors of society. And the New Life Center has been honored to be invited to the table to collaborate with Royal Thai Government entities to influence Thai law related to human trafficking, citizenship and human rights.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



A MESSAGE FROM SHARON KOH

Dear IM Family,

Have you noticed that the unique cuisine of a particular culture and location is often a point of great pride?

When I was in Blantyre, Malawi, at the beginning of the year, many of the people I met were eager for me to try *chambo*—a fish caught in the nearby lake, grilled and topped with a tomato-based sauce. In each circumstance, the host or chef would stand eagerly nearby to see if I enjoyed the local delicacy. It was delicious!

I made sure to have curry in Thailand, *peri-peri* chicken livers in South Africa and bratwurst in Germany. In the United States, I also try to ask what people like in the area that I'm visiting. I recently had clam chowder in Boston, pizza in New York City and fried chicken and biscuits in DC.

It is interesting to me that, no matter where I am in the world, salt plays an essential role in food. On its own, salt is rather unpleasant, and too much salt in a dish can overpower even strong flavors. However, with too little salt, food can taste bland. This simple, everyday substance has the exceptional ability to amplify *other* flavors in the food that we eat. In many ways, the salt makes the meal.

Jesus tells us,
"You are the salt of the earth."

Matthew 5:13

Each one of us is called to participate in God's mission, and some of us get to do it in international locations. As "salt," we unlock the good that God is already doing. I hope that what you read in these pages will inspire you and your church to more "salty" participation in God's mission, until it is *on earth as it is in heaven*. Thank you for loving and supporting our global servants in prayer and with your gifts.

The World Mission Offering (WMO) materials that your church will receive by August 1 also highlight Matthew 5:13. We are focusing on three Ministry Priorities: Health & Wellness, Abolishing Global Slavery and Economic and Community Development. While not inclusive of all the ministries of IM, these serve to illustrate some of what God is doing worldwide through our 118 global servants, 900+ volunteers, 43 home staff and 240+ global Christian partners. Your congregation's gifts to the World Mission Offering powerfully connect you to all of the global servants and ministries of the Lord through IM.

Thank you for loving and supporting our global servants in prayer and with your gifts.

In Christ,

Sharon Koh
Executive Director / CEO

CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER



We have prevented exploitation and trafficking by promoting education and conducting anti-trafficking campaigns throughout the Mekong Sub-Region, educating thousands of people. We have provided comprehensive case management and rehabilitative care for thousands of survivors of sexual abuse, domestic violence, labor exploitation and trafficking in persons. The New Life Center is also known throughout the region for our greatest resources—our amazing, capable and qualified staff and our excellent programs.

The improvements in tribal society that we see today have happened because God empowered a group of dedicated people to pour their hearts and souls into the work necessary. And this progress is not something we claim to have done alone. We did it together, as the New Life Center staff, residents and graduates worked in collaboration with government entities, other NGOs, churches and financial supporters.

Nevertheless, we still have a long way to go. We have not yet reached our goal of "an exploitation-free society for tribal people throughout the Mekong Sub-Region." Tribal minorities still experience discrimination and forced labor in the workplace. Poverty, addiction and domestic violence still plague villages. Girls and young women continue to be victimized for the sexual gratification of others. These things must end!



As we head into the future, the New Life Center is committed to redoubling efforts to be agents of change in the region. We will continue to expand our prevention work by training leaders from Thailand and neighboring countries to educate people in their own language groups about the risk factors for trafficking. We will continue to provide excellent

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aftercare services for survivors of trauma. We will advocate at the provincial and national levels for human rights and equal access to citizenship. We will work tirelessly to educate and empower tribal women, many of whom will become influential leaders in society.

And so, on January 27, 2018, we celebrated the past and we looked toward a bright future for the New Life Center.

Those who attended this special celebration were just a small representative fraction of the hundreds of friends and supporters from all over the world who have focused their energy, prayers and resources to build a more just society for marginalized hill tribe girls and young women. Please join us in praising the Lord for all that he has done!



On location

To subscribe to this free newsletter, send your name and address to: International Ministries On Location 1003 W 9th Ave, Ste A King of Prussia, PA 19046

We welcome comments on Facebook at International Ministries—American Baptist.

For more information, contact catherine.nold@internationalministries.org



650,000 Displaced Refugees with No Place to Go



IMAGINE YOURSELF IN COX'S BAZAR, BANGLADESH, surrounded by 650,000 Muslim refugees. These are the people who call themselves the "Rohingya," and many of them can trace their ancestors' roots in Myanmar to the 15th century. To others in Myanmar, however, they are known as "Bengali" and treated as unwanted strangers. As a result, they have been displaced from their homeland, becoming a people without a home.

As far as you can see stretch cramped, crude tent homes built of tarps and bamboo. This is the camp of Kutupalong. The shelters are too many to count. You notice basic hill-side latrines that are certainly a sanitation hazard in this 90-plus-degree heat, and one that is likely to worsen during the impending rainy season.

The Rev. Ray Schellinger, who serves International Ministries (IM) as global consultant for Immigrants and Refugees, and photographer Francisco Miguel Litardo recently saw these dire conditions firsthand.

These displaced refugees are from an ethnic minority that practices a Sufi-inflected variation of Sunni Islam. Most are farmers whose desire is simply to be left alone to grow their crops in a place they can call home.



Fulfilling that dream seems unlikely. They cannot cross the border to go back to Myanmar because there they are regarded as intruders and foreigners. The fear of Muslims that has been fomented around the world by the acts of terror of a few extremists makes their stateless predicament worse. No one wants to accept them.

And so these displaced people live in their crowded tents. They cook a diet of rice in smoke-filled rooms on stoves fueled by scarce wood they gather on land that is increasingly deforested to make room for more 110-square-foot "houses." The simple tent shelters are deliberately temporary because the Bangladesh government does not want their occupants to remain.

Along the way, Ray encountered 12-year-old Hala. She greeted Ray and shared that not so long ago in Myanmar she had watched soldiers murder her parents and burn her house to the ground.

"The soldiers sexually assaulted her," Ray says. "She managed to run away to her aunt, and together they fled Myanmar by walking for three days to safety across the Bangladesh border with nothing at all."

On the day Ray met Hala, she and her friends had fashioned a jump rope out of scrap twine that had been used to bundle supplies brought to camp occupants. "The laughter and resilience of Hala and her friends seemed to contrast dramatically with their stories and dire conditions," Ray says. "It really struck me."

"We are at a Pentecost moment. The world is at our door, and we have the opportunity to share the gospel of God's love and grace with those who so desperately need our help to find a way home."

Ray Schellinger

"One thing that gives me hope is seeing the tireless efforts of relief organizations," Ray continues. He adds that the groups, in spite of their remarkably diverse backgrounds, are working seamlessly together.

The migrants' limited belongings have been furnished through ChristianAid, an ecumenical group; Bangladesh Red Crescent; and Muslim relief initiatives, as well as humanitarian outreach efforts that are not faith-based. The United Nations High Commission on Refugees has a growing profile in the region. Such groups are also trying to build an infrastructure of water pumps and some semblance of sanitation.

Francisco tells of taking a photo in Cox's Bazar that he entitled "A light breeze, two boys and a couple of kites."

"Watching the boys make the kites out of discarded and fragile material, then eagerly looking for the best breeze and happily launching the kites into the sky, was magical and surreal for me," Francisco says. "They seemed to want to launch all their troubles out into the gentle breeze that day. I will never forget the experience."

TO LEARN MORE contact Ray at ray.schellinger@internationalministries.org.



WHY GIVE to IM's General Fund?

BY ZOFIA DRIPPS, ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR MISSION ADVANCEMENT

The General Fund

Part of the General Fund furnishes resources like IM's website, awareness-building and fundraising, finance services and donor services for answering questions as well as receiving and processing gifts. It covers expenses for the work of mobilizing new global servants. It pays more than half the cost of five area directors who support engage with and build relationships between global servants, international partners and mission supporters. When personalized support falls behind, IM also helps global servants stay in ministry by making up the difference with general funds.

For these and other operational needs, IM requires over \$16 million annually in PSG support, General Fund support and other income combined.

In short, your giving advances God's mission. It is only with the prayer and financial support of you, the IM family, that we are able to meet needs around the world and share the love of Christ. Only by enlarging and sustaining both personalized support funds and the General Fund will IM be able to chart out another hundred years in global mission. Thank you for joining us in answering God's call.

WAYS TO GIVE include cash, stocks, IRA charitable rollovers, gifts as part of will planning and beneficiary designations. International Ministries is registered as the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society and our Federal ID is 13-5563392.

For further information, contact Mission Advancement at 610-768-2311 or visit www.internationalministries.org.

AT INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES, we are often asked why gifts to the General Fund are needed. IM global servants reach out to individuals and churches directly to meet a large portion of their own support needs, so where do general funds go? To answer this question, let's look first at what a global servant's funding covers.

The PSG

When you make a donation for an IM global servant, you are helping to meet his or her personalized support goal, or PSG. This is the funding necessary for the global servant to live and serve where God has called. Because the cost of living varies from country to country, PSGs also vary. Part of the PSG is used for salary, living expenses, such as housing, retirement, medical benefits and other personal and family needs. Another part may include basic ministry expenses, such as travel visas, passports and services like technology licenses and internet services. The remainder may include vital indirect support by dedicated global personnel services staff and an area director.

But if a global servant's PSG does all this, why is General Fund support also needed?



hear the call

Are You Considering Serving God as a Missionary?

Each summer, IM conducts the Hear the Call weekend conference. Individuals and families who are interested in long-term international service are invited to come explore and discern God's invitation to join in his mission. Participants interact with experienced IM global servants and staff to gain a deeper understanding of how God is at work around the world and how their gifts and experience might be used to meet human needs and glorify God in exciting and meaningful ways.

For more information, contact IM's Director of Mission Mobilization, the Rev. Dr. Rodney Ragwan, at rragwan@internationalministries.org or 610-768-2168. He and his team can provide you with information about the 2019 Hear the Call conference and IM's application process.

Important News for Churches about the World Mission Offering Mailing this Summer

Last year, we reduced the quantities of World Mission Offering resources that were mailed to each church, and we asked churches to order any additional materials that they needed. Many churches appreciated our desire to be better stewards of our natural resources. But we heard from many other churches that this approach, while well intentioned, did not work very well for them. We appreciate the feedback and are happy to make adjustments that make it easier for churches!

For the WMO mailing this summer, your church will receive a boxed supply of resources based on the quantities that were received or requested for the 2016 WMO. The box will arrive by August 1, 2018, and will include the materials needed to launch your WMO campaign in September.

Additional materials will be available upon request, and most resources will be available for download on IM's website. If you have questions, please contact catherine.nold@internationalministries.org or 610-768-2182.



world mission offering



Giving from a Grateful Heart to Make a Difference Now

BY REV. RAY SCHOOLER, D.MIN, SENIOR DIRECTOR FOR DEVELOPMENT

When I first met Lincoln “Link” and Glenda Fraley at their family business in Indiana, I learned that Link had drifted away from the church during his early adult years. However, through life’s circumstances, he came back to the church and is now serving the Lord with a grateful heart. Link and Glenda have been supporting IM’s global servants for many years, and they have plans for a legacy gift to IM.

But recently they decided that they could do even more to support God’s work today. As a result, they provided a very generous gift that became the seed money for the 2018 Spring Matching Gift Challenge. Their gift was used to double others’ gifts in support of global servants. When they shared this decision with me, they emphasized, “our hearts are grateful” and “we want to make a difference *now*.”

We are thankful for all who faithfully support IM in many different ways. Perhaps this one family’s decision to make a difference now is also your story. If not you, who? If not *now*, when?