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IM Welcomes Myanmar's Ambassador to the United States



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After more than 200 years of missionary service in the Southeast Asian country of Myanmar (formerly Burma), the leadership of International Ministries (IM) and the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) were honored to welcome Myanmar's ambassador to the United States to the Valley Forge offices on May 16. The meetings were hosted by the Burma Refugees Commission of the ABCUSA. The meeting was scheduled after a productive visit to the Ambassador's offices in Washington DC in fall of 2017. At that time, Lynn expressed interest in visiting the Valley Forge offices of ABCUSA and meeting its leadership.

"The gathering of government officials Ambassador U Aung Lynn and his wife, Daw Kay Thi Kai Win, and First Secretary U Swe Sett with American Baptist leaders is a first, and it is welcomed because of our longstanding historical ties with Myanmar," commented IM Area Director for Southeast Asia and Japan the Rev. Leslie Turley.

The deep and meaningful relationship began over 200 years ago with the groundbreaking missionary work of Adoniram Judson as the first American protestant missionary to serve in Burma. During 40 years of service in Burma, Judson preached the gospel to thousands and accomplished the daunting task of translating the Bible from Greek into Burmese, the language of the people.

Myanmar now stands at a turning point in its history, entering the world stage for the first time as a fledgling democracy. After having been under military rule since 1962, the country held its first free elections in 2015. The recent gathering in Valley Forge was an opportunity for Lynn, his entourage and the gathered American Baptist leaders to express a common hope of a more peaceful and united Myanmar and a desire for improved civil and religious rights for all of Myanmar's Christian and Muslim minority communities.

Upon the ambassador's arrival, the Burma Refugees Commission hosted a time of official introductions and welcomes. Lynn brought greetings from Aung San Suu Kyi, government leader in the role of State Counselor and long-term leader of the pro-democracy movement in the mainly Buddhist nation of Myanmar. "State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi recognizes the long and significant relationship between American Baptist churches and Baptists in Myanmar," said Turley.

The Myanmar delegation was provided with a brief overview of IM's global servants, ministries and strategic plan, focusing on IM's work in peace and justice. IM expressed its solidarity with its counterpart in Myanmar, the Myanmar Baptist Convention. The guests toured the offices of IM, the American Baptist Home Mission Societies and ABCUSA.