This was our 11th Myanmar mission sponsored by Health Teams International (HTI) that I have had the privilege to lead.

We took a team of 11 deeply, committed health care Christians from all over the U.S. and one from Canada. Our primary purpose was to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the Burmese people, most of whom have never heard the name of Jesus. At the same time we showed them Jesus’ Love in a meaningful manner by caring for their health care needs that most people would never have had a chance to receive.

For you, who may be like me and get more information daily than you can possible read, I will give you our final results up front, and for you who have the time or interest you can read the details towards the end.

After spending 30 minutes to an hour sharing the Good News of Jesus with these beautiful, kind, loving Burmese people who had never heard of Jesus, almost 100% of them, including several Buddhist Monks asked to become Christians. We led almost 800 of them through the prayer and steps to becoming a Christian.

After they become Christians we gave them a 30-page booklet, very simply written that our host and I wrote and printed in Burmese with photos covering from Creation to Heaven but mainly how to become a Christian. We then challenged them to teach their family and friends how to become a Christian so they all could go to Heaven with them someday. Until a year or two ago Bibles were forbidden to be imported or sold in Myanmar and even today 99% of the people have no access to a Bible.
We have found from earlier missions that many of the new Christians have accepted this challenge of sharing Jesus and have led many more people to Jesus than we ever did with several new churches being started as a result. We also left our host pastor in each area with the name and address of each new Christian so he could continue to visit and mentor them. What a thrill to see how excited these new Christians become.

Buddhist people’s main goal in life is to be good and kind enough so they can be reincarnated into a better life, but when asked where they are going after they die no one knew. When they found out Christians have God’s promise that when they die they will be reincarnated directly into Heaven to be with God, Jesus and their Christian family and friends forever and ever, they all wanted to become Christians and they got very excited. We offered to teach them how to become a Christian. We also showed them Jesus’ Love by treating almost 1600 people with health care needs.

We had 6 medical personnel, more than any Myanmar mission, treated 736 patients, which was almost everyone who was seeking our medical treatment. Jim Okamoto, one of our HTI board members, who has been on over 60 medical missions, led our medical team including securing all our needed medications and supplies for the 2nd year.

We fit 685 patients with glasses with just 2 people working in the optical area. Almost 300 of them were prescription glasses fit by Dianne Woods, after a few hours of training using a very expensive portable battery powered auto refractor which could read the lens of the eye very accurately and transferred the readings into a laptop computer. The computer was programmed to select the best pair of prescription glasses from our data bank of over 3000 prescription glasses. It worked great, including near sighted, far
sighted, bifocals, trifocals and stigmatism.

This program was created by Holland Kendall, a retired, committed Christian who wanted to use his fantastic optical, technical and computer skills to help the poor people in the third world countries to see, while leading them to Christ. He trains people to use his equipment, packages everything for overseas shipment and loans us his equipment and program (only one known in the world) almost free.

My wife, Dora May, and a few others fit almost 400 reader glasses. It was very rewarding to see the expressions on the people’s faces when all of a sudden they could see after so many years of everything being blurry, with no hope of ever seeing clearly again. No question that it completely changed many people’s lives in just the few minutes it took to help them see clearly again. They could now go back to school, thread a sewing needle, get a job, read again and see our beautiful world clearly.

Medical and dental pains would probably go away in time but not being able to see is a life time problem. Needless to say the optical department was very busy and they had instant results with their treatment.

Dr. Hill, from Canada and I did the dental surgery. We were able to extract many teeth on 166 people. We observed massive oral disease. These people had never seen or many never heard of a dentist. Some were afraid because dentistry was so unknown to them. Dr. Hill and I had time to spend 20-30 minutes with each patient while we waited for the anesthesia to take good effect. We talked with each patient one-on-one about Jesus. We had almost 99% of our patients ask to become a Christian. We led them to salvation through Jesus Christ.

Many people showed great pleasure and excitement after becoming a Christian. These people have no dental or oral education. Very few had a toothbrush and many did not know what a toothbrush was. Dental floss was not available or heard of in Myanmar. Almost no one had
ever been to the dentist before and many people had 5 to 10 or more abscessed teeth but interestingly, they only wanted the teeth that were hurting at the present moment extracted, usually 1, 2, or 3 of them. We almost never saw fillings or any type of dentures or replacement of missing teeth. Many times if they had an aching front tooth they just pulled it out themselves. And sometimes we think we have problems.

This year was a little bit of a transition year. We changed our host in Myanmar. Dr. Rev. Robin Seia invited me to bring a HTI team to Myanmar 12 years ago. He did a fantastic job of hosting our teams and help us to win several thousand unreached Buddhists to become committed Christians. Robin and HTI shared the same goal, that is to evangelize the unreached.

I have a fantastic respect for Robin and feel he was one of Myanmar’s best trained and greatest Christian leaders in all of Myanmar. Robin has finally reached an advanced age that his health is starting to fail him. He had to retire from all his many responsibilities recently but hung on to hosting our HTI teams. After 11 ½ years of hosting us he finally gave up his last responsibility as our HTI host. In October 2014 he e-mailed me and said he had to turn over the responsibility of hosting HTI to his son-in-law Jubilee.

Jubilee has a bachelor’s degree and masters in Theology and has been Robin’s right hand helper for over 15 years. Jubilee took over as pastor of the largest Nazarene church in Myanmar at Robin’s request when Robin needed to step down to assume other responsibilities. Jubilee took over as dean of Robin’s Bible School, again at Robin’s request. Jubilee helped Robin host and translate for every HTI mission we have had.

Jubilee was my personal translator for the first 10 years of our Myanmar missions and together we led over 1000 unreached people to Christ. I have as great of respect for Jubilee as I do for Robin. I had been talking with Jubilee for the last few years and asked him if he would host our HTI teams when Robin could no longer do it. He said yes and he was ready although he only had 2 ½ months this year to make many of the arrangements when Robin finally had to give it up.
They say behind every great man is a great woman. Moe Moe is Jubilee’s wife, daughter of Robin, mother of 2 boys ages 9 and 11, and has a bachelor’s degree from a Christian University in the U.S. Moe Moe is a great leader and has been a very important woman in supporting and helping her husband in all his responsibilities. Moe Moe has also been a very big help in all of our HTI missions, especially this year.

Do not get me wrong, our HTI team members, Jubilee and Moe Moe, would not have had much success at all if it were not for all our translators and helpers. Jubilee and Moe Moe were responsible for not only hosting us foreigners but also finding all the Christian translators, cooks and helpers and furnish them with transportation, food and housing and then telling each one what their responsibilities would be. We not only had our 11 HTI team members but almost 30 Christian translators and helpers all working together to make Robin’s, Jubilee’s, and Moe Moe’s several months of planning a success.

It is said a good missionary is one that is very flexible. This being a year of host transition there were times that we all needed to be flexible and we all were and it made for a very successful mission.

For those of you who are still with me I will share with you some of the interesting details of this mission. We spent 2 or 3 days in 4 very unreached areas. One of the areas where we spent 2 days was 95 miles out of Yangon in the edge of the Mon State.

Our first 2 days we visited Pastor Kip’s small house church in a rapidly growing suburb of Yangon. Pastor Kip was greatly concerned because the Buddhist mayor of his area who had persecuted him many times, was not happy with us coming to his area and gathering such a crowd of people. The mayor stood outside and requested that all the waiting patients to go into the small area of our clinic. We had patients standing around everywhere.

The second day the mayor asked me to take out some of his aching, infected teeth, which I did. After I finished the mayor stood up, smiled and told me we were doing a good work here and that we needed to come here again. He then allowed the waiting patients to stand outside the front of our clinic.
Pastor Kip reported to Jubilee before we left Myanmar that the number of people in Pastor Kip’s congregation doubled the Sunday after we were there.

Pastor Biaka, a young graduate of Robin’s bible school, felt led by the Lord to set up a house church in the Mon State, an area where there was absolutely no Christian influence of any kind for many, many miles. He had been there several years and had very little success. While there he suffered much persecution and many threats from the head Monk in a nearby large Buddhist Monastery as well as the village mayor and many of the people, but he continued sharing the Good News of Jesus. The head Buddhist Monk of the monastery warned everyone in the small village that they were not to go near the foreigners for free health care or to the church. The very first day a Monk who was second in charge of the monastery came to our clinic sick and in pain. After getting treated and hearing the Good News of Jesus he asked to become a Christian and he did. The mayor of the town came and was treated. He also became a Christian. A school teacher came, she became a Christian and then confessed she had recently severely beat one of her young boy students because he admitted he was a Christian, but she promised that would never happen again.

On our second day at Pastor Biaka’s small house church the word of our free medical treatment spread to many of the surrounding villages and we had many more patients. Some walked hours to where we were. They were much more receptive to the Gospel because they had not been threatened. All together we had over 250 unreached people ask to become Christians.

We spent Sunday in this small house church. Dr. Gary Moberg, the evangelist on our team preached the sermon about being strong under persecution. The number of new Christians almost doubled the attendance.
Previously Pastor Biaka was not welcomed when he tried to visit homes in his village. We heard a week later he was very welcome in many homes in following up on the new Christians and that many others were coming to him asking about what Christians believe. He said he was so busy he did not know which way to turn and felt that the Buddhist stronghold had been broken. He asked Jubilee for extra help and was sent several Christian helpers to share with the new Christians.

The next area we visited for 3 days was at the invitation of Rev. Lay and his family, who had been ministering in an area for many years under severe persecution and threats which resulted in a small group of believers. The suburb he had been led to serve in had grown very fast to the main industrial area of Yangon with over 700,000 people. It also had a very strong Buddhist influence with over 4,000 Buddhist Monks and 100 monasteries and temples. Pastor Lay was not only persecuted by the Buddhist Monks but also by many of his surrounding neighbors who would not even talk to him.

We had a great ministry here with lots of patients. Dr. Gary Moberg, who is actually a dentist, sold his practice in mid-life and went back to a great Christian university and received a masters degree in Theology, specializing in missions. He has joined our HTI board as our Chaplin and is searching for a full time mission area.

Dr. Moberg’s job as our team evangelist was to help gather the patients that were waiting to be seen and invite them into a separate, fairly large room away from the clinic where he shared The Good News of Jesus with them. He and his very excited evangelist translator spent a full hour with groups of 15 to 25 at a time. He gave them the choice to become a Christian if they wanted to. Almost everyone asked to become a Christian, so he led our largest number of people to Jesus, although most of our team mates led numerous additional people to Jesus one-on-one.

On our second day the President of Buddhist Monks in this suburb came went right upstairs to Dr. Moberg’s the Board that ruled over all 4000 to our clinic, registered and then counseling group. Pastor Lay saw
him but did not get a chance to greet or talk to him and was surprised when he went straight upstairs to listen to what Dr. Moberg had to say. Pastor Lay had been persecuted by him indirectly on several occasions and knowing that he was the most powerful Buddhist in this whole area he was extremely concerned.

Pastor Lay paced back and forth on the clinic floor praying for God’s protection and that God would touch his heart. Dr. Moberg, thankfully, he said later, did not know that this top head Monk was in his group so he proceeded telling the Good News normally. Dr. Moberg also took several photos of his group and his new Christians. After the counseling session was over the waiting patients came down from the upstairs room and were treated, including the head Monk who was treated medically and received glasses. He greeted Pastor Lay and said thank you.

After the head Monk left Pastor Lay and Dr. Moberg got together. Pastor Lay showed Dr. Moberg in his photos which person was the head Monk. Dr. Moberg said, he remembered him well. He listened very intently to everything Dr. Moberg had to say and shook his head in agreement, was very happy, smiling and he asked and prayed to become a Christian. Wow!! Time will tell.

One of the things that Pastor Lay was very happy about was that many of his neighbors who had persecuted him and would not talk to him came into his house church for the first time, heard the Good News and many became Christians. They talked to him for the first time in 10 years and thanked him for our team’s help.

I had a Buddhist monk come to me with a dental problem. While waiting for the anesthesia to work I had an opportunity to talk with him for about 40 minutes one-on-one. I asked him if he knew what was going to happen to him when he died, he said no, the same as all Buddhist say. He said he had devoted his life to learn and serve Buddha’s teachings in hopes he would be reincarnated into a better life when he died. I asked him if he knew or would like to know what Christians believed, he didn’t know but asked me to tell him.
After I shared with him about Jesus and what Christians believed and that I and all Christians have the promise of God to be reincarnated directly into Heaven. He quickly blurted out quite loud, I want to be a Christian and he became one very happy Christian. What an exciting experience it was for me, each time I see God’s Holy Spirit touch the hearts of any person who becomes a new Christian and change their life.

This is my 48th mission and I am still learning how to help people better. I had the opportunity to personally lead over 50 people to the Lord. After they become a Christian I give them our 30 page booklet that Jubilee and I wrote, illustrated and printed in Burmese as to how they became a Christian. This is something we encourage them to use to teach their family and friends to become Christians.

This time for the first time I opened the book to see if they could read it. Some of these people are illiterate and if so I try to help them find someone that they know who could read it to them. Often it is their children. It is written very simply. Much to my surprise almost 80% of the people knew how to read Burmese but couldn’t read this booklet. The Burmese characters (not English letters) were quite large size but they said it was all blurry. I was shocked again when I asked them if they planned to go to optical and get some reading glasses, they said no. They didn’t realize they had a problem or a correctible problem with their eyes. It come on so gradual they assumed it was just normal. So knowing that optical was swamped and had a waiting line I went and got a reading chart and had the patient tell me what size character they could see clearly. I only wish you could see their face light up when they put on glasses and suddenly they could see and read. It was all the thanks I needed.

One old man started to cry as we told him the Good News of Jesus. He told us that all his life he had been worrying what was going to happen to him when he died. Then he said now he knew where he was going and he was the happiest man in this world. He jumped up, hugged us and cried with joy.

I had two memorable patients that were sent to me from medical. They had pus running out of the side of their face in the lower jaw area. The one boy had a large red infection around the area the pus was coming out and it was painful. The medical doctors had already started him on antibiotics. I asked him how long this sore had been there and he said 2 or 3 years.
The second patient also had pus coming out of the same area of the side of her jaw. Hers was not as red or sore. When I asked her how long the pus had been coming out of her face her answer shocked me and set a new record in my book. She said she was 40 years old now and it started when she was 19 years old. To my count that is 21 years. I asked her if she knew what was causing the pus she said no.

Actually this young boy and the 40-year old woman’s problems were both the same. It was caused by a decayed, abscessed, infected lower molar. The pus from the abscess usually drains into the mouth but on rare occasions it will come out through the skin of the face.

They had both been to counseling and became Christians so it took me only 10-15 minutes to give them anesthesia and remove the abscessed roots. There is no question in my mind that in just a few days the pus would stop and the areas on the face would heal but may leave a little scar. Twenty one years of suffering and only 10-15 minutes to solve.

Several people helped a very crippled man into my dental chair with the usual toothache. After I gave him some anesthesia I started talking with him. His mind was sharp. He explained he had been in a serious accident and was lucky to be alive. He didn’t know what a Christian believed and although he was Buddhist as almost 100% of the people were, he said he would like to know what a Christian believed.

After about 30 minutes of explanation of Jesus and what Christians believed he very excitedly asked me to teach him how to become a Christian. So I did and he became a very excited, happy Christian. I gave him one of our booklets and prayed for him before he left, as I do with all my patients. When I got done he said something that rings in my head daily and I will never forget.

He said, “I almost died in my accident, WHY DIDN’T SOMEONE TELL ME ABOUT JESUS BEFORE?” I didn’t know what to say and without prompting he said, “I WILL TELL EVERYONE I MEET ABOUT JESUS.”

It may be hard to believe but today we still have over two billion people, one third of the world that have never heard the name of Jesus. Many of them are just waiting for someone to come and tell them.
I thank the Lord for the fantastic opportunity he has given me to serve Him. Since I have turned 80 years old people keep asking me how long before I am going to retire from being President of Health Teams International and stop leading all these mission trips. I tell them the same thing I have been saying for years that as long as my Lord gives me health I want to be serving Him.

I sincerely want to thank all my eleven North American HTI team members, the 28 Burmese translators and helpers and the hundreds of people who helped us in so many ways with supplies, finances, encouragement, prayers and in so many other ways.

It took a large number of God’s family working together to make our 2015 Myanmar mission a success. Many thanks and God’s Blessings.

One’s life will soon be past and only what is done for Christ will last.

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Dr. William Johanson, our Vice-President of HTI led his 6th HTI mission to Myanmar this year 2 weeks after we left.

Jubilee is a very busy man. He has developed and leads a program called HI KIDZ for the last 5 years. He has trained several hundred adult Christians of all denominations all over the country to be HI KIDZ leaders. They are training several thousand kids morals, education
and Christianity with the goal of reaching several million kids in the next few years. Jubilee says our kids are going to be our leaders of the future and need to be trained as Christians.

In spite of Jubilee’s many big responsibilities in his HI KIDZ program he tells me we need to send more HTI mission teams because our missions have proved to be one of the best methods of evangelism in all of Myanmar.