HISTORY
OF
SHAN CHURCHES
IN
BURMA (MYANMAR)
( 1861 – 2001 )
By
Sai Htwe Maung
First Edition
August 2007
This book is dedicated to my beloved parents
Saya Hsaw and Daw Nyunt.
Preface

Praise be to God our Heavenly Father!

In the year 2000, at Great Commission Institute Training in TaungGyi, a young lady wept when she heard that we had tried to unite Shan Churches all over Shan States to form Shan Baptist Convention but failed. She said that no one had told her, including many young people, about our effort and work among Shan Churches, needless to say about the work of missionaries one hundred years ago. She thought that no one had tried to do anything for the betterment of Shan Churches except their pastors in their own Churches for their own congregations. It prompted me to write this book to let all the Shan Churches and Christian workers who are involved with missions among the Shan to know the history of Shan Churches since the beginning in 1861.

History is a record description of the past events. The historians write the events without bias so that the readers get the truth of the past. The Bible tells us the truth. The writers of the books in the Bible have written the true story about Adam, Abraham, Jacob, David, Peter and Paul etc. both sides of their life without prejudice. However not every one wants the truth to be told. Pharisees hated Jesus because He spoke and taught the truth. In writing history of Shan Churches in Burma the real story and the truth must be told otherwise it will not be a history.

My purpose of writing this book is to let the people see the works done by missionaries, evangelists, pastors and Christian workers among the Shan in 140 years, to appreciate their dedications and sacrifices, to follow their footsteps in good direction, to learn the lessons and strive forward for perfection in the future Shan missions. Nothing in the book is personal. I have no intention of hurting or discrediting any one, any Church, any association, any convention or any denomination who have been serving God faithfully and honestly.

Undoubtedly there will be two kinds of reactions to this book. One will appreciate for writing and telling the truth and revealing success and accomplishment, the weaknesses and failure in our missions, in our leaders and our Churches so that the future Shan leaders and workers who work in Shan missions and Churches will be able to improve and achieve successful ministries. Another reaction will be disappointment and anger for telling the truth and revealing the weakness and failure in our missions, our leaders and our Churches. I wish the readers would read this book with open mind and sincere heart so that we can learn the lessons and strive forward for the betterment of our Shan Churches and missions in the future.

Sai Htwe Maung  
April 2007  
United States of America
Introduction

The Baptist mission has started among the Shan in Burma (Myanmar) in 1861 by missionaries from Baptist Missionary Union of United States. They continued their missions in the Shan States until 1966 when Burmese military government asked all foreigners to leave the country after military coup.

There are many difficulties in evangelizing the Shan because of their long and old traditional cultural background and belief. Knowing the past missionary endeavor among the Shan is very important to make changes if necessary, to improve and strive forward for the successful missions in the future. The main source of information and references to this writing are the letters of missionaries, reports from Baptist Missionary Union, Baptist Missionary Magazine, Burma Baptist Convention Annual Meeting Records, Minutes of the meetings from Shan Churches and associations, corresponding letters, field research and personal experience.

Chapter one of the book is about the Shan people, their ancient kingdoms, their states, their culture and their religion. Chapter two is about the beginning of Baptist mission in Burma, in Shan people, the most famous missionary Rev. Josiah Nelson Cushing who translated Bible to Shan language, the establishment of first mission field in HsiPaw, second mission field in MunogNai, the third mission field in NamKham and the fourth mission field in KengTung and subsequent development. Chapter three is about the challenges in twenty-first century and the chapter four is about how we develop a project to meet the challenges. Chapter five is about the effort in ministry development in translating Shan Bible into new Shan writing system, publishing new Shan Hymnbook and broadcasting gospel in radio to the Shan. Chapter six is the analysis make on the past and present situation in Shan Churches and missions. The biography, corresponding letters and reports from Shan Churches, leaders and associations are included in appendix. Because of inadequate resources and references, I admit that this writing is not a comprehensive history about the Shan Churches but this is the true facts and writing.
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