

CHAPTER SIX

ANALYSIS ON SHAN MISSIONS

The reports and letters from Missionaries, Baptist Missionary Union Annual Reports and Baptist Missionary Magazines from 1861 to 1954, and reports from local Churches' leaders from 1955 to 2001 are the main sources which have given me a good insight about Shan Churches in Myanmar.

The analysis on mission work among the Shan cannot be done properly and accurately because most of the reports given by missionaries who worked among the Shan are not specifically telling us about the work among the Shan people but generally about the work in the Shan States including other people groups living in Shan States. All statistics given were also not exclusively the Shan converts. It makes us not able to make proper assessments on Shan Churches. The records kept by Shan Churches' associations are also not complete and some are not available. I have tried my best to get the most as much as possible.

Our main concerns are centered on the questions "Why are there very few Shan become Christians," as only 10,792 baptized in 140 years, "Why are very few Shan Churches planted," as only 92 Shan Churches in 140 years. Even though we cannot judge whether the mission among the Shan is successful or not, we can see, study, learn and do more research on the work among the Shan and strive for better and fruitful future.

This analysis is directly based on the reports given by missionaries in the past and the writer's own research and experience in present situation in Shan Churches. The analysis is divided into the "past" and "present" situation. The past stands for the period between 1861 and 1966, and the present stands for the post foreign missionary era between 1966 and 2001. The italic letters are denoting original letters from the missionaries.

Please note that Burma and Myanmar are the same. The country was previously known as Burma before Military Government changes the name to Myanmar in 1989.

1. Workers in The Harvest of Shanland

Past

Rev. Bixby said on June 28, 1861, *“Must they die forever because there is no one to lead them to the tree of life? It seems to me that Christians in America cannot allow this. How many there are in our Colleges and Seminaries and Churches who would be delighted to tell them of a Savior’s dying love! Why not send them? Have compassion on the long reaper; have compassion on these multitudes and send them help from your many sanctuaries. The Churches must give up their pastors and businessmen must give of their substance to send them and they must go into the entire world speedily for the night cometh.”* *“The harvest before me is indeed great but what can I say of the laborers? As I stand on the border of this broad harvest-field and look over it I am overwhelmed with a sense of the magnitude of the work and when I turn my eyes to a single sickle my heart sinks within me. Can one reaper garner such a harvest?”*¹

Rev. Bixby said on November 6, 1861, *“When I left Rangoon I tried to get a Burmese preacher to accompany me to this place (Toungoo) but did not succeed. Since coming here and seeing the demands of the place and the very great destitution I have written to different stations with feeling that I must have a native helper but hitherto have failed. But thank God a man has been raised to me on the ground who boldly and intelligently proclaims the gospel in all places at proper times and all at his own charges.”*²

Rev. Bixby said on November 12, 1862, *“When will you send him? If I could divide myself into a hundred parts every part would without delay find a place to work in the center of a rich ripe harvest field. But alas! It is hard to be only one. In America, twenty or thirty applicants for every vacant pulpit for every chaplaincy in the army! In this portion of “the field” not one preacher to a million. “How long, O Lord, how long?”*³

Rev. Bixby said in 1863, *“How can I do all this work and not break down? I am the pastor of a growing Church whose members need the most constant watch care and the most patient and thorough teaching, teacher of a Theological Seminary with six young men preparing for the ministry, a preaching missionary at large with souls millions of people to care for, a writer and translator for a whole race of Shan and an explorer of unknown regions. This is the outline. Can I fill it up?”*⁴

Rev. Cushing said in 1893, *“The present need of the Shan mission is men, who are ready to go into the interior take up a life of comparative isolation and pioneer labor and availing themselves of the preparatory work already done vigorously prosecute the work of evangelization.”*⁵

It was reported in 1916, *“While missionary efforts among the Karen have been signalized by great evangelistic results, among the Shan who are intense Buddhists, the work has been characterized by a slow ingathering of converts. Part of this has been due to small number of missionaries engaged in the work. Shan stations have been opened at Bhamo, HsiPaw, NamKham, MuongNai, TaungGyi and KengTung but the missionary staff has become so depleted that only four men, A. H. Henderson, M.D., at TaungGyi, Rev. Dr. H. C. Gibbens, M.D., at MuongNai, C. A. Kirkpatrick, M.D. at NamKham and Rev. W. M. Young at KengTung are now working in the Shan language. Bhamo has not had a Shan missionary for years. HsiPaw is without a missionary and Rev. Young though speaking Shan has his time occupied in work for the Muhso, Lahu, Wa and Lolo tribes of the KengTung field who are coming in masses towards Christianity.”*⁶

¹ Letter From Mr. Bixby, June 28, 1861. Toungoo.

² Letter From Mr. Bixby, Nov. 5, 1861. Toungoo.

³ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Nov. 12, 1862, Toungoo.

⁴ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Jan. 16, 1863, Toungoo.

⁵ “The Shan Mission” By Rev. J. N. Cushing, D. D. Boston, American Baptist Missionary Union 1893

⁶ 102nd Annual Report, 1916, American Baptist Missionary Union

Bixby was calling Colleges, Seminaries and Churches in United States to send missionaries to the Shan. He said that there were not enough workers in the harvest of Shan. The Baptist mission first started in Burma among Burmese and Karen. The mission to the Shan began 48 years after Judson began his mission among Burmese in 1813. Since native helper was very important in reaching local people, Bixby tried to get local helper but could not get one from any mission stations in Burma. However later we've seen Karen missionaries came along with American missionaries and worked among the Shan.

In mission field, the one who worked, worked very hard. One person did many jobs at the same time. Bixby said that if he could divide himself into a hundred parts every part would find a place to work. How long could a man stand without physical sickness or psychological derange or nervous breakdown in such situation? How long a candle will last if burning at both ends? We have seen many missionaries got sick and have to return to America very often. Some had nervous breakdown.

Slower response, fewer result, low morale and disappointment in Shan work were partly due to inadequate manpower in mission fields. There were six mission fields opened almost at the same time for the Shan in Shan States but only four missionaries were working in the fields. Some mission fields did not have missionary. How could the work be done without worker? If there's no follow up, the seeds sown will be eaten by the birds. That's why mission among the Shan grew weaker and weaker. Why couldn't American Baptist Foreign Mission Board send more missionary? Bixby lamented! We have noticed that foreign mission support was also weakening financially. That's why some mission fields had to be either rearranged or closed.

Present

Today the reapers in the harvest of Shan are very few. There are not more than one hundred full-time Christian workers working among five million Shan in Myanmar. Since 1966 there is no foreign missionary living and working among the Shan in Myanmar any more when Burmese military government took control of the country and asked foreigners to leave. No foreign missionary allowed to live and do religious work in Myanmar ever since.

Since there are not enough evangelists and missionaries preaching gospel to the Shan, those serving honestly are working very hard faithfully but not efficiently. Some dedicated God's servants are trying very hard and doing many things as a one-man-band among the Shan. By His wonderful grace and assignment I have been able to produce radio program for broadcasting one hour every day, rewriting Shan Bible, rewriting and producing Shan Hymnal, writing and publishing Shan gospel tracts and books, traveling, preaching, evangelizing, planting Churches, giving training to evangelists and Church leaders, recording and producing Shan gospel songs on volunteer basis and also healing the sick as a medical doctor. It was reported by Bixby in 1861 that a local man went out preaching gospel by his own expense in Toungoo. Today we seldom see Shan pastors or evangelists going out and preaching gospel on volunteer basis. Instead some Seminary graduates demand better salary, better housing and better benefit for a job at the Church. Some even threaten to resign if they were sent to other remote places. Nevertheless there are some pastors, evangelists and missionaries working as tent-maker, without salary or with minimal support only. We have to raise such dedicated and self-sacrificed workers among the Shan.

Regretfully some of our Shan students going to Seminaries and Bible Schools with different idea, planning and motive instead of fully committed to serve in missions. Some even have the idea and motive of going abroad after graduation because it's been claimed that it's easier to go abroad if they are Bible School graduates. Locally 65 Shan graduated from Bible Schools and Seminaries in 140 years. In average only one person graduated from Bible School in two years. If we are going to rely on these graduates, by proportion, one graduate is responsible for 76,923 Shan. Moreover very few Seminary graduates want to be evangelists or missionaries because of poverty, difficulty, hardship and suffering in mission fields. Most of them only want to stay at well-established Churches. Some even do

not enter into ministry after finishing their Seminary. We sent 18 Shan students to various Seminaries and Bible Schools in 1985, expecting that they would become evangelists and missionaries to the Shan after their four years study. However none of them are serving as evangelist or missionary in mission fields. Most of them are serving in Churches as pastors. Most of them have been ordained. We have discovered that it's quite successful when we sent grass-root-evangelists, who only have primary education but have gone under short course training program, to Shan villages for the missions. Through these bare-foot-evangelists the miracles are seen, the evil spirits are driven out and more Churches have been planted in the Eastern Shan State.

Working among the Shan is just like Bixby said, "A single sickle in the harvest." How can a single person do it all? How can a handful of Shan Christian workers save millions? The most needed in Shan mission is not money but human resources. Not all Shan Churches are financially poor. Since Shan Christians come from Buddhist background and living in the Buddhist environment they enjoy giving and are very generous. Most of the Shan Churches are financially strong to stand on their own feet. Some may have millions of Kyat in Church fund but they use very little amount of money in supporting evangelist, missionary, pastor and mission work. Missionary work is not their first priority. One of their most important priority is building church building bigger and bigger, make it more and more beautiful, buying more and more materials for the Church. They are willing to spend millions on church building, car and material but not for the missions. Churches are even competing with one another in building church building. Little effort is put on mission and less support in evangelistic outreach activities. They use to say, "We don't have money to do it."

Under 21st Century Shan Mission Project's goal number one, short-course training programs for Shan Churches are conducted from 1994 to 2000. Total 400 have graduated from Great Commission Institute training programs in seven years. However not all of them are going out and serving as full-time evangelists because of lack of dedication, commitment and financial support. Nevertheless the work has been done to certain extent. We need more people to serve and more money to spend in missions. We need more evangelists and missionaries to go out and preach good news to the Shan. We need more dedicated, committed and faithful servants of the Lord.

Matthew 9:37-38 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field."

Revelation 14:15 Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

2. Response to Gospel

Past

Rev. Bixby said on November 5, 1861, "*What the result of all this will be on our work I cannot say. The priest is unquestionably a Buddhist still and most ardently attached to his own bible but I must think he has taken a step unconsciously towards Christianity. I directed his attention to such passages in the Bible as speak of the spiritual nature of God, His omniscience, omnipresence, unity and eternity and he was greatly surprised and delighted. 'Why this is just what I believe' he exclaimed 'Why your Bible must have been taken from the Pali.'* After reading on still further he said, '*The God of the English is not merely the Englishman's God but the God of the whole world.'* He said, '*If I would give him the Bible he would carefully compare the two.'* I shall follow him up with the truth as it is in Jesus

and shall labor in hope that he may yet come to Christ.”⁷ “The Shan are very friendly and some listen well but none as yet believe.”⁸

Buker reported in 1935 that *Buddhist monks were baptized*. It was suggested in August 1936 by American Baptist Mission, *“The whole Shan work should be abandoned because of slow response. The argument was that the Shan had come in so slowly. It might be the wisest thing to turn to other more responsive races.”* The mission board was disappointed and not very optimistic about mission among the Shan. However Dr. Henderson, a missionary doctor to the Shan in MuongNai, defended Shan work strongly by saying, *“Except for the sadness of it, that does not affect us here in MuongNai, for we are already abandoned and are carrying on with what we can put in and contributions from local Christians and others who see the need and believe in the work. It is true that they have come in, for the most part, slowly. But I am going to ask you to put yourselves in their place and try to see how you would feel. Supposing you had been continually in the same place, shut away from the world currents for 2,000 years, with no other place for your thoughts to rest except in the past. Would it be fair to blame you for being conservative? Would it be just to expect all such influences to be changed in 40 years? This place in MuongNai has been in existence since before Christ. Do you wonder that we were constantly met with the remark ‘That is not our custom’ Would it be fair to expect that in forty years the basic nature of a race would change and that you would be one of the many who would leap up and decide that you would break with old traditions and public sentiment? Those are the conditions under which the Shan have been born and grown for hundreds of years. In forty years we have seen such changes that we are amazed. I’d rather think that when we get to heaven, I would meet many who will come forward to thank us for bringing them the message. They do not show on the Church books but this is the sort of thing I mean.”⁹*

Instead of thinking of abandoning the work because of slow or poor response the missionaries should try to find out the causes of slow response and make changes and gear up the work. Dr. Henderson expressed that it was not fair to blame the Shan being conservative in their thinking and behavior because they had been living in their culture for two thousand years. What a pity if the mission work among the Shan was abandoned as suggested by mission board in 1936! Thanks to Dr. Henderson for standing firm for the Shan mission work. It’s in fact very quick to get one convert baptized within the first six months and another six in nine months in Toungoo in 1862. Adoniram Judson, the first Baptist missionary to Burma, got the first Burmese convert after six years of hard work. In the beginning, the response to Shan mission was very quick among the Shan refugee in Toungoo.

Present

Shan are neither receptive nor resistant to the gospel. Almost the whole tribe of Kachin, Chin, Lahu, Lisu and Ahka become Christian within one hundred years. But only 0.4% of five million Shan become baptized Christian in 140 years.

One of the main obstacles is their 2000 years old tradition in Buddhism. We need to know HOW to.... with Shan Buddhist. Shan seldom refuse to listen to the gospel. They seldom say “Yes I believe” on one hearing. They may ask many questions, argue, debate and challenge before they agree to accept Jesus. I have not seen a Shan makes a decision on the spot at a crusade rally and ended up in the Church as a baptized member. A person need to discuss with their family members and relatives before making a decision to follow Jesus. Making decision to become a Christian is a very courageous and sacrificial act for a Shan. It may take years to make a decision. If the evangelist is not zealous and persistent enough in doing follow up he may easily loose a prospect. Multi-individual and corporate decision is rare. Usually the un-believed members of the family do not agree to let one of their family

⁷ Letter From Mr. Bixby. November 5, 1861. Toungoo.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Letter From Dr. A. H. Henderson, MuongNai, August 13, 1936

members to become Christian and abandon Buddhist tradition in their home. It is very difficult for a believer to go against the family and follow Jesus unless he/she dares to suffer many consequences.

Another weakness is our Shan pastors, preachers and evangelists who do not understand well about Shan culture, tradition and Buddhist practices in approaching Shan. They don't know how to begin the conversation and presentation. When some one is interested and wants to become Christian, they use to ask the new potential believer to abandon his traditions before baptizing him and accepting him as Christian. They make him Christian first before baptizing him. Shan preachers seldom make altar call after their evangelistic preaching. Probably because preacher does not expect unbeliever may come forward to accept the Lord in one hearing or he has no confidence of making such a call. Sometimes they may stand up and accept the Lord when invited but they may not take water baptism quickly, easily and lightly to become Christian.

Matthew 13:3-9 Then He told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop — a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

1 Corinthians 3:5-8 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

3. Commitment and Sacrifice

Past

Rev. Bixby said on March 29, 1861, "*They may need to make strenuous exertions and perhaps practice a little self-denial to keep up the interest of the mission during this trouble times in the States but they must not leave the work of the Lord to suffer. O that the Lord would give us a little of the spirit of self-denial! If we have not the Spirit of Christ we are none of His. How marked was his self-denial! O that we may all glory in the cross!*"¹⁰ Rev. Bixby said on April 12, 1861, "*It is delightful to trace his hand in all the way thus far. He put into the Board of the Executive Committee to appoint a missionary to the Shan. He moved the heart of the missionary to accept that appointment at a great personal sacrifice.*"¹¹

Rev. Bixby said on May 8, 1862, "*In the first place it was necessary to get a comfortable dwelling. And though at first we experienced the greatest difficulty at length we succeeded in obtaining an old dilapidated house, which has been with much earn and labor converted into a very comfortable and valuable dwelling.*" "*Missionaries love to share their good things with others but their sorrows are too sacred to be revealed. The people are overwhelmed with joy when they hear of a great victory but how little do they know how little can they know what heart rending anguish was necessary to the achievement. The sunny side of missionary life may be seen and rejoiced in at home but the shady side is too deeply shaded to be seen at so great a distance. One only can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities but this is enough.*" "*Traveling in the Shan country, for the present, seems rather dubious. The whole frontier is infested with robbers who do not hesitate to shoot down men of every race and class who are supposed to have money. Several timber merchants have been robbed lately after being sadly cut up and Lt. Halhed, superintendent of police, was brutally murdered a few days ago while attending to his official duties. How long this state of things will last cannot be foreseen.*" "*The year has been draught with hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, conflicts and victories, deep depressions*

¹⁰ Letter From Mr. Bixby. March 29, 1861, Rangoon

¹¹ Letter From Mr. Bixby, April 12, 1861, Rangoon

sinking almost to despair and exaltations riving almost to ecstasy.”¹² Bixby said on July 25, 1864, “The work will go on, not without rebuffs, repulses, disappointments, losses, self-denials, heart trials, it may be death itself; but it will go on, it will be done, it is only a question of time.”¹³

We have seen incredible dedication, commitment and sacrifice made by foreign missionaries to come to the Shan and preach gospel. They had to abandon everything from United States and come to our land and people. They gave and served the best, they suffered the worst and some of them died gloriously in Shanland for the sake of the gospel and the souls of our people. Bixby asked for self-denial, willing to sacrifice for mission. He considered his acceptance as a missionary to the Shan was a great personal sacrifice. That is true. Of course the Shanland is not a better land than America. Leaving a country like America and coming to the Shan is a great sacrifice, the most courageous act and unquestionable evidence of faith. They left big houses from America and lived in old dilapidated house in Shan village. Their sorrows were sometimes too deep to reveal. They lived and traveled in the land infested with robbers and uncivilized people. How dangerous it was! How courageous they were! We have to challenge our own people that if American missionaries loved us so much that they abandoned everything and came to suffer for us, how much more we have to do for our own people. In 1910, Dr. Harper at KengTung suffered a severe accident that threatened to deprive him of the use of his right arm and for a time seemed to necessitate a trip to England for an operation.¹⁴ He did not give up. He was committed to Shan missions. He returned and served until he died. His memorial hospital was built in NamKham in 1930. There had been an unusually high loss of missionary personnel due to ill health and death. Despite the suffering and loss of life in mission fields, they continued to serve the Lord until Churches were established among the Shan.

The missionaries and faithful servants who died in Shanland were;

Mr. Kelley, died on January 1, 1873 near MuongNai.

Miss. Rockwood, died in Toungoo in 1882.

Mr. W.C. Lambert, died in HsiPaw on May 23, 1895

Rev. Dr. M. B. Kirkpatrick, M. D., died in HsiPaw on February 10, 1915.

Rev. Tha Dun, died in NamKham on November 26, 1926.

Mrs. Huldah Mix, died in TaungGyi in 1933.

Dr. Ohn Shwe, died in MuongNai in 1936.

Saya Sam Pwa, died in NamKham in 1942.

Dr. L. T. Ah Pon, died during Japanese occupation.

Dr. Grace Russell Seagrave, died in NamKham on August 17, 1951.

Rev. Htun Pyu, died in NamKham on November 20, 1958.

Dr. Gordan Stifler Seagrave, died in NamKham on March 28, 1965.

Rev. Kham Maung, died in MuSe on February 9, 1976.

Dr. Ai Lun, died in LaShio on January 18, 1978.

Rev. Ai Hmoon, died in SeLan on August 30, 1980.

Rev. Ai Pan, died in NamKham on October 30, 1980.

Present

The American missionaries had made a commitment and sacrifice and come, suffered and died in Shanland for the sake of the gospel. It is not possible to serve God if we cannot make a commitment to follow Him and dedicate our life for His mission.

There are some Shan Christian workers who are very dedicated and working very hard in serving among the Shan. But we have to admit that there are very few. Big number of Bible School and Seminary graduates resigned from ministry after serving for a few months or years and left for secular

¹² Letter From Bixby, May 8, 1862, Toungoo

¹³ Letter from Bixby, July 25, 1864, The Baptist Missionary Magazine, February 1865, p42

¹⁴ 96th Annual Report, 1910, American Baptist Missionary Union

work. Some even do not join the ministry at all. There are 43 people graduated from Seminaries and Bible Schools from 1893 to 1992 from ShweLi Valley, Northern Shan State, but only 19 had served in the Church. A Seminary graduate is now working as a butcher at a meat shop, a graduate is selling clothes in the market, a graduate is doing trading and some graduates are doing secular works. What made them quit the ministry? Lack of commitment and dedication before going to Seminary are the main reasons. Some go to Bible School without God's calling to be the servants of God. Economic hardship is one of the satanic weapons. Many Shan believers dare not to join full-time ministry because of eminent of facing hardship. For a Shan to commit to full-time ministry is definitely a step of faith, demonstrating willingness to be sacrificed for the sake of the gospel because the Church do not give adequate support.

In 1998, I have received a letter from Shan believers in HsiPaw, the first mission field in Shan country in 1889, asking me to send a pastor to them. There are some Shan Christian families longing to form a Church. I asked general secretary of ShweLi Valley Shan Baptist Mission to look at the request and send a pastor to them. He promised to send a pastor but until today no one goes to HsiPaw. The same situation is in PangLong and other Shan villages. In some places there are already Christian families but they don't have pastor or leader to lead them in worship and forming a Church. In 100 years, there are 17 Churches under ShweLi Valley Shan Baptist Mission, Northern Shan State. In some Churches there are more than one pastor. In some Churches there are no pastors. For instance there are five Bible School graduates including three ordained and two un-ordained pastors working together in one Church, which has four hundred members. MuongPa Village Church in the Northern Shan State was planted in 1980. Rev. Ye Boy served there until he passed away in 1990. After Ye Boy's death no one goes to live in MuongPa Village and take care of the Church. MuongPa village is 80 miles away from MuSe and 20 miles away from LaShio. MuSe Shan Baptist Church sends a pastor only once a month to go and see the Church and to conduct communion service for believers. A man who has graduated from MayMyo Lisu Bible Seminary said, "I have graduated from English Seminary. MuongPa village is not my place. I deserve better place." Another young ordained pastor said, "If you give me such and such, so and so, I'll go." Until today there is no pastor serving at MuongPa village. Many Seminary or Bible School graduate do not want to go to remote villages. We have forgotten the American Missionaries who came to our land and our people a century ago. They all were very highly educated people with master and doctor degrees. If they chose the better and more comfortable place, better pay and benefits, I am sure none of them would have come to our land.

Some of the main reasons for students going to Seminaries and Bible Schools in recent years are:

1. After matriculation examination they want to continue study at higher-level education, Universities and Colleges, but not qualify. They go to Seminary as alternative.
2. Some are sent by parents to Bible Schools because he/she is too difficult to be taught or controlled at home, having bad character, alcohol or drug addiction problem, expecting that he/she will be changed at Bible School.

A pastor told me that he learned from some seminary students how to play poker and how to smoke because there are many bad students in Bible School. A lecturer at Bible School admits that they have many students with bad character, behavior and problems. Some of the students have to be dismissed from school because of breaking the regulation. Some pastors of the Church give false letter of recommendation to the students to get admission to Bible School. A daughter of a pastor was dismissed from Seminary because of pregnancy without marriage while living in dorm during her study. A lecturer at Seminary said, "Our seminary is not correctional institution. We offer academic education."

3. Some think that they may have a better chance of going abroad, especially USA, if they've graduated from Bible School and Seminary and work in the Church or Christian organization. Myanmar Baptist Convention use to send their people abroad under sponsorship of foreign mission or Churches. Some do not return after arriving abroad.

4. When all Universities in Burma were closed because of political upheaval in 1988, many students applied to Bible Schools and Seminaries. A lecturer at Bible School said that the applications to Seminary and Bible Schools are three hundred times more than normal situation.
5. Some have a real calling from God and a genuine heart of serving the Lord.

We give thanks and honor to those who are faithfully and sincerely serving with great sacrifice and dedications.

Matthew 10:38 Anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Philippians 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.

4. Opposition to Christianity

Past

Bixby reported on October 25, 1862, *“Public sentiment, which is powerful for good or evil everywhere acts strongly against Christianity here and the fear of ridicule may keep back many for a time but if they are indeed pricked in the heart not simply cut to the heart sooner or later they will come.”* Bixby reported on January 16, 1863, *“Buddhist persecution however is more formidable. It appeals to superstition, which has at best a strong hold on the native mind. It talks of an awful hell for all those who turn from the religion of their fathers. It arouses public sentiment, which is more difficult to stem than a mighty flood, it takes hold of the tender family ties and tears them asunder. Indeed it is impossible for the people in a Christian land to conceive adequately of the nature and extent of the persecution to which our feeble disciples are subjected. I often wonder that they stand it so well. It is only because when the enemy comes in like a flood the Lord lifts up a standard against him. An effort has been made directly by the priests and others to separate wives from the their husbands whom I had baptized with the hope, no doubt, of leading them to abandon the faith.”* Bixby reported on March 25, 1863, *“Since the New Year came in twenty-five adults nearly all heads of families have applied for baptism, some of them in the midst of great opposition, nineteen of them have been accepted and baptized while the others remain on trial.”*

Rev. Rose reported in November 1868, *“Never once we were insulted or treated rudely. The people listened with attention and treated us with respect and often with kindness. Objections would sometimes be raised mostly by Burmese officials, messengers or others who are always found about the Shan courts; these Burman would often ask questions, raise objections, or jump into an argument, as much for the purpose of displaying before the Shan courts their stock of sacred Gaudama’s lore, as for defending Gaudama’s religion. But the success of these self-complacent gentlemen was such as to render them quiet after a few brief encounters.”*¹⁵ It was reported by Rev. Cushing in 1870, *“The attendance at Church service was irregular, varying from nine to twenty and more, the irregularity being occasioned by the opposition of Shan priests, who intimidated the children and their parents.”* and in 1888, *“Two persons who seemed to be hopeful inquirers almost ready to receive the truth did not have the courage to brave the opposition of their heathen relatives and take stand for Christ.”*

Rev. W.M. Young reported in 1903, *“The first convert in KengTung had to endure severe persecution but he had proved a steadfast and earnest man. For several months opposition was very strong. The priests who at first seemed very friendly became openly hostile as soon as active work was begun. Several had professed to believe that Christ was the true God but the opposition had kept them from taking a firm stand. Some of them were told they would die in three days if they became Christians. Satan was powerfully entrenched here and the early converts would have to face bitter opposition. The Khun are very conceited, bigoted and superstitious. The northern Shan are slaves to*

¹⁵ Letter From Mr. Rose, Missionary Magazine, November 1868.

custom, but purer in morals, and more accessible to the gospel.” Dr. Henderson reported in 1912, “A teacher says when he went into the village no one bothered to stop the dogs from barking at him.” and in 1936, “If they abandoned worshiping Buddha, they would almost certainly have been driven out from their village.”¹⁶

We have seen some American missionaries were warmly welcomed by SaoPha and Shan people wherever they went. Shan were generally not militant to Christianity. We have read a very friendly religious dialogue between Dr. Henderson and a Buddhist monk in MuongNai (page 52). Some of the Buddhist monks were the real seekers of the truth. They did not refuse to read the Bible. They made comparison with Buddhist scripture and learned about Christian God. But they did try to stop people becoming Christians. We did not see them making direct interference to the mission work or giving direct trouble to missionaries. May be because they were under British sovereignty.

Present

The Christian has three implacable foes: the world, the flesh and the devil.¹⁷ The attack may be physical or mental or spiritual in character. The opposition to Shan believer usually comes from immediate family. Sometimes when someone wants to believe Christ and become Christian he/she must first get agreement from immediate family. If someone goes against the family and becomes Christian he/she will be excommunicated from family, in the worst situation, driven out from home or taken away the birthright. Sometimes a shelter or a new village has to be built for new believers. I met a man who was driven out from his home by his father in-law because of his conversion to Christianity. He had to leave his wife and his one-month-old son and live alone in a small tent. A girl was beaten many times by her mother in-law for going to the Church. Some tolerant parents may allow their children to choose their own faith. In fact Jesus has already forewarned us about this division in Matthew 10:34-36.

Some Buddhist monks are friendly to Christian missionaries and pastors. But some see Christianity as a threat to their well-being and religion. I have visited Buddhist monks and Abbots at monasteries a number of times. They are friendly to me. I have never been rejected or treated as their enemy. One time I was taken to a Shan Buddhist monastery in Yangon by a friend of mind who wanted me to meet some Buddhist monks who use to listen to my gospel message in radio and have written me letters. Usually the Buddhist Abbot sits on the higher place and all the lay people sit on the floor, which is lower place. When I first got into the room I was given a place to sit on the floor by my Buddhist friend. But when I was introduced to the Abbot as a Christian pastor, the Abbot came down from his high place and sit next to me on the floor and had a very polite and friendly conversation with me. It is unfortunate that some of our pastors and Christian workers do not have a contact, communication, meeting and dialogue with Buddhist monks. They even do not try. May be they are taught not to communicate and have dialogue with leaders of other faiths. When I was young my pastor, Church elders and my father told me not to go to Buddhist monastery for whatever reasons. I did not know why. Villagers of a Buddhist village use to have meeting at monastery to discuss the matters relating to community and village affair. There is no special place for community meeting or gathering in small village. When our evangelist was invited to go to attend the meeting at monastery, he asked me, “Should I go to the monastery for the meeting? It is a Buddhist place. As a Christian minister, is it appropriate for me to sit in the monastery?” I said, “Why not. You are not going to worship other god. You are going to meet the people and talk about the village affair. You should go and show your concern and participation in the community. Don’t isolate yourself.” Make friends, not enemies!

Many Shan Christian leaders do not understand interfaith-dialogue. Friendship with Buddhist is very important if we want to have peace and freedom of missions among the Shan since 99% of Shan are Buddhist. Most of the monks have high authority over the villages. Without monk’s goodwill

¹⁶ Shan work questioned by Henderson, August 13, 1936.

¹⁷ Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective by J. Hebert Kane, published by Baker Book House, Michigan, 1979, p267

gesture it is not easy to have a free and peaceful Christian activities in the village. One time a Buddhist monk was searching for the truth. He listened to the gospel in radio. He wanted to go to the Church to hear Christian teaching and experience Christian worship. Once he approached the Church on Sunday, when the worship service was about to begin, the usher saw the monk with a yellow robe and he said to the monk, "You have come to the wrong place. This is not the place for Buddhist monk." The monk was not allowed to go into the Church. This is what the Buddhist monk gives a testimony after he becomes a Christian. Even though there are some opposition and discrimination against Christianity there are few direct Christian persecution yet. I have not heard of a Shan Christian pastor being arrested and persecuted because of purely preaching gospel, a Shan believer being put in jail because of his faith in Christ. Recently I met Shan political leaders who were not Christians. They asked me to say grace for the food before eating meal. Shan are now becoming more tolerant and open to Christianity. The real opposition is not from Buddhists but from some authority. New church buildings are not allowed to be built. The new building can only be named as Christian Center not a church. Cross is not allowed to be erected on top of the building. The cross erected on the hill has been pulled down.

Matthew 10:16 I am sending you out like sheep among wolves . Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

Acts 4:18-20 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

5. Religion, Tradition, Superstition

Past

Rev. Cushing said, "*Shan are sturdy mountaineers and occupy the most Eastern section of Burma bordering on Siam and China. They are nominally Buddhists and offer sacrifices to spirits and are controlled by many inherited superstitions.*"¹⁸

Rev. Bixby said, "*The Buddhist religion is the religion of the Shan.*"¹⁹ Bixby said on October 25, 1862, A man said, "*I believe your religion is true but I am ashamed to embrace it.*" "*He does not come to the chapel but visits me privately quite often ostensibly for instruction in science but is always willing to listen when I turn to the Bible.*"²⁰ SaoPha consented reluctantly but listened attentively. When his son told him that he had received the doctrine of the true God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, he said, "*If you believe in Him, continue to worship Him. I shall not yet change my religion.*"²¹

Rev. Cushing said that the Shan considered Christianity as doctrine of foreign religion. Mr. Case reported in 1885, "*To be told that they be no gods which are made with hands, does not please these bigoted Buddhists and when an attempt is made in preaching to them most of them sit in sullen silence till it often seems like talking to many stones. There are, however, some gratifying exceptions to this rule. At present a few among them, two or three priests seem inclined to turn from their idols to the living God.*"²² and in 1886, "*The city had no desire to hear of our religion, many however, were quite attentive and they said that the message was good but none were ready to give up all their old ideas for the sake of salvation from sin and woe.*"²³

¹⁸ Rev. Dr. Cushing, Josiah Nelson. D. D, Ph. D. By Henry Melville King, published by Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1907

¹⁹ Letter From Bixby, April 12, 1861, Rangoon.

²⁰ Letter from Bixby, October 25, 1862, Toungoo

²¹ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Toungoo, British Burma, October 25, 1862.

²² 71st Annual Report, 1885, American Baptist Missionary Union

²³ 72nd Annual Report, 1886, American Baptist Missionary Union

Dr. Henderson reported in 1894 from MuongNai, *“The work here is sowing but we sow in great hope for while superstition and idolatry meet us everywhere yet the promises of our Master are sure. We meet the grossest superstition at every turn, once or twice we have found them saying charms over their medicine and one old man who had been relieved when we went to speak to him about God said he did not know God but he would worship me for he thought I must be God.”*²⁴

Dr. Henderson reported in 1895, *“Some person professes to have heard from one of the Phe (spirits, some good, but mostly bad) that there was so much of this Jesus Christ religion being preached that they (the Phe) were going to leave. Two of the Idols also feel it so keenly that they are said to be sweating from the same cause. This is another version of “even the devils are subject unto us.” In this connection it may interest you to hear my opinion of the character of the Shan, bearing in mind however that I have lived here only one year. Of course they are horribly superstitious, everything they cannot understand is ascribed to Phe.”*²⁵

It was reported in 1963 that the Shan were complacent and slow to change. They had a religion of their own - Buddhism mixed with Phe (spirit being) worship. Unless they were sick, diseased or troubled or possessed by evil spirits, they seldom seek help from pastors or missionaries and conversion was not easy. If any one possessed with evil spirit he was warned by community to do away with the spirit and if one was unable to do so, he would be driven out of the village. He usually found refuge in a Christian village where the pastor and the elders, in the name of Jesus Christ, would drive out the evil spirit or heal mental or bodily disease that was cursed by evil spirit. After which the afflicted person usually accepted Christ and freed from the evil spirit and settled down in Christian community. It is interesting to hear a man said that he believed that Christianity was true but he was ashamed to embrace it. He may not be ashamed of Jesus who was hung on the cross but he may be ashamed of being a Shan to embrace Christianity. Shan use to claim that Buddhism is Shan’s religion and Shan are Buddhist.

Present

Hundred of thousands of pagodas are all over the country. There is almost no town without pagoda or no village without monastery. There are four million pagoda in Burma, the highest number of pagoda in the world. There is a pagoda on almost every top of the hill. Shan have adopted Buddhism as their religion for almost two thousand years. Shan claim that Buddhism is their religion. They have taken ownership of Buddhism. Traditionally Shan are Buddhists but they also believe in all kinds of spirits, both good and evil, and offer sacrifices to them to appease them and to get help from them. Shan are not fanatic but devoted Buddhists. Even though they claim to be Buddhists some are Buddhists by tradition. Many do not know much about Buddhism. Some are also superstitious. They are willing to listen to the story of other religions. Shan see Christianity as a new religion from the West and do not want to accept it. Shan are also nationalistic.

A few years ago I presented gospel of Jesus Christ to 65-year-old Buddhist woman. When I finished my gospel presentation, I asked her questions. “Do you agree that you cannot go to heaven by your own effort?” She said, “Yes.” Then I asked second question, “Do you believe that Jesus Christ is God and He can save you to heaven?” She answered, “Yes.” My final question was, “Do you want to receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and become Christian?” She said, “No.” She explained that she had been worshiping Buddha for 65 years. All her generations were Buddhists. She did not want to leave Buddha and follow new God at this age. She just wanted to be faithful to her religion. She was willing to add another hope for her future. That is Buddhist by tradition. Traditionally they have their own way of worshiping gods, spirits, paying homage to elders and parents, marriages and burial etc. In Christian opinion these traditions are Buddhist practices. Once a person becomes Christian he has to abandon all his previous practices what they call their “national culture.” How can we solve this

²⁴ Report from A.H. Henderson, M.D. MuongNai, July 4, 1894, The American Baptist Missionary Magazine.

²⁵ 81st Annual Report, 1895, Baptist Missionary Union.

“tradition” problem, which they have been doing for 2000 years? How can we let the Shan see the differences between “Religion based on Tradition” and “Religion based on Faith?”

Shan follow their traditions. Their traditions are Buddhist.

How can a Shan Christian follow Shan tradition, which is Buddhist?

How can a Shan become Christian without abandoning their tradition?

What will happen if tradition is not our obstacle?

The problem of “Tradition” “Buddhism” and “Christianity” is a big issue in Shan Churches, evangelism and mission. Our missions among the Shan will be easier and fruitful if we know how to solve these problems. But there is no compromise to the gospel of truth.

Many Shan Churches are also having problem with “Church Tradition”, which were taught to them one hundred-forty years ago. They refuse to change. They think the new things are wrong and are not Baptist. When I tried to teach them about Praise & Worship according to Psalm 149 and 150, I was in trouble. They rejected me and accused me of “Assemblies of God.” When I teach about Fasting and Prayer, they said that it’s not Baptist practice to fast and pray. They always follow ancestor’s tradition in worship services. They do not want to change from original setting. No prophecy, no speaking in tongue, to diving healing, no deliverance, no power, no miracle in the Church. Such things are considered AOG.

The superstition is also influencing the life of Shan. They use to consult astrologer, magician and palm-reader for the event that has happened to them and the event to come. They believe what the astrologer, magician and palm-reader said and they follow the instruction. Such superstition is also influencing Christians. Some Christians believe if they give the tithe regularly at the end of each month they will be blessed by God but if they fail to give at the end of the month or fail to give regularly they will be punished by God, if they recite certain scripture verses, especially Psalm 23, repeated thirty times or fifty times a day their sickness will be healed, all strange dreams are from God and they use to interpret their dreams by themselves and take the meaning as revelation to them, etc.

Mathew 15:1-3 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!”

Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?”

Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

6. Shan National Culture and Christian Practices

Past

Rev. Cushing first studied the country, the people, their customs and mode of life as well as their language when he began to work among the Shan. He was able to collect various dialects of the Shan language and the information about the customs and habits of the Shan. It is only by acquiring a thorough knowledge of the languages, habits, customs, and superstitions of the people that missionaries can hope to influence and convert them.²⁶

Rev. W.M. Young reported in 1903, “*The northern Shan are slaves to custom, but purer in morals, and more accessible to the gospel.*”²⁷ Rev. Cochrane reported from NamKham on December 29, 1894, “*The young man, our first fruit was married last night to a good-looking and highly respectable Shan girl. She was perfectly willing to have the ceremony performed according to Christian custom and seemed to enjoy the change of style.*”²⁸ Dr. Henderson reported in 1903, “*At its own recommendation the Church has started a free-will thanks offering fund and at our suggestion a little*

²⁶ Rev. Dr. Cushing, Josiah Nelson. D. D, Ph. D. By Henry Melville King, published by Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1907

²⁷ 89th Annual Report, 1903, American Baptist Missionary Union

²⁸ Report from W.W. Cochrane, December 29, 1894, NamKham

thanks offering of rice is given each morning by all who feel so inclined. This is applied to the support of the orphanage and may amount to rupees 50 per annum. This is an instance of a heathen custom being diverted into a Christian channel."²⁹ Dr. Henderson was so clever to divert the Buddhist custom in giving donation into Christian channel. He said in 1963 that the Shan use to say, "That is not our custom"³⁰ and refuse to accept the gospel.

Why did they reject gospel based on culture?

What is Shan culture?

What is Christian custom?

Who created such culture and customs?

Why couldn't Shan Christian marry in their own culture?

Why should Shan Christian get marriage in Christian custom?

If we ask them to abandon all their culture and follow Christian custom, which was accused by the Shan as Western culture, how can Shan become Christian?

How can we transform Shan culture into Christian custom?

These are very important complicated questions.

Present

Knowing Shan culture, tradition, background and their belief is very important in doing missions among the Shan. When a Shan becomes Christian the question of whether he has to abandon all the Shan culture and practices or keep on doing it is the biggest problem we are facing today. "Buddhist practices" are not well differentiated from "National cultures." Some Buddhist practices become national culture and some national culture are also part of the Buddhist practices. When someone becomes Christian, he or she has to abandon all national cultures, which Christian consider Buddhist practices. It makes a believer alienated from Shan community. Shan use to say, "If you are Shan you must be Buddhist. Shan are Buddhist." A Shan woman said to me, "If you are Christian you are not Shan any more." They identify nationality with religion. The questions are;

"How can we call ourselves Shan if we don't follow Shan culture?"

"How can Shan Christian follow the culture which are considered to be Buddhist practices?"

Christians are taught not to participate in any festivity, which Christians think is a Buddhist festival. When Christians refuse to join, they said that we have abandoned our national culture. But when Christians join, it seems like we are joining Buddhist festival. There are Shan musical instruments called gong, mong and cymbal. They are played together in synchronizing rhythm at celebrations and festivals accompanied by traditional dancing. Generations by generations, Shan used this instrument in their festivals of course which are Buddhist. Pastors and Shan Christian leaders do not allow Shan Christians to play these musical instruments and dance traditional dance any longer when they become Christians. The first convert in Eastern Shan State in 1902, Phak Ka Sai, had to leave the village because he refused to join Shan New Year celebration, play gong, mong, cymbal and participate in Shan dancing after becoming Christian. Western musical instruments such as guitar, violin, banjo, drum, organ, piano etc. are introduced to Shan Churches. We sing western hymns and songs. Our traditional folk songs are not allowed to sing any more. One lady said during our GCI training in TaungGyi in 1995, "I have secretary learned Shan traditional folk songs at the age of fourteen. Our pastors and Church leaders do not allow us to sing it. I have no chance of singing it. But now I am happy to have an opportunity of singing this folk song the first time in my life at the age of forty." I don't see anywhere in the historical documents of Baptist mission among the Shan that American missionaries had asked Shan believers to abandon their gong-mong-cymbal music, Shan dancing and singing their folk songs. Why do our Shan pastors and leaders stop Shan Christians to play our musical

²⁹ 89th Annual Report, 1903, American Baptist Missionary Union

³⁰ Letter From Dr. A. H. Henderson, MuongNai, August 13, 1936

instruments and sing our traditional folk songs? Shan allege that Christians are no longer Shan because they do not keep Shan culture any more. They accused that we have been westernized. They call us “Shan American.” In wedding ceremony, traditional ways of marriage are replaced by Western style of marriage so called Christian marriage. Paying homage and respect to the parents by kneeling down on the floor and bowing down to the parents are no longer permitted. Shan accused that children did not respect their parents any longer when they become Christians. They did not pay homage to their parents and elders any more. Buddhist parents are very upset when their Christian children abandoning traditional cultures and not paying respect to them by bowing down to them to show their respect. In fact the Bible teaches children to obey and respect their parents but not to worship any one except God. Christians think it is an act of worship when they knee down before their parents and elders.

As Shan Christians are abandoning their traditions, Christianity is seen as a threat to their cultures. It is in fact unacceptable for any nation to see it happens. It is a national responsibility to maintain and preserve its own culture. The Christians are being accused of importing western culture to the Shan.

Why do they see Christianity as Western Religion?

Why do they think Christianity is a threat to their culture?

Do they have to abandon their national cultures when they become Christians?

How can they change these views?

What good is it to see our pastors wearing suite and tie instead of Shan national costume?

What good is it to see our Christian children with long hair and tight blue jean instead of their traditional dress?

What will happen if national culture is not a Buddhist custom?

How can we make them “Shan Christian with Shan identity?”

These are big questions in our effort to reach Shan people and converting them to Christianity. We need to do more research and find out which tradition and culture are acceptable and good to continue in Shan Churches. We need to work out how the Shan can say, “Shan can be Christians and Christians are also Shan.”

Psalms 150:3-5 Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals, praise him with resounding cymbals.

Revelation 7:9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb.

They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

7. Festivals

Past

Rev. Bixby reported on November 23, 1863, “*They are fond of the festivals and excitement common to worship and religious gathering. The strength of Buddhism lies mainly I think on the social nature of the people. Their worship consists mainly in grand gathering, feast, social enjoyment; just such gratification as more civilized nations find in grand balls, theatres, public dinners, horse-races and other exciting worldly association and amusements. Their funeral even becomes festivals. One of the most joyful festival that I ever attended with them was when a noted and venerated Phoneghee (monk) or priest was burned.*”³¹

Rev. Cushing reported on December 27, 1886, “*Mong Hswang accepted the position and entered the printing establishment. From that time he ceased to worship at the pagodas and being*

³¹ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Nov. 23, 1863, Toungoo

attendant at the Shan services held from time to time at Letkhomebin after a while, he acknowledged his belief in the truth of Christianity but declared that he could not be baptized because he was not ready to abandon all the heathen festivals and customs of his friends."³² The festivals were considered heathen and required to be abandoned before becoming Christian. It was not easy for the Shan to abandon their festivals, enjoyment, singing and dancing with friends in order to become Christian. It was reported from KengTung in 1927 by Telford, "A more affable sociable more kindly people than the Shan would be difficult to find. They do not take life very seriously. Lot of the men folk work about six months in the year and spend the other six months in festivals more or less related to the Buddhist religion."³³ According to Shan calendar there are festivals almost every month. (page 12)

Present

It was reported by Shan Harold Agency, "A typical Shan dotes on festivities. In fact, hopelessly addicted to them. Most of their year is spent in finding excuses to celebrate. Their latest fling was the 5-day Novitiation Ceremony, where nearly 100 boys were thoroughly humored and spoiled before being ordained as novice monks on the last day, 25 April. However, just before the ordination, the revelers were set upon by a hail storm 11:30 - 12:30 noon. Fortunately, the ordination went on as scheduled albeit with less pomp. Would this have taught them a lesson to exercise moderation? No way, because last night they were still celebrating the conclusion of the ceremony."³⁴

Shan are festival-loving people. The festivals are a kind of social and religious gathering for enjoyment. All year round there are many festivals. Life seems boring if not meaningless if there are no festivals. They even try to find reason to organize festival. Young and old join together whenever there is a festival with gong-mong-cymbal music and dancing. They celebrate days and weeks. Some even travel for days from distance, bringing their sleeping mats, blankets and cooking utensils to the festivals. But when they become Christians they have to abandon all these festivals. It is understandable because almost all festivals are Buddhist related festivals. It is not easy for them to abandon such festivals, which they enjoy most and become Christian. What the life of the village would be like if there is no gong-mong-cymbal music, dancing, buying, selling and eating at the festival market any more in the village? Social gathering, social enjoyment, social eating and drinking, social dancing, social singing are the life of the Shan. According to my survey, 55% said that they did not want to become Christians because they were afraid of losing chances of participating in their festivities. About 90% said Christian festivities are very few compare to Buddhist festivities. They are correct. The only Christian festival we have is Christmas.

Should we create more Christian celebrations and festivities for Shan to enjoy?

What will happen if there are Christian festivals that the Shan can enjoy?

In the Old Testament, there are many festivals celebrated by the Jews.

The feasts, or sacred festivals, held an important place in Jewish religion. There were religious services accompanied by demonstrations of joy and gladness.

The Weekly Sabbath (Lev. 23:3)

The Passover (Lev. 23:4-8)

The Feast of Unleavened Bread began on the day after the Passover and lasted seven days (Lev. 23:5-8)

The Feast of Tabernacles (Num. 28-29)

The Feast of Pentecost (Lev. 23:15-21) also called the Feast of Weeks, First-fruits, and Harvests

The Feast of Trumpets (Lev. 23:23-25)

The Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:26-32)

The Feast of Tabernacles, or Booths, or Ingathering (Lev. 23:33-43)

The Feast of Lights was observed for eight days beginning on the 25th day of Kislev (Nov./Dec.).

³² 73rd Annual Report, 1887, American Baptist Missionary Union

³³ History Of The KengTung Mission, Telford 1927, Archival Collection, Board of international ministry, ABC, pp.17-18

³⁴ <http://www.shanland.org/articles/general/2006/VP4260406>, Apr 26, 2006

The Feast of Purim was kept on the 14th and 15th days of Adar (Feb./Mar.)

Actually we have many occasions to celebrate according to the events in New Testament time. Christians never celebrate Easter, Pentecost, Baptism, Communion as festival in festive atmosphere, as it should have been as a big celebration. If Shan people can come and celebrate joyfully in the Church as they use to celebrate in their Buddhist festivals, I have no doubt many Shan will come to the Church.

Luke 2:41-42 Every year His parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When He was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom.

8. Academic education of Leaders

Past

All the missionaries to the Shan, one hundred forty years ago, were very highly educated people with high qualifications. Twenty-five medical doctors served among the Shan as missionaries. They did not only medical work but also evangelistic work, preaching, teaching, translating, training and planting Churches. Forty-one non-medical missionaries including Rev. Bixby, Rev. Cushing were college graduates with Master degrees. The government of India often committed to Rev. Cushing “missions of great importance and delicacy.” His attainments as a scholar were exceptional. He mastered not only the Shan language in which he was an acknowledged authority, but also Burmese and Kachin, an unusual accomplishment and was an expert student and successful teacher of Pali, which was the literary language of Buddhism. Cushing translated Holy Bible to Shan language, published the first and only English-Shan dictionary and Shan-English dictionary.

However most of the past Shan pastors and leaders who succeeded missionary work after missionaries had left the country were either schoolteacher or retired schoolteachers who did not have a chance of going to Bible School or Seminary or getting adequate training.

Present

There are only five Shan university graduates who have gone to Seminary and serving in Shan Churches and missions in 140 years. We seldom see educated young people go to Seminary and Bible School. Up to year 2001, none of the serving ministers has Doctorate or PhD. There is a tremendous need of educated and well-trained Shan Christian leaders with high quality.

Why didn't the educated young people go to Seminary and serve the Lord?

How can we motivate and help young Shan educated men and women to join the ministry and serve the Lord? Shan Churches seldom try to recruit highly educated students to go to Seminary. Parents do not encourage their educated children to go to Seminary. One of our short-course GCI training graduates who only has primary education said, “I was asked to preach at army camp. I first thought it's no problem to preach to the ordinary soldiers. But when I got to the camp, I saw many army officers in the rank of major sitting at the front row to hear my message. I was trembling and sweating. I was afraid to preach to such highly educated officers. But I prayed a lot. Finally I could manage to finish my sermon.” Lowly educated pastors feel shy or afraid or inferior to approach highly educated non-Christians and tell them the gospel. That is why we do not see highly educated Shan Buddhist becoming Christians. Most of the new converts are grass root people with low education, poor, outcast and ex-evil spirit possessed. A longest and oldest serving pastor said, “I have no chance of going to school. I only know how to read and write.” But he has served for fifty years and still serving at the age of eighty. He has planted many Churches. Regretfully some of our Seminary-educated pastors do not want to go out and find the lost sheep in rural area. Most of our serving pastors in the small towns and villages are grass-root with primary or secondary education and some are without theological training. Some educated people only thinking of serving God after their retirement from secular business.

Exodus 34:26 “Bring the best of the first fruits of your soil to the house of the LORD your God.”

2 Timothy 2:15-16 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

9. Backslider and Exclusion

Past

Rev. Bixby reported from Toungoo on May 8, 1863, *“An influential man was found guilty of polygamy and as he had taken the second wife after receiving instruction on the subject and refused to put her away there was no other alternative than to exclude him. I trust a healthful sentiment has been created, which will contribute to the purity and prosperity of the Church. Unhappily we have no civil law that will touch cases of this kind.”*³⁵

Rev. Case reported in July 1884, *“Toon La, the teacher in our boys’ school made us glad last June by coming back after his years of wandering making a full confession of his grievous sin of adultery and asking to be received back into the Church. Since then his walk has been exemplary and both in the school and the Church he has proved very useful. The saddest event of the year for us is the fall of Pai Dee, the oldest Shan preacher. He was one of the first Shan converts and has been a preacher for many years. He has made some slips heretofore and has been rather lazy, yet, on the whole, has seemed to walk very well. A few months ago, however, he secured considerable money of me to go on a preaching-tour, deserted his wife who is nearly blind and several small children, took a young woman as a new wife and ran away with her. He is a specimen of the kind of men we have to deal with in laboring for the Shan.”*³⁶

It was reported by Dr. Kirkpatrick from NamKham in 1899, *“The past year has been the most trying in all my experience as a missionary. The three senior native preachers have been dismissed and excluded from the Church. Two students from the theological Seminary have left their studies and gone into secular work and one of them has taken a heathen wife.”*³⁷ It’s a heartbroken and a shame to see a Shan preacher cheated money from missionary and ran away with another woman leaving behind his wife and children. How many native Shan preachers in NamKham in 1899, six years after mission field begun? The dismissal of three senior native preachers from NamKham Shan Church in 1899 was undoubtedly a big blow and a great loss to Shan Churches. The missionaries were quite strict in exercising Church discipline. One of the first Shan Seminary graduates in 1963 committed adultery and was excluded from the Church in NamKham. Most of those backsliders were related to adultery. As reported in 1962 by secretary of ShweLi Shan Baptist Mission, ManPon pastor has been expelled from the Church on question of his inability to upkeep the Church’s regulations.³⁸

Present

According to Baptist practices member of the Church would be excluded from Church membership if he/she is found committing certain sin in breaking the Church’s ordinances. Most of the members excluded from the Church were because of adultery. Is adultery the only sin deserved to be excluded from the Church? What about drug addiction, alcoholism, gambling, cheating, lying, stealing, robbery and killing? Some have committed the above-mentioned sins but are not excluded from the Church. Some are still holding leadership position in the Church and some are still preaching.

Shan Churches exercise the exclusion of Baptized member from membership of the Church is done not only for purification of the Church but also as a punishment. Sadly to see that once someone is excluded from the Church, the pastor and the Church use to abandon him, ignore him, do not

³⁵ Letter From Mr. Bixby, May 8, 1863. Toungoo.

³⁶ 70th Annual Report, July 1884, American Baptist Missionary Union

³⁷ 85th Annual Report, 1899, American Baptist Missionary Union

³⁸ ShweLi Valley Shan Baptist Mission Report, NamKham, 1962.

communicate with him, do not try to get him back into the Church by visitation, counseling, and helping him to repentance and restoration. When I was in NamKham in 2001, I was called to visit and pray for a man who had been excluded from the Church because of adultery. He felt very lonely and depress. No Christian or pastor visited him. He was completely isolated. He said that he still believed in Christ. In fact backsliders must not be isolated and abandoned. Counseling, restoration and reviving program must be offered to them. We have to find the lost sheep. Jesus came to find the lost sheep. He commanded us to find the lost sheep. We must open the door and welcome repented sinners. They believe that once one is excluded from the Church one is no longer Christian and one will not go to heaven after death. They also avoid associating with such sinner.

There is a procedure in Shan Baptist Church in exclusion a member from the Church. The decision must be made by the Church council and congregation. In accepting a backslider back to the Church, first of all, the backslider has to confess his sin openly to the council of the Church. The council then decides whether to accept his confession and accept his request for reinstatement into the Church. Then the proposal of the acceptance will be presented to the Church congregation and the congregation will make a decision whether to accept the person back to the Church as a member or not. A young Shan pastor from a Church in the Northern Shan State resigned in July 1993 because of unethical behavior. But he was not excluded from the Church. A new graduate from Seminary was excluded from the Church in 1963 because of sexual immorality but now ordained and serving as pastor without repentance and going through the reinstating procedure. Shan Churches need more clear discipline, teaching, theology and spirituality.

Matthew 18:17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

Luke 15:7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

10. Water Baptism

Past

Rev. Bixby reported on November 25, 1862, "*Three applicants for baptism, after a trial of six months, have been refused. Two more are under consideration. Several others have abandoned their idols and have become regular attendance at the chapel.*"³⁹ As reported in Toungoo on January 6, 1863 by Rev. Bixby, "*We are enjoying glorious work of grace among Shan and Burman of Toungoo. Last week ten adults, eight Shan and two Burman, presented themselves for baptism and after a careful and prayer seven of the number were approved and on the first Sabbath of New Year they were buried with Christ in baptism. The others were not rejected but delayed for further instruction for brighter evidences of grace.*"⁴⁰

As reported on March 25, 1863 by Rev. Bixby, "*Since the New Year came in twenty-five adults nearly all heads of families have applied for baptism. Some of them are in the midst of great opposition. Nineteen of them have been accepted and baptized while the others remain on trial. Baptized seven last Lord's day at Myogyee in the presence of a crowd of Burman and Shan who had never witnessed the ordinance before. Two of them were Sawdees (ဆုတ်ဝတ်) (wisdom-worshippers). Maung O's wife, one year ago, who drove her husband from his house and disowned her husband, was one of the baptized. She is now with her husband clothed in her right mind. In the evening of the Sabbath we administered the Lord's Supper to thirty-one disciples of Jesus and enjoyed the season exceedingly.*"⁴¹

³⁹ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Toungoo, British Burma, October 25, 1862.

⁴⁰ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Jan. 6, 1863. Toungoo.

⁴¹ Letter From Mr. Bixby, March 25, 1863. Toungoo.

As reported in August 1867 by Rev. Bixby, *“On July 22, Sau Quala baptized for me six converts, one Geckho, one Saukoo (slave boy), one Dana and three Shan. Two of the Shan are orphan girls belonging to the family that came out from Moonay (MuongNai) a year ago because they had heard some of their friends had found the way to heaven and were happy.”*⁴² In July 1871, *“A Shan was baptized, who gives promise of great usefulness in the mission. He is represented as a highly intelligent young man who came out from his heathen associations from deliberate convictions of the truth of Christianity and the necessity of pardon through Christ. He recognized the certainty of trial and persecution but his heart seemed to be fired to serve God.”*⁴³ In July 1873, *“Two young men recently from the Shan State were converted and Baptized.”*⁴⁴ In July 1876, *“Five Shan girls have been taught in their own language in connection with Mrs. Eveleth’s girls’ school and by the grace of God three of the persons baptized by Mr. Eveleth during the year and reported in connection with the Burman mission are Shan.”*⁴⁵ In 1910, *“Twenty-four baptisms are reported on the MuongNai field; the largest number for any one-year in the history of the station. Eleven of those baptized were pupils in the MuongNai School and two were from the school at LoiLem.”*⁴⁶ In 1910, KengTung, *“Many hundreds are asking for baptism in sections of the field not yet visited. Mr. Antisdell, in his report, states that several hundred have been baptized in the regions already evangelized.”*⁴⁷

Rev. Young returned from furlough early in the year and his report covered some ten months of service. On his journey up to KengTung he held a two-days’ meeting where a large number were gathered together during which he baptized some twenty-five persons. The total number of baptisms for the year was 936 and the membership of KengTung was 9,800. (reported in 1911) (They all were not Shan alone) In the early years of mission work in Shan States there was quick response with baptism. However not all the reported numbers were Shan converts. Eight Shan baptized within one year and ten months of Bixby’s labor in Toungoo. It was reported from Eastern Shan State that more than one thousand baptized within 10 years of mission. All the baptism reported were not be the Shan because there were many tribes living in Shan States. When it was reported 936 baptism in KengTung in 1911, most of them would be Wa, Ahka and Lahu tribes because hill tribes respond in mass, even the whole village. Some requests for water baptism were rejected. The missionaries did not give water baptism lightly. They interviewed the candidates, tested and kept them under observation for months before giving them baptism. We don’t know what kind of interview and observation they had done. The first Shan baptized in Northern Shan State was Kham Maung in 1896 and in Eastern Shan State was Phak Ka Sai in 1902.

Present

Water Baptism is a sacrament of the Baptist Church. It is also a testimony of faith. It is a “Happy Day” as we always sing “O Happy Day” at baptism. According to Baptist doctrine no one can become a member of the Church and allowed to partake the communion without taking water baptism. The Church use to give the number of membership of the Church as baptized members and non-baptized members. Sometimes it is quite difficult for a Shan to be baptized even though he/she has believed because of certain requirement. Baptist do not give infant water baptism. Children dare not to take water baptism unless parents agreed. Most of the people baptized in the Church are second generation Christians who are born from Christian parents.

Shan Churches seldom have pre-baptismal classes or Biblical teaching lessons given to baptismal candidates prior to baptism. Some people take water baptism without knowing basic

⁴² 53rd Annual Report, August, 1867, American Baptist Missionary Union

⁴³ 58th Annual Report, July 1872, American Baptist Missionary Union

⁴⁴ 59th Annual Report, July 1873, American Baptist Missionary Union, By Rev. J.N. Cushing and Wife

⁴⁵ 62nd Annual Report, July 1876, American Baptist Missionary Union, Rev. J.N. Cushing and Wife

⁴⁶ 96th Annual Report, 1910, American Baptist Missionary Union

⁴⁷ 96th Annual Report, 1910, American Baptist Missionary Union

doctrines. When I was baptized at the age of sixteen in 1963, I did not have much knowledge about Christian doctrine because I was not given lectures or lessons before baptism. I was baptized not because of Holy Spirit conviction but because of my parents who asked me to be baptized before I leave home to study at other town which was quite far away from my hometown.

There is a procedure for baptism in Shan Baptist Church. First the candidate must put his request to the Church Council, then the Church Council will interview the candidate, give the approval and conduct baptism on Sunday during worship service and accept him as a member of the Church. Baptism use to take place in the Church once or twice a year only. One senior pastor said that normally they did not have baptism all year round. People want to be baptized at Easter or Christmas. Most of the candidates are from Christian parents. Very seldom there are new converts from other faith.

In 1973 I organized a Bible Study Camp for seven days in MuSe with 33 young people participated. After the study all the young people requested water baptism. When we put our request to the Church Council for baptism, in the beginning they refused, but when the young people insisted by saying, "Do you know what's going to happen to us tomorrow? What can stop us taking baptism in Christ?" Then the Church council held a special meeting and asked many questions to the youths. A Buddhist mother of a young girl persuaded her daughter not to take baptism by offering her a gold necklace. The girl reply, "I will not exchange Jesus Christ with the gold necklace." She got approval from her parents. Another young girl was persuaded by her Buddhist mother not to take baptism by offering her a watch. But the girl replied, "I will not exchange my salvation with the watch." She got the approval for baptism. There were tears of joy to see 33 youths taking water baptism together on Sunday.

Mass baptism use to take place on special occasions such as World Communion Sunday, Easter Sunday, Christmas, Conferences and Celebration.

218 people baptized when Eastern Shan State Baptist Convention celebrated 65th Eastern Shan State Baptist Mission Celebration in KanNaLone in 1968.

165 baptized in 1978 when Annual General Meeting of ESS Shan Baptist Association took place.

68 people baptized when Shan Bible Centenary Celebration was held in MuongYang in 1985.

273 people baptized in NamKham during Shan Bible Centenary Celebration in 1985.

58 people baptized in 1987, when silver jubilee of TaChiLeik Church was held in TaChiLeik.

168 baptized in KengTung when celebrating Eastern Shan State Baptist Mission Centenary in 2001.

Why do people want to be baptized on such special occasion?

Should we have more such occasion so that we may have more people baptized?

Shan Churches seldom preach "repentance and baptism" and giving "altar call" after worship service. The sermons of Grace, Mercy and Blessings are the most common topics preached in the Church. Baptism is just like a "tradition" or "ritual" in some Churches. Parents use to ask their children to take water baptism when they reach certain age or when the children are about to leave home to other city or town. It is rare to see children coming to the pastor and ask for baptism because of their conviction, repentance and faith. Baptism is rather like traditional and ritual. Baptism is by emersion. The pastor use to give baptism in fishpond, river or lake when baptism is not taken in the Church where there's a baptistery. They considered "water baptism" as "born again" even though there is no evidence of new life. They believe that once they are baptized they have got the salvation and they are qualified to go to heaven regardless of character and behavior after baptism. The salvation will never lost. Only ordained pastor is allowed to conduct water baptism and communion. There are 10,792 baptized members in Shan Churches all over Shan States in the year 2001.

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Acts 8:36-38 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

11. Bazaar Preaching

Past

Rev. and Mrs. Cushing visited KengTung in January 1870 and spent eleven days there, preaching in the bazaar and giving out tracts. Rev. Case reported in 1885, "*During the rains, besides teaching daily in the boys' school, I did considerable preaching in bazaar to Shan coming in from neighboring villages to trade and I also visited and preached from house to house in some of the nearest villages.*"⁴⁸

It was reported in 1893 by Dr. Kirkpatrick, "*Our preachers are faithful in proclaiming the gospel message. We also hold meetings in other bazaar as much as we can. The meetings held each bazaar day, in a large zayat in the bazaar are well attended. Estimate the average attendance is nearly one thousand, many being traders and people from a distance which we reach in no other way. At the close of the rains we began regular services at Bwe Gyo, a large town five miles from the town on a river and also on the Bhamo cart road, where there is a large bazaar every fifth day. SaoPha has given us a piece of ground in the bazaar where we will build a large zayat for the preachers and Bible-women. Every bazaar day they go and spend the day preaching and distributing tracts. They report many inquirers and some who profess conversion.*"⁴⁹ Dr. Henderson built a zayat in the bazaar in MuongNai at a cost of rupees 160, money raised in the Church collections and his own contributions. *The attendance at the bazaar meetings has always been good, seldom if ever below 100, with an average attendance of about 200.*⁵⁰

Dr. Henderson reported in 1896, "*The general outlook of the field is very encouraging. Our bazaar congregations are only about one-fourth or one-fifth as large as at first but this is not surprising. It is due to two causes; first the novelty has worn off and their curiosity is largely satisfied; second our services are entirely carried on in broken Shan a fact that we realize more and more as we learn enough of the language to know the mistakes.*" and in TaungGyi, 1914, "*A special feature of his work has been the preaching in the public bazaar.*" Dr. Gibbens reported in 1915, "*a preaching zayat at the five-day bazaar and opportunity to preach to crowds and to dispense tracts and medicines in MuongNai.*" Bazaar is a place for trading, buying, selling goods and meeting people from different villages and towns especially at fifth-day-bazaar. All Shan mission fields had bazaar preaching. Almost all missionaries preached and distributed tracts in bazaar. They were so courageous to speak Shan language in the bazaar and un-ashamedly distributing the tracts to the people. How noisy it would be in bazaar? How loud they had to shout without loudspeaker? How embarrassing to preach in bazaar in Shan language? They did it. They were not ashamed of the gospel. They put up zayat (temporary shelter) in bazaar for their preaching and distribution work. It was reported that the average attendance was nearly one thousand. We did not see any of missionaries was abused, stoned or beaten up for preaching gospel in bazaar but they had more and more inquirers. They got the result. I can recall, in 1960, a man, his name was Lao San from NamKham, used to preach the gospel in the bazaar using the illustrated pictures, standing on a chair, shouting to the audience. He got many people stopping and listening to him. He was the last person to do bazaar preaching in Shan missions.

⁴⁸ 71st Annual Report, 1885, American Baptist Missionary Union

⁴⁹ 79th Annual Report, 1893, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Rev. Dr. M.B. Kirkpatrick, M.D., Mrs. Kirkpatrick

⁵⁰ 80th Annual Report, 1894, American Baptist Missionary Union

Present

We don't have bazaar preacher doing bazaar preaching any more today. None of the Shan Churches has bazaar ministry neither preaching nor distributing the tracts. In fact this is the best opportunity of meeting many people from many places at one place without going up the mountains and the hills, passing through terrain and valley. Why don't Shan Churches continue doing outreach ministry in bazaar on market-day? In fact bazaar is the largest gathering place for the Shan and the best opportunity for Shan evangelist to meet the people. It is shameful to see some Christians selling and buying goods in bazaar on Sunday instead of preaching gospel. Some Christians even skip going to Church on Sunday but to the bazaar instead. Church attendance is low on Sunday when it falls on market-day. One Church leader proposed postponing morning service to evening so that Christians can go to the market and do business on market-day in the morning. But it was rejected. Bazaar preaching should be revived since we now have better equipments and facility.

Our pastors use to preach in the church building expecting and waiting for the people to come in and listen. But many Buddhists do not want to come into church building to listen to gospel. They are even afraid of being seen in the church building by other non-Christian friends. They prefer listening to the gospel at unexposed place. Should we go to them to tell good news or should they come to us to hear the gospel?

Matthew 28:19 Jesus said, "Go and make disciples"

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

12. Charity Work and Social Concern

Past

Rev. Bixby said on January 6, 1863, *"Another of the baptized said that the teacher saved his life when he expected to die and therefore he knew him to be his friend and went to hear him preach. He rejoices now in the salvation of soul and body. It is not always in vain to administer to the physical need first."*⁵¹ It was reported in MuongNai in 1899, *"In April there was an awful fire destroying half of the houses in town and then a good opportunity offered itself for us to show kindness to many who needed help. We did our best to ease the pain of those who were burned in the fire and helped some to put up little houses to shelter them from the rains, which began to descend in May. This seemed to bring us in closer touch with the people."*⁵² Dr. Griggs reported in Bhamo in 1901, *"The medical work has grown very fast. It is most important too as we can reach people in this way whom we could reach in no other. For example during the year I was called to see the wife of the mullah or Mohammedan priest and was taken into his inner room where his wife was. I was the first man not a near relative who had ever seen her. Unfortunately she died a few minutes after I arrived so that I could do nothing to aid her but the fact remains that I was allowed to visit her. I attended a large number of Sikh women too, the wives of officers and men in the native regiment and the military police. Mrs. Griggs often went with me to their quarter but unfortunately we had nobody who could speak to them. None of our girls could speak Urdu and they would not allow any of the male helpers to come into their rooms."*⁵³

Medical work had been given more emphasis among the Shan than among any other people groups of Burma, with a higher proportion of missionary doctors. There were 25 missionary doctors who worked in Shan missions. Naturally when people are in need of medical help they will open the door for any one from any religion who can offer them help. Hospital and medical services provided by missionaries were very successful in the history of missions. Saving life is the beginning of saving soul. The most famous mission hospital was NamKham hospital in Northern Shan State. The missionaries

⁵¹ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Jan. 6, 1863. Toungoo.

⁵² 85th Annual Report, 1899, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Dr. Henderson

⁵³ 87th Annual Report, 1901, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Dr. Griggs

had built other hospitals in HsiPaw, MuongNai, KengTung and TaungGyi. Helping people in their physical needs is as effective as preaching gospel. People see Christ not only by our words but also by our deeds. Helping people in natural disaster or physical sickness are very effective way of evangelism. People see the love of God in our help. Christians should take such opportunity to show Christ's love.

Present

J. Herbert Kane said, "Salvation includes the whole man – body, soul and spirit."⁵⁴ Helping people in their physical need is very important in missions. That is why foreign mission use to have hospital, clinic, school and institution. Charitable work and social work are very important to develop friendship and acceptance of the people. But unfortunately Shan Churches do not involve very much in charity and social work in the village or town as a Church. When the charitable work and community work are organized by the village or township community on Sunday, Christians refused to go and join the work. They believe that Christian must not work on Sunday. They call Sunday "Sabbath day" and claim that God prohibits Christian to work on Sabbath day. A Christian lady has written a letter to me asking, "There is a charitable and community work organized by our villagers at a Buddhist monastery. Should I go and help? I was told that I must not go and do anything that is in Buddhist monastery. Is it true?" Some Churches do not want to involve with social and charity activities of the village, town or city organized with other religious groups. They want to stay away from non-Christian groups. Without involvement in society how can we be accepted by society? In fact Churches must involve as much as possible in social work and charity work together with people of other faith so that people may see Christ through our love and concern. Most of Shan Churches do not have community work. They seem like isolating themselves from others. A Shan Church in the north has a nursery education and primary health care clinic in ZonZaw village but not free of charge. The Eastern Shan State Shan Baptist Convention has a HIV/AIDS care program for sufferers in KengTung as Christian ministry. We need to do more. Love must be shown in action.

James 2:15-17 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Luke 10:37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

13. Church Activity and Program

Past

It was reported in NamKham in 1893, "*At the chapel we have a sunrise prayer meeting every day and evening worship at our house where there a usually from twenty-five to forty present. On Lord's day we have a prayer and praise service at 8 A.M. At 11 we have a sermon by the pastor. Sunday-school at 12 o'clock. At 3 P.M. wife has a meeting for the children and mothers while at the same hour there is a meeting at the house of one of the recent converts. Every weekday a service at the hospital and every fifth day the bazaar meeting.*"⁵⁵

Activities were going on every Sunday and weekdays. The missionaries were very busy in teaching at school, healing the sick in hospital, preaching gospel at bazaar and Church, conducting Bible Study, leading prayer in early morning every day.

⁵⁴ Christian missions in biblical perspective by J. Herbert Kane, publisher by Baker Book House, Michigan, 1979, p190

⁵⁵ 79th Annual Report, 1893, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Dr. M.B. Kirkpatrick, M.D., Mrs. Kirkpatrick

Present

A Church should have good and effective activities and programs seven days a week. But most of our church buildings only open on Sunday. They are closed and not used in weekdays, six days a week. Some churches open on Wednesday for evening prayer meeting. We should make use of our church building every day for His glory and Kingdom with Christian activities. Some Churches are very busy on the Lord's day only. There are worship services ranging from two to seven services on Sunday but no activity on weekdays. Usually there are Sunday schools for children, women's fellowship, youth fellowship and main worship service on Sunday. Some Churches also have men's fellowship. Few Churches have Adult Bible Study program. Sometimes adult Sunday school is held immediately after worship service or one hour before worship service. Since there are no activities on weekdays people may think that the church only opens on Sunday and they have to worship God only on Sunday. They use to call Sunday as "Sabbath Day" instead of "The Lord's Day." Some are "Sunday Christians" "Easter Christians" "Communion Christians" and "Christmas Christians" only. They will appear at the Church only on such special occasions. Some will make every effort to be there on Communion Sunday once a month to partake the communion. They believe that once they have taken the communion all their sins, which they have committed in the past whole month, were cleansed. In fact Sunday is not only the day for the Lord and the rest are the days for ourselves. Believers need to have fellowship with the Lord every day. I have seen a pastor sleeping on the bench, in his front yard, almost every afternoon after lunch, under the sun. He said that he had nothing to do. His work was just preaching on Sunday. Actually he should not be a Sunday pastor only. I was told that he mistakenly preached about Jesus' crucifixion instead of Jesus' resurrection at Easter Sunrise Service on Easter Sunday. Preaching without preparation was quite common. Sometimes the pastor was struggling trying to find the songs to sing and Bible verses to read at worship service because he had not made preparation before hand. Sometimes the leader did not know the song and sang with the wrong tune. Never mind. They would start again when some one knew the song.

A Shan Church in Eastern Shan State has a busy activity such as a prayer warriors praying every morning at 8 AM, caring AIDS patients and giving health education, youth and music ministry by the youth group to different places, organizing evangelistic trip to different places, organizing men and women association, conducting training and producing future leadership of the Church, three months evangelistic training for future evangelist production and building children hostel for poor village children to stay and continue their basic education. Some of the hostel students have graduated from training and Bible School and are now in full-time ministry. More and more young people are now graduating from Bible Seminary.

The worship programs in Shan Baptist Churches are traditionally follow the order of service. It follows the program drafted by the pastor or leader. The chairman use to lead the worship service as announcer making announcement according to the program. It seldom follows the leading of the Holy Sprit in worship, praise and prayer. Sometimes worship service becomes program service. They use to say, "Let us start our worship program. May the Lord bless our worship program." Program oriented! They will not accept anything if not included in the program.

Common Sunday worship program liturgy:

1. Prelude
2. Call to worship (Chairman)
3. Opening prayer (Chairman)
4. Singing Hymn (Congregation)
5. Announcement (Chairman or secretary or pastor)
6. Intercessory Prayer (As selected)
7. Singing Hymn (Congregation)
8. Offering (Special Music during offering)
9. Prayer for offering (Chairman)

10. Special Music (Choir or Solo or Duet or Quartet)
 11. Reading Scripture (Chairman or as selected)
 12. Sermon (Preacher)
 13. Closing Hymn (Congregation)
 14. Benediction (Ordained Pastor)
- Such worship program seldom changed.

Acts 2:46-47 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 17:11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

14. Church Growth

Past

It was reported by Rev. Bixby on April 2, 1863, *“It was necessary to build a chapel in the Shan village where most of the Shan disciples were, and on two Sabbath morning about one hundred Shan gathering around at the worship. I shall organize another Church there soon if the Lord’s will the two will be two miles apart.”*⁵⁶ It was reported by Rev. Bixby in May 1866, *“We have three Churches gathered from the Burman, Shan and mountain tribes and the germs of others seem to be springing into life. The aggregate membership is 102.”*⁵⁷

Also reported in MuongNai in 1898, *“Our Church here has almost doubled its membership by baptism. Our gain has been ten by baptism and one by restoration; five have been baptized from the school, two through treatment at the hospital and three are from the heathen on the compound. There still remain five or six who say they intend to be baptized, but I do not feel that these are all Christians. Our Sunday School is doing thoroughly good work, but is now ready for better organization. Our missionary offering was this year made a special object in which the school children participated, some earning money by drawing water, some by raising chickens, some by cleaning house etc. We raised altogether 70 rupees”*⁵⁸

Rev. Young reported, *“The baptism of almost an entire small Ahka village and of forty Wa who came from the extreme northern part of the field in China. One of the most significant and inspiring records had come from the hills about KengTung where Rev. W. M. Young was laboring. In that mission about 12,500 have been baptized since the beginning. The development of Christian character, organization of the work, the steps taken toward self-support, the spiritual growth of the Christian and the year had been one of the very best in the history of the mission. The outlook was very encouraging in all. There were twenty-seven Churches, 649 baptisms and 10,552 members in the district.”*⁵⁹ (These numbers were most likely hill tribes, not the Shan)

In 1914, *the total number of Churches in all Shan States is 30 with 661 baptism and 10,777 Christians.*⁶⁰ (Not all are Shan)

In 1915, *the total number of Churches in all Shan States is 70 with 12,682 members and 5 associations.*⁶¹ (Not all are Shan)

⁵⁶ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Jan. 16, 1863, Toungoo.

⁵⁷ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Toungoo, March 15, 1865, American Baptist Missionary Union 51st Annual Report

⁵⁸ 84th Annual Report, 1898, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Dr. & Mrs. Henderson, Dr. Robert Harper, Mrs. H.W. Mix

⁵⁹ 100th Annual Report, 1914, American Baptist Missionary Union

⁶⁰ Ibid

In ShweLi in 1967, *there are 3 Churches, 1,002 members, 3 ordained ministers, 6 un-ordained ministers.*⁶² (All are Shan)

In the beginning of Shan mission, Rev. Bixby reported on September 25, 1862, *“The formation of first Shan and Burmese Church of Toungoo composed of nine members.”* It is amazing to see Rev. Bixby can form a Church within one year with nine members. Bixby was very ambitious. He was going to organize one more Church, seven months after the first one, just two miles apart. The idea was to have a Church for the Shan since the first one was for Shan and Burman combine using Burmese language. In May 1863, one year later, the member of the Church increased to thirty-three natives, including three disciples from Rangoon, is a vigorous and promising body. The Church grew so quickly to 102 membership and three Churches within 5 years in Toungoo. But all were not Shan. A Church of 101 members was reported at TaungGyi in 1910. But all were not Shan.

Present

The number of Churches is one of the measurements of the success of the missions. The number of members is one of the indicators of Church growth. In 1988, the total number of Churches in Eastern Shan State was 247 and 18,805 members, the total number of Churches in Northern Shan State was 150 and 15,403 members, the total number of Churches in Southern Shan State was 26 and 4,300 members. They all are multi-racial Churches. Out of these figure Shan Churches in the Eastern Shan State was 13, Northern Shan State was 7 and Southern Shan State was 3.⁶³

In the year 2001, the number of Shan Churches in the East was 70 with 8,500 baptized members, Shan Churches in the North was 17 with 2,292 baptized members and Shan Churches in the South was 3 with about three hundred baptized members, making total number of Shan Churches to 90 and 11092 members in 140 years. The other tribal groups whom have been evangelized by missionaries later than the Shan have more Churches and believers.

Lahu Baptist Convention has 273 Churches and 23,496 members,

Kachin Baptist Convention has 261 Churches and 137,150 members,

Zomi Baptist Convention has 761 Churches and 82,378 members,

Lisu Baptist Convention has 110 Churches and 17,482 members.

There are groups of Shan believers in some villages and towns but are not recognized as Churches because they don't have a full-time pastor and Church building according to Shan Baptist's definition of the Church.

Mark 4:20 Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop — thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown.

1 Corinthians 3:6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow

15. Church Building

Past

Rev. Bixby reported on June 28, 1861, *“I have selected a site for a central chapel near the bazaar free from noise but easy of access from all quarters. When I can command I hope to build a small chapel or zayat in each Shan village.”*⁶⁴ Bixby later got a plot of land near the bazaar. He borrowed money and built a teakwood chapel in which regular worship was begun in May 1862. Bixby said, *“At the very beginning of the year I band it impossible to labor to advantage without a chapel or*

⁶¹ 101st Annual Report, 1915, American Baptist Missionary Union

⁶² Minutes of 99th Annual Meeting of Burma Baptist Convention held in The Centennial Karen Baptist Church, Insein 7-10 December 1967.

⁶³ Minutes of 111th Annual Meeting of Burma Baptist Convention, Dec 28 – Jan 2, 1985 held in NamKham

⁶⁴ Letter From Mr. Bixby, June 28, 1861. Toungoo.

zayat. My house, being in cantonment, could not be used as a place of worship and then a dwelling home is never suited especially in this country to such a purpose."⁶⁵ Within one month Bixby and friends were holding meetings in the new chapel. The cost of the building including land, furniture, etc. was 2,000 rupees that were all provided, except about 300 rupees.⁶⁶ The first Shan-Burmese church building of Toungoo was consecrated at Lau-koke-ta-ya at five o'clock on January 18, 1863. About one hundred people gathered around and Bixby preached "Jesus and the resurrection."⁶⁷

Bixby arrived Toungoo in March. He was looking for a site to build a chapel three months after his arrival, even before he got a convert. Is building chapel very important? Why did he make it his first priority? The Shan are not use to worship god with other people at home. The Shan use to have worship activity at monastery. They feel more solemn and holy when they worship God in a special place like a Church or chapel. They assume that the holy god is only at the holy place such as monastery. There should be a church building whether big or small to have a special place for worship. When Rev. Bixby did not have enough money to build a chapel, he borrowed the money because having a church building was so important for the people of Buddhist background. It was reported in 1892 that there were 33 members and a bamboo chapel was built in MuongNai. Missionaries built either chapel or church building in all mission fields in Shan States.

Present

Shan believers consider building a church building for congregation is very important. They do not call a fellowship of believers as a "Church" without church building. Some Churches' leaders put the building of the church building much more important than any other ministries of the Church. The church building of Shan Churches varied in size and cost. Some are big and cost millions of Kyat with concrete wall and zinc roof, some are small with bamboo wall and thatch roof. They are willing to spend a lot of money for the building but reluctant to spend a little more money on missions and evangelism. People are also very keen to donate money for the building but not for missions. For the Buddhist it is the great merit in making donation for building the monastery or pagoda. Even Buddhists are willing to donate money for Christian church building. Church leaders use to make every special effort to raise fund for the building. Some Christians and leaders do not understand the meaning of "Church." Most of them think that Church is just a "Christian organization." A senior pastor of Judson Church said to me, "You cannot call your 'Shan fellowship' as 'Shan Church' because you don't have a church building, you are just having worship program at rented room, your pastor is not ordained, you don't have Sunday school class, you don't have youth fellowship, you don't have women fellowship." In fact there is a full-time un-ordained pastor, a rented memorial hall for regular Sunday worship service with more than one hundred believers attending and they have other activities such as Bible Study program, home cells meeting and outreached ministries. But it is not recognized as a Church according to Baptist Senior pastor. I heard some members of the Church alleged that in 1990 a church building committee in the North have raised money for church building by getting gambling permit from authority and sold it to the gambling mogul and collected taxes from the gambling for church building fund. This allegation is serious. I went to the North to investigate. I could not interview the chairman of the church building committee because a year ago he suddenly collapsed and died in the Church while he was collecting the offering and secretary of the committee was seriously ill and I have to lay hands on him and pray in stead of interview. The report shows that the initial fund collected for the building in 1989 was only Kyat 6,000. It was far below the required payment to contractor. A special collection from 50 hard-core members was done and got Kyat 132,800. The laying foundation was done on April 19, 1989 with the cost of Kyat 573,122. How could they get such big amount of money in a month? The source of money was not mentioned in the report. I interviewed a lady from

⁶⁵ Letter From Mr. Bixby, May 8, 1862, Toungoo.

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Jan. 18, 1863, Toungoo.

that Church, she admitted, “Yes. It is true.” Again I asked another senior member of the Church who was a daughter of the late pastor, she said, “Yes. It is true. A young pastor of the association was very angry and surrendered his pastoral card immediately.” If it is true, how shameful and sinful way of raising fund for church building. The place is now the largest gambling city in the country. Another Shan Church in the East sell lottery tickets for fund raising purpose during Christmas season. Where is our Christian ethic?

Shan Churches are still very peculiar. The church building must have a tall bell tower. Without bell tower, the building is not considered as a church building. Shan Christians consider the church building as a holy building and the church ground is a holy ground. In some Churches people do not wear shoes or sandals or hats in the church. They do not bring food into the church or eat in the church. Children are not allowed to run around and play in the church or shout in the church. They consider making a loud noise in the church is an insult to God.

Habakkuk 2:20 But the LORD is in His holy temple; let all the earth be silent before Him.

Acts 17:24 The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.

16. Evangelism

Past

Rev. Bixby said on June 28, 1861, “*My method of labor for the present will be as follows: ‘a part of the day is devoted to the study of the Shan language and the Burmese language, a part to preaching to both Shan and Burman. I propose to occupy a zayat daily in some central places where both races congregate. I hope also to open a chapel soon for regular Sabbath services. Besides I expect to preach from house to house by the wayside and wherever I can get a human ear. Thus I hope to sow the seed. It may be a long time before the seed scattered will come to maturity but we will sow in hope. We feel confident that God has commenced a work among the Shan and He never will be defeated.’*”⁶⁸

Knowing native language was the first priority for foreign missionaries so that they could communicate with the people effectively. All missionaries to the Shan learned and spoke Shan very fluently. It was reported in 1915 that Rev. Young spoke Shan very well and used Shan language in reaching other hill tribes who were Animists in KengTung. It was compulsory for foreign missionaries to learn Shan language and literature so that they could preach gospel to the Shan in their language. Zayat was in fact like a convention and exhibition hall of modern day. People from different places came and stayed together for a short stay at zayat as their temporary shelter. Their methods of evangelism were preaching in zayat, bazaar, house to house and distributing tracts to non-believers. House-to-house preaching was like a personal evangelism. It provided good person-to-person contact and more opportunity for dialogue. I have seen my late pastor Rev. Kham Maung of MuSe did the same in 1960. It was very successful.

It was reported in HsiPaw in 1889, “*During the year jungle trips, bazaar preaching, jail meetings and house-to-house visitations have been continued as heretofore*”⁶⁹ Shan villages used to have fifth-day-bazaar (bazaar on every fifth day). Hundreds of people are selling and buying goods at one place. Missionaries took opportunity of meeting various people group, preaching the gospel and distributing the tracts at bazaar. It was their evangelistic meeting place. Sometimes they could reach more than one thousand people in one day. It was reported in May 1862, “*His father keeps on hand a supply of the Scriptures and tracts for the benefit of himself, son and neighbors. Sometimes he has a tea party at his house to which he invites his relatives and friends. The preachers are also invited and*

⁶⁸ Letter From Mr. Bixby, June 28, 1861. Toungoo.

⁶⁹ 85th Annual Report, 1899, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Rev. Cochrane

requested to give the company information regarding the person and character of the Lord Jesus Christ and during the time many important questions are asked and answered."⁷⁰ The believers used to invite their neighbors and friends to come to their home for green tea or meal and listen to the gospel. Inviting friends for a green tea was a custom of friendship and fellowship. Shan seldom decline personal invitation. Shan seekers are zealous. Once they seek they will seek until they have found. They may walk on foot for the whole day to get to the place to hear the gospel when they want to hear. They may not believe without questions or arguments base on their belief.

Rev. Bixby said on January 16, 1863, *"We do not always go together but separate into twos to reach a larger number but we are careful to get together often that we may not lose our sympathy or the power of united prayer. A bed of live coals separated in many parts would soon become pale and dead but kept together each lends to others its heat and glow."*⁷¹ This is a Biblical model of going out together in two. Jesus sent His disciples two by two. Working and praying together is showing unity in spirit. Rev. Bixby reported on November 23, 1863, *"After getting into our new house I went to Rangoon with the hope that at least one small tract might be printed in the Shan language before my departure to the Shan States and also to make preparation for our contemplated journey."*⁷²

Rev. J.A. Freiday said in July 1881, *"The latter part of the first quarter accompanied by one of my native preachers I visited the two annual fairs in the vicinity of Bhamo. At these fairs we met many traders from distant villages to whom we gladly preached the word and gave tracts."*⁷³ After visiting people at the village, what would be the tool of follow up? The tracts were very important cost-effective materials since the Bible was not translated and available yet. Leaving the tracts for them to read and revisit them again was the best way of follow up. Missionaries distributed tracts wherever they went. Rev. Cushing reported in 1883, *"Evangelistic effort is the great need of the Shan mission but health and strength are necessary to put forth that effort."* Dr. Kirkpatrick reported in 1893 from HsiPaw, *"There were 306 gospel meetings and 4,791 people attended. There were interesting services in the jail every day at the request of the SaoPha. By request of SaoPha, jail meeting held every day except Sunday. For one hour the prisoners were called together from their work and listen to the gospel message. Several professed conversion and all seem to appreciate our kindness in looking after them."* *"They were gone nearly two months and preached in nearly sixty large towns and bazaars."* *"Soon a great crowd gathered at the zayat our evangelists spent all of the afternoon and well on to midnight preaching to the people."* *"Also in the surrounding villages regular preaching visits had been made. In the town visitation was also carried on. At the funerals of acquaintances was a good opportunity to preach whenever possible."* 306 gospel meeting in a year was almost every day except Sunday. Evangelistic trip lasted for two months. Evangelistic preaching in zayat from noon to midnight and also at funeral.

Ray Buker reported in 1935, *"250-mile journey taking one month in June visit 20 Shan and 5 Lahu villages, 102 hours spent traveling. Interest shown near Chinese border where no Shan believers exist. On our way home, a short day from MuongYang, we were stopped on the road by some Shan from a village where we have not had the opportunity to visit. Last year they told us they heard the Good News through a Lahu preacher. They were impressed. Now they wished to know all about it from a Shan, i.e. from the lips of a man who knew their language and customs as one of themselves. They said that their old religion was not satisfactory."*⁷⁴ Spending one month on foot and bullock to preach gospel to 25 villages was a tremendous effort in reaching people with great endurance. Ai Noi said, *"People do not come to see a doctor until they are sick. When these people are in trouble they will turn to us then they will be more responsive to the message we have to give them about Jesus Christ."* Dr. H. C. Gibbens reported in 1914, *"First despise then pity and then embrace was quite true of the*

⁷⁰ Letter From Mr. Simons, May 1862

⁷¹ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Jan. 16, 1863, Toungoo.

⁷² Letter From Mr. Bixby, Nov. 23, 1863, Toungoo.

⁷³ 67th Annual Report, July 1881, by J.A. Freiday

⁷⁴ Letter from Ray Buker and Richard Buker, April 27, 1935

converts won from heathenism.” It was reported in 1963, “Settlement evangelism is strongly advocated for the Shan. The Shan are complacent and slow to change. They have a religion of their own, Buddhism mixed with Phe (spirit) worship. And unless they are sick, diseased or possessed with evil spirits, conversion is not easy.”⁷⁵

What is settlement evangelism? When someone believed in Christ and became Christian he faced a lot of discrimination and hardship either from immediate family members or villagers. When people were tormented or possessed by the evil spirit, they used to come to the Christian pastor and asked for help. They knew that evil spirit feared Christian. After they were released from the evil spirit they could not return to their own village because the villagers did not accept them. They were discriminated against because they had been possessed by unclean evil spirit and they were considered unclean. They had to be resettled somewhere. Sometimes a village for new believers had to be developed. That’s why we can see the village called “Christian village” in Shan States.

It was reported in 1865, *“Many strangers came in on Saturday. We opened the meeting Saturday evening. After a few remarks, explaining the objective of the meeting and the reading of the word with brief exposition, we spent the evening in special prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit. No time was lost but prayer after prayer followed in quiche succession interspersed with singing until a late hour.”⁷⁶*

It was reported from Bhamo mission field in 1991 by Mr. Spring, *“The people are Shan-Chinese and have given the most hearty reception and willing ear to the gospel from the beginning. We sat some days from dawn till nearly midnight telling the wonderful story of Jesus, stopping only long to eat our meals. They did not want us to leave them and when we do they literally hung to our clothes begging us to remain.”⁷⁷* How hungry were the souls! They listened until late hour. The time had no limit. As long as the people were there and listening, the meeting continued even till the late hour.

Present

Evangelism seems to be very successful in the beginning of Shan mission. The first Shan convert was baptized within a year after arrival of Rev. Bixby to Toungoo. Another 8 Shan baptized just 4 months after the first baptism. The Shan are traditionally resistant to the gospel and Western influence at least in part due to negative experiences during the British colonization period. Christianity is seen as a Western religion and there is a lack of a Shan way of “Doing Church”. Western forms are often adopted though there is one Church on the Thai-Burma border who is making headway in the area of funerals, a very important part of Shan culture. “To be Shan is to be Buddhist”, they say of themselves. The idea of eternal life seems to them irrelevant, as the goal of Buddhism is to seek for passionless peace. The existing Shan Churches in Shan State are often lacking in desire and initiative to reach out to their Buddhist neighbors. There is a Christian sub-culture that is hard for new believers to break in to.⁷⁸

Some Shan Churches are trying very hard in evangelistic works by sending short-term evangelistic team to villages to preach gospel. But sometimes transportation or money are the excuses for not going out for evangelism. It should not be an excuse. Compare to transportation one hundred years ago, present situation is a lot better and easier. The Church should send out preachers to preach and the Church should pay for their travel expenses. Nowadays we don’t see a preacher preaching gospel in bazaar or zayat like American missionaries did in the past. Bazaar preaching, zayat preaching, prison ministry, gospel tract distribution are no longer exist today. There are house meetings occasionally for thanksgiving service and special worship service with believers but not as an evangelistic outreach meeting. We use to send evangelistic teams to the villages. We use to hold

⁷⁵ Progress Report Of KengTung Shan Baptist Field, 1957-1963.

⁷⁶ The Missionary Magazine August 1865, p309, report from Rev. Bixby, Feb. 1, 1865.

⁷⁷ 97th Annual Report, 1911, American Baptist Missionary Union

⁷⁸ <http://www.joshuaproject.net/profiles/text/t113721.pdf> Apr 21, 2006, p10

evangelistic rally at open-air and mass evangelistic outreach program. However not many people come to the Lord and ended up in the Church after such trip and crusade. Sometimes we only want to have a good record without having a good result and bearing fruits. In 1978, I have an opportunity of helping well known Burmese evangelists from Rangoon holding several open-air evangelistic meeting in different towns in Northern Shan State. Many people came forward and gave their names indicated that they were either interested to know more or believed in Christ. But we didn't see those people ended up in our Churches. Because we didn't plan for follow-up. We just wanted to do it and make it happen but not really getting people converted and ended up in the Church as believers.

Buker said in 1935 that the Shan he met wanted to hear the gospel in their own language. It's true. When I visited PangLong in June, 2000, about one hundred Shan came to listen to gospel I preached in Shan language as a native Shan. Many of them were in tears and came forward to receive Jesus. They said that it was the first time they had heard the gospel in their own language.

Not every Shan Church today is engaging in evangelistic work even though it is the greatest need among the Shan. Many Shan Churches, evangelists and pastors do not have the opportunity of being trained in evangelism, mission and Church Planting and motivated. Many of them do not know how to present the gospel to Buddhist. There are many methods used in gospel presentation. Most of them are developed from the West. We have not yet developed a method to be used in the Shan in their own context with their background belief, culture and tradition. Some "Western method of Evangelism" may not be suitable to the Shan. Some methods of approach, the way of presentation, the words to use, the analogy and illustration to give should be in Shan style, which is acceptable and understandable to local people depends on their tradition and cultural background. We have to be aware that some of the Western style of presentation might even be an offense to the people in the East. For example the question, "If you died tonight, do you think you will go to heaven?" is considered bad omen and disrespectful and the preacher will certainly receive angry response from listener. Adopting Western style of living by local pastors, evangelists and believers is also one of the drawbacks for our evangelistic effort among the Shan.

In evangelizing the Shan, it is important to identify with them as "Shan". Rev. Ray Buker dressed as Shan when he lived among the Shan. When I visited Maehongson in 1988, I saw a missionary from Holland wearing Shan dress and having Shan name. If western missionaries put on Shan dress and take Shan names, why do the Shan pastors, Shan evangelists and Shan Christians put on western dress and take western name? Why not dress our own dress, speak our own language and identify with our own people? May be our Shan long pan do not have pockets. Shan use to argue and debate before they agree to believe. In preaching gospel to the Shan we should allow them to ask questions. They may not believe unless they have their questions and doubts cleared. Without knowing the Bible well, it will be difficult for evangelist to evangelize the Shan. Shan use to discuss with their Buddhist knowledge. Knowledge of Buddhism is also very much necessary for Shan evangelist. They will lookdown on you if you do not know how to answer their questions. Very difficult hypothetical questions such as "How can dead woods give green leaves again?" "How can 99 people get clean when only one person takes the bath?" "How can 10 people get full when one person eats?" etc. Even though they will come with question, discussion, debate and argument, seldom there is a fight. We have never seen any evangelist or missionary being beaten or killed because of preaching gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

17. Support

Past

Rev. Bixby said on June 28, 1861, *“I have been laboring several days among the numerous traders from the Shan country. They receive me very kindly and appear pleased with the idea of having a foreign teacher and urge me to go to their country and promise me a kind reception and many friends. I have a great desire to comply with their request but have not the means. Can you furnish money to print a few small tracts in Shan? Can you furnish money to enable me to spend next dry season in the Shan country?”*⁷⁹ Bixby reported in 1864, *“We have six Shan six Burman and fourteen mountaineers preparing to be teachers and preachers and in the primary department. Mr. Bartholomew has seventeen boys and Miss. Marston has twenty one girls some Burman some Shan. The young man preparing for the ministry are boarded and clothed by us when preachers and teachers go forth among the heathen to take up new fields they must be for a season mainly supported by us. I beg to give thanks for these donations for they have enabled me to meet the growing wants of the mission which no human foresight could have provided for in advance.”*⁸⁰

In 1871, Women Baptist Missionary Society supported Mrs. Cushing’s Eurasian School and Shan School. The activities of missionaries were limited by financial resources. The support mainly came from abroad. Dr. Henderson wrote in 1916, *“We think and write of intensive development but actually grow weaker and weaker every year. I do not know what we should have done for the loyal and earnest help of Miss. Kingsley, head mistress of the school. A gymnasium has been provided at a cost of 1,100 rupees and an old mission house remodeled at a cost of 1,000 rupees of which only 150 rupees were received from America.”*⁸¹ It was reported in HsiPaw in 1893 by Dr. Kirkpatrick, *“HsiPaw SaoPha gave a building for a hospital and Rupee 1,000 toward furnishing instruments, Rupee 500 for medicine in October and received Rupee 500 from the government because we have cared for so many of the government employees. The SaoPha has given the logs and we have about twenty men sawing lumber also twenty carpenters at work on the frame and the coolies have the post holes all dug, so in a few days we expect to have the framework up.”*⁸²

Kirkpatrick reported in 1895, *“The SaoPha continues to be very kind and helpful. He gave land, money for medical and schoolwork, all the logs for the chapel and assists us in every way he can. On Christmas day we had a double wedding in the chapel and gave the SaoPha and some of his ministers an invitation. They all came and seemed much interested and impressed by the wedding ceremony. Before leaving the chapel the SaoPha gave each of the grooms a large silver betel-nut box, and to each of the brides he gave a ruby and diamond ring. To each child in the school he gave Rupees 3 and to me he gave a bag of Rupees 200 for mission work. I doubt if any other station of our society has ever had so much help from the native ruler as we have had here.”* We do not forget that it is *“the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.”*⁸³

“SaoPha of HsenWi was pleased to hear that a mission was being started at NamKham and readily gave Brother Cochrane an order for as much unoccupied land as he wants for mission use. At the same time he wanted to know when we could come to his city to begin mission work. He asked us to look over the whole city and select the most desirable site for a mission compound and he would have it marked and reserved for us. We gladly accepted his offer and selected a fine knoll, which will be near the new palace. From this knoll one can see all over the city. I counted twenty-three villages in sight. This is a very important field about midway between HsiPaw and NamKham and ought to be occupied at once while the SaoPha is so friendly and ready to help. At both NamKham and HsenWi timber is very scarce and poor only jungle wood and probably all permanent buildings at both places must be

⁷⁹ Letter From Mr. Bixby, June 28, 1861. Toungoo.

⁸⁰ Letter Of Moses Homan Bixby, 25 July 1864, The Missionary Magazine, Feb 18, 1865

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² 79th Annual Report, 1893. American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Dr. Kirkpatrick

⁸³ 81st Annual Report, 1895, Baptist Missionary Union

made of brick. We spent one bazaar day here and had crowds of listeners till the rain came on. The SaoPha invited us to the palace for one service. The large room was crowded and great interest was manifested by some."⁸⁴ SaoPha were very supportive to missionaries' works. The missionaries had good relationship with both SaoPha and government. However not a single SaoPha had accepted the Lord and baptized.

Rev. Cochrane reported in 1896 from NamKham, "*We expect to organize a native Church here soon with probably not far from twenty members. We shall aim to raise the pastor's salary at least from the start. In truth I told Dr. Kirkpatrick that I did not favor the organization of a local Church until it would pledge itself to support its own pastor. It is better to wait and start right. This station was never in so prosperous a condition as it is now bazaar meetings thronged, little school growing, helpers increasing and permanent buildings in view.*"⁸⁵ It was reported in 1910 that MuongNai Church has maintained its standard of self-support providing the entire salary of a native pastor.

Dr. Henderson reported in 1912, "*In TaungGyi, a Lutheran, who is engaged as a hospital assistant, subscribed Rs. 100 toward the building and undertook to raise another Rs. 200 through local contractors and himself gave Rs. 15 monthly toward the support of the preacher.*"⁸⁶ He also reported in 1914, "*six organized Churches on his field the central Church at TaungGyi being entirely self-supporting. Besides the pastor's support thus Church has contributed regularly more than half of the Taungthu Pastor's salary and since the close of the Judson fund has been contributing at about the same rate toward a new school building.*"⁸⁷ TaungGyi Baptists contributed Kyat 1,800 towards the Shan State Bible School Fund and some Christians supported four pupils.⁸⁸ Two new Primary Schools had been started at MuongYang, taken care of by Saya Chein and Saya Baw Lu taken care of school at WanYawt Lu on self supporting basis.⁸⁹

ShweLi Valley Shan Mission reported in 1961, "*Supporting each student at Burma Theological and Divinity School at Kyat 250 per year, aiding Kyat 478 per year to the Burma Baptist Convention Fund, supporting to the Shan States Bible School, TaungGyi, at Kyat 260 yearly, paid the salary of Saya Peter Loo at Kyat 80 per month up to December 1960, paid salary of Sayama Shwe Aung, the Missionary to KaChio, Kyat 80 per month up to July 1961, Starting from April the salary of Saya Aung Htun will be paid by the Myitkyina Baptist Association, aiding TaGown Chinese Church Kyat 200 from the Shan Baptist Association, Kyat 100 from the Women's Association and Kyat 100 from the Christian Endeavor Society, paid the salary of Saya Tu Ja for two months during school holidays at Kyat 76 per month, ShweLi Valley Shan Baptist Mission reported in 1963, financially we are weak and can support only three pastors and a secretary. Our special evangelistic program is supported by mission appropriations.*"⁹⁰ I am surprised to see that in 1959, Shan Churches in ShweLi had given financial help to Indonesia Relief 100 Kyat and to Churches in Korea 350 Kyat.

It was reported from LoiLem field in 1963, "*We are privileged to receive financial aid from the Inter-Church Aid, Geneva. This project in promoting the economic life of refugees has already been carried out for about three years after which we expect the refugees to be able to manage by themselves. We are using modern equipment and teaching the people new methods of cultivation. Our aim is to make the village a self-supporting one. At the same time we are trying to improve the economic standard of other Churches In our field too. A tractor that we have serves us with double purposes. It is very useful for ploughing and at the same time with a trailer attached to it, it can ferry our Church people to visit other Churches and non-Christian villages nearby for preaching the Gospel.*

⁸⁴ The Baptist Missionary Magazine 1895

⁸⁵ Letter From Rev. W. W. Cochrane, NamKham, Sept. 14, 1896

⁸⁶ 98th Annual Report, 1912, American Baptist Missionary Union

⁸⁷ 100th Annual Report, 1914, American Baptist Missionary Union

⁸⁸ 90th Annual General Meeting, of the Burma Baptist Convention held at Cushing Hall, Rangoon. October 24-25-26, 1958

⁸⁹ KengTung Baptist Conference Report for the year ending July 31, 1959

⁹⁰ ShweLi Shan Baptist Mission, Annual Report, 1962 - 63

The result is that they become more and more interested in our religion. Besides helping each family in their farms we have allotted over twenty acres as the Lord's acres from which we hope we will be getting some money."

Present

The support to local Churches comes mainly from members of the Church. Government or local authority does not give financial support to the Church. Sometimes they also received support from foreign friends and Churches. Some Shan Churches are financially rich and independently self-supporting. They may have millions of Kyat in their account since Shan are generous in donation. But some Churches are very poor. They don't even have enough money to support their pastors. Some pastors have to do other work to support their families. The work and ministry of the pastor are declining because they have to spend more times on their secular work to earn extra money. Sometimes secular works have drawn full-time pastors to quit their ministry. The strong Church seldom helps the weak Church financially. It is rare to see one Church supporting other Church financially. One may have million but one may have nothing to support their pastor and ministry. Some funds are raised from abroad to support Shan Churches in training, pastors, evangelists, evangelism, missions and Church Planting since 1984. Shan Churches and missions must learn how to be self-supporting. I believe the strength is within us. But we are lacking of love, care, unity and priority. We need two kinds of support to Shan Churches. One is spiritual support and the other is educational support. Most of the Shan Churches are spiritual weak and biblical, theological education are very much limited.

Ezra 10:4 Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will support you, so take courage and do it.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

18. Friendship

Past

Dr. Griggs said in 1901, *"Since then I have performed several operations upon people belonging to the village including a Buddhist priest and have given medicine to almost everybody there at one time or another. This, of course, has made them very friendly and we wished very much to open an out-station there but we had no one whom we could spare from our compound."*⁹¹

It was reported in TaungGyi in 1915, *"Dr. Henderson's skilful medical work has made many friends among the people"* Missionaries were well treated and accepted by people because they offered health care services and education to the public without discrimination. They gained friendship through their services. It was reported by Dr. Henderson from MuongNai in 1912, *"At the Christmas entertainment, which the Christians of MuongNai themselves managed with such skill, the rulers of the town, the prince and his wives, all attended. During the celebrations in honor of the coronation, Christians were the only ones invited into the prince's palace where they were entertained with refreshments."*⁹² It was very uncommon to have a royal family, ruler of the people who were Buddhists, to attend Christian gathering. It was an extraordinary achievement for Shan Christians to be invited to prince's palace as special guests during coronation celebration. It was reported in TaungGyi in 1914, *"Nearly all who were baptized came from those who live near and this seems to be the rule each year. First despise, then pity and then embrace is quite true of the converts won from heathenism. Those who are reached as a general rule seem to be the people who first became acquainted with the missionary by daily intimate contact and then attend the services, after which they generally become*

⁹¹ 87th Annual Report, 1901, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Dr. Griggs

⁹² 98th Annual Report, 1912, American Baptist Missionary Union from Dr. Henderson

Christians”⁹³ Making contact with the people with patience, kindness and love is the best method of approach to Shan Buddhist. They may first express their dislike, then may have pity on the dedication and suffering of the missionaries and later they may embrace Christianity.

Dr. H.C. Gibbens reported in 1914, “*First despise then pity and then embrace was quite true of the converts won from heathenism. Those who were reached as a general rule seem to be the people who first became acquainted with the missionary by daily intimate contact and then attend the services after which they generally became Christians.*”⁹⁴ It was reported in KengTung in 1927, “*Apparently it seems essential that in work for the Shan confidence and friendship have first been established as a basis of approach for the Gospel message*”⁹⁵ This statement is absolutely correct. Without friendship with the people and lack of confidence, they may turn deaf ears to you. Once you got friendship and gained confidence you will be treated as their family member and they will be willing to listen to you.

Present

Building friendship is the cornerstone in Shan missions. Shan are friendly people. They love making friend, they love making joke, fun and laughing, they love social gathering. eating, playing gong-mong and dancing. Once you are friendly to them and they are friendly to you, then you’ve got listening ears and you can preach gospel to them easily. Preacher should first gain friendship before preaching. Making friend with monks, village leaders and people is the most important way to success in missions among the Shan. Building friendship doesn’t mean that we have to do what they do. Make friend without compromise in faith and truth of Christianity. When you’ve gained confidence, trust and friendship from them you’ll be welcomed to be their guests, stay at their home, given best hospitality and treated as their family member. If a missionary or evangelist cannot make friend with or gain confidence from the people he cannot live long in that place. He may face a lot of difficulty and problem. It is wrong for Christians to distant themselves from people of other faiths. Make friends, not enemies.

Proverbs 22:11 He who loves a pure heart and whose speech is gracious will have the king for his friend.

Mathew 11:18-19 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, “He has a demon.” The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and “sinners.”“ But wisdom is proved right by her actions.”

Acts 10:28-29 He said to them: “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?”

Romans 12:16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

⁹³ 100th Annual Report, 1914, American Baptist Missionary Union

⁹⁴ 100th Annual Report, 1914, American Baptist Missionary Union, pp339-340

⁹⁵ History Of The KengTung Mission, Telford 1927

19. School

Past

It was reported by Rev. Bixby on May 8, 1862, “*Mrs. Bixby has an interesting day school, which is increasing in number already more than thirty have been in attendance and many of them are from the very best families in Toungoo. They are taught the Scriptures daily and are required to attend Sabbath school and Sabbath worship. We study the Bible the first hour every morning. During the year five of the pupils have been baptized and all over ten years of age are Christians. We are looking for them to become the preachers, teachers and Bible women in the near future.*”⁹⁶ Bixby started school within a year after arriving Toungoo. Missionaries used to start their missions by establishing schools and hospitals. Education was one of the main missionaries’ arms in reaching Shan. It was what the people needed most. Even though they were not interested in gospel, the parents certainly wanted their children to get education. Learning scriptures and attending Sunday worship were compulsory for the students in mission school. Even though students were non-Christians they had to follow. Parents agreed. Some students later believed and baptized. They were later trained to become preachers and teachers.

Rev. Young in KengTung reported in 1927, “*There is a SaoPha’s school in town where free education is given but despite this competition many parents prefer to send their children to the Mission School where both the teaching and the discipline are better. Even the SaoPha sends some of his family to our Mission School*”⁹⁷ Mission Schools had good reputation and achievement in education and discipline. Most parents wanted to send their children to mission schools despite school fees were much higher than public school. There were mission schools in every mission field.

Present

All mission schools were nationalized and taken over by the military government in 1962. No more mission or Christian school exists today. Nowadays Shan Churches do not provide any kind of education neither to the public nor Church members except some Churches have nurseries. Shan Churches should have a literary teaching classes for their member because many younger generations do not know Shan literature. Shan literature is not taught in government schools any longer after military takes over the governance of the country. Some Shan Churches use Burmese Bible, Burmese Hymn and Burmese language instead of Shan because they are either not good in Shan or do not know Shan any more. There will be no more Shan Churches if Shan Churches do not use Shan language and literature. Shan Churches need to provide teaching Shan literature to their people who do not know Shan so that they can read Shan Bible and sing Hymn, praise and worship in Shan language. I am wondering, even though we put our greatest effort in translating Bible into Shan language in new Shan writing, who are going to read it if they don’t know Shan literature? I have seen many Shan pastors and Christians are using Burmese Bible. Most of our pastors have got training from Bible Schools and Seminaries in Burmese language.

Churches should also provide other educational lessons to their members such as civil, health, agriculture and technology since there are some experts in our Churches.

Exodus 18:20 Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform.

Deuteronomy 4:9 Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

⁹⁶ Letter From Mr. Bixby, May 8, 1862, Toungoo.

⁹⁷ History of The KengTung Mission, Telford 1927

20. Religion of Poor and Outcasts

Past

Dr. Henderson reported in 1907 from MuongNai, *“Here, he must shelter the poor witch who has barely escape from her village with her life here pick up the poor traveler or beggar, forsaken his companions in his direst need, and left to die like a dog alone. Here he is to raise a refuge for the blind, the halt, the maimed until gradually the people, forgetting that foreign medicine will cause them to swell up and die, lose their dread of being cut to pieces by the foreign doctor, are ready to brave the unlaidd ghosts of the patients who have died in the hospital and trusting to Jesus through the doctor (for the two are strangely jumbled together in their minds) come to him with friend, mauled by animal or hacked by man, wife in sore distress or child with broken limb, the blind, and the leper, saying as they lay them at his feet, “trust all to you, do with them as you will. Such in bare outline is the doctor’s work in Burma.”*⁹⁸

It was reported by Dr. Henderson in 1907, *“Here will he be called on to cure those from whom the native exorcists have failed to drive out evil spirits? Here must he prove that medicine is more powerful to stop the cholera? He must shelter and heal the poor witch who has barely escaped from her village, the poor traveler or beggar forsaken by his companions in his direst need and left to die like a dog alone. Here he is to raise a refuge for the blind, the halt and the maimed.”*⁹⁹ When the people were accused of possessing evil spirit, they would try to exorcise it by witchdoctor. If not successful, they would drive him out from the village and abandon him to die in the wilderness. Finally they were rescued by missionaries. Dr. Keith Dahlberg reported in 1963 from KengTung, *“Due to greater ministry to the needy and poor often we are in financial difficulty but God answers our prayer and we found enough help to meet our need. We are still able to pay a regular visit to PangWai to see patients every four week and some of the places on the way are also not neglected. We stop to help whenever patients on the way halt us. In spite of the presence of some weaknesses in our hospital it is positively progressing.”*¹⁰⁰ Missionaries had to rescue them and save them. Most of the poor and abandons later became Christians.

Present

Since many of the believers and members of the Church are from former evil spirit possessed, leprous, abandoned and poor people, Christianity is being seen as a religion of poor and outcasts. Because many poor and outcast were saved by Christian workers and they came to Christ and became Christians. Why isn’t the rich and educated Shan becoming Christian?

Shan people are quite stubborn, proud and logical. Unless they see a miracle with their own eyes, feel the power of the Lord with their own experience, see our words in action; they do not want to believe. The out casts, the poor, the sick who have seen the love and the power of God, believed. Rich and healthy people seldom seek God. When people have problems especially with the evil spirits and sickness, they first try to solve the problems by their own effort and belief. Eventually, when all failed, they come to the pastor or Christian and ask for help to solve the problems. Some demon possessed are released by the power of God, some lepers whom are abandoned by the community are helped and cared by Christians, some outcasts and poor whom are being ignored are fed and supported by Christians. The majority of Shan Christians are not wealthy. Very few Shan Christians are in the top position in government offices. Shan evangelists seldom try to evangelize the top, rich and famous people but the bottom, the grass root and the poor. Sometimes preachers are not courageous enough to approach and preach gospel to the educated, rich and famous because of fear. Sometimes preachers feel

⁹⁸ “The work of the doctor in Burma by A. H. Henderson, M.D, MuongNai, Burma, April 1907, The Baptist Missionary Magazine

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Progress Report Of KengTung Shan Baptist Field, 1957-1963, 95th AGM, Burma Baptist Convention, Rangoon, December 1963.

that those people are too wealthy, influential and intellectual to approach. They may have inferiority complex and not confidence enough to preach to those people. They dare not to tell them that they are sinners who need Savior. They seldom get educated, rich and famous people converted. Most of the educated, rich and famous people in the Church are second or third generation Christians. We need evangelists who have the gift, who have the opportunity, who dare to evangelize the rich, the famous, the influential, the key persons and the authority, who are courageous enough to go like Moses to King Pharaoh. Sadly to say very few Shan pastors and evangelists have tertiary level education. Only five Shan University graduates have attended Seminary in 140 years and serving as full-time pastor or evangelist or missionary. Sometimes Christianity is also seen as religion of Chin, Kachin and Lahu hill tribes because 90% of the Chin, Kachin and Lahu tribes are followers of Christ.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of man came to seek and to save what was lost.

Matthew 10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

21. Leadership Quality

Past

Rev. Bixby reported in 1864, *“Therefore I selected several young men and brought them home with me on my second tour. Not one of them have had ever been to Toungoo to school neither before nor had any of them been baptized. I preferred to take those whom others had no claim and to have the entire training of them myself.”*¹⁰¹ Dr. Kirkpatrick reported from NamKham in 1893, *“As usual we had a daily training class for all of the native workers and any other Christians who would come during the rainy season. We spent about two hours a day in Bible study and prayer. Our hope for the evangelization of the Shan is in training on the field Shan converts for the work.”*¹⁰²

Kirkpatrick reported in 1895, *“We now have a service at the hospital six mornings in the week also at the jail. At BawGyo and HsiPaw we have zayats in the bazaar and each fifth day we have a service at each place. The training class meets five times a week. All these services with the school and four regular services on Sunday keep us all busy.”*¹⁰³ Dr. A. H. Henderson said in August 1936, *“The Shan had been isolated from the world for 2000 years. Their way of life and conservatism was understandable.”* It was reported in 1954, *“The work had grown to such an extent that some reliable source of better-trained pastors and workers was a very urgent need.”*¹⁰⁴ E.E. Sowards reported in 1954, *“The great need of most of the fields in the Shan State is for many more and much better trained pastors and Christian workers.”* *“A possible candidate for this position is Thra Aung Din now at KengTung. He had two years in Judson College and then completed the four years in the Divinity School obtaining the degree of B.Th. He has been in KengTung for several years and now speaks Shan and Lahu in addition to Burmese, Karen and English. Thus he possesses many of the qualifications we would desire in an efficient Director of Evangelism for the Shan State.”*¹⁰⁵

All of the past Shan pastors and leaders were trained by missionaries as they helped and lived with them. They did not have a chance of going to Seminary or Bible School. Rev. Ai Pan went to Insein Seminary and studied for four months only. Nevertheless his Biblical knowledge was amazing. His book “150 Sermons” written in Burmese was very popular among preachers. Spiritual quality is much more important than educational knowledge.

¹⁰¹ Letter Of Moses Homan Bixby, 25 July 1864, (The Missionary Magazine, Feb 18, 1865)

¹⁰² 79th Annual Report, 1893. American Baptist Missionary Union

¹⁰³ The Baptist Missionary Magazine 1895

¹⁰⁴ American Baptist Convention Year Book 1951

¹⁰⁵ A Study of Baptist Work in the Shan States, By E.E. Sowards, 1954, Burma Baptist Mission, Rangoon.

Present

When we talk about quality of leaders we should focus on spiritual, moral, educational and intellectual quality. The past leadership in Church ministry was in fact unexpected, self-given, when the Burma military government asked all foreigners to leave the country immediately in 1966 military coup. All local Christian leaders had to take all the responsibility and leadership role in the Church and association without having any training and preparation.

On July 15, 2000, at the funeral service of late Rev. Sai Stephen, senior pastor Rev. Seng Tip lamented in tears, "I don't understand why God has called our leaders back home so soon. We don't have capable leadership now." A man gave a testimony at KengTung GCI in 1997, "My father is an ordained pastor in MuongYang. Even though I'm the son of a pastor I used to fall into bad habits. I got married and have four children. In our Church we have cell groups to go and evangelize young married couples. I was selected as a group leader. There are 15 members in the group. But nobody knows how to pray and nobody attends Church. I have to lead them to go for evangelizing, so I have problems! I asked the Lord to help me to lead them and be a good example. I started visiting every home and praying for people. I found no change in their lives. One day I visited two of my cell members. I said, 'we have nowhere to go today so what shall we do.' They said, 'let's enjoy ourselves.' They got drunk and they cared about nothing." How can such group of people become leaders of the Church? It is important to choose and appoint the leaders who are spiritually qualified, not just to fill the post. Churches use to have many posts and positions in Church ministries. There is not set requirement and qualification to be elected to the position. When some one is going to be elected for spiritual position he/she should have spiritual qualification.

The leaders are sometimes assigned to do what they do not understand and know how to do. They are sometimes posted to the department which they have no knowledge of it. For example; a man is elected to be treasurer of the Church, association and convention without knowledge in accounting. A woman is elected director of mission and evangelism without having understanding and knowledge of mission and evangelism. Leadership training and development among the Shan is not adequate. Most of our Shan Churches' leaders do not have opportunity of receiving training in leadership. Some of the pastors are Bible school graduates but some are not. Some pastors are either retired army officers or retired schoolteachers. Some become pastors without proper pastoral training. There are about twelve Baptist Theological Seminaries in Burma in different languages but no Seminary or Bible School teaching in Shan language for the Shan. It requires three to four years to complete study in Seminary. No short course training programs are available. Seminars and conferences are seldom held. Without proper knowledge and training, some leaders do not know how to lead the Church. Shan Churches are under leadership of either Church Council or pastor. Even though the pastor may have physical or spiritual problems, the members seldom take action against him. They use to say, "God will settle the account with him. We do not want to do anything against pastor." They consider dismissing or taking action against a pastor is a great sin. They will allow the pastor to keep on going and doing until or unless he resigns voluntarily or dies. Pastor use to serve until they die even though they are physically become disable. They call it "faithful servant." I have seen a senior pastor who has hearing defect. He cannot hear what the people said. One day a lady came to him and told him about her dying mother and asked him to pray for her mother. Then the pastor laid his hand on her head and prayed for her in tears, as she was the one who was terminally ill. The lady then said, "Pastor. Not me. My mother." Then he stopped praying. A pastor's resignation because of inability to lead is very rare. Some pastors refuse to retire even when he reaches the age of seventy or become disable. Some pastors are really very honest, sincere and faithful. They served until they died in the Lord with sound mind, sound doctrine and sound teaching without dictatorial mentality.

Some selfish leaders in association and convention switch their position from one to another when the term expires just like taking musical chairs among Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer to be in the board of executive members. Some may have served in the board for several years in different

position. Proud and happy to be chairman or secretary but forget the duty and responsibility to God. Some leaders are good at talking but not good at working and not trustworthy. I have experienced a leader who had promised me to take our foreign missionary couple from Myanmar-China border to attend ShweLi Shan Centenary Celebration in MuSe in 1993. But on the day of their arrival he refused to go and take them cross the border to MuSe instead he sent a pastor from Eastern Shan, who had no knowledge of China, to go to RuiLi and take them cross the border. The pastor was arrested by Chinese police and detained for the whole day before releasing him at night. A Church leader who has history of adultery, criminal record and bad character has served as chairman and general secretary of the association for several years. Sometimes there is a great competition, advocacy and conspiracy among leaders at the time of election for the position in Church council, association and convention, not competing to serve but just to get the position.

Some leaders are eager to receive but reluctant to give, want to be served but not to serve. Some pastors are behaving like monks. They won't go to visit people at home voluntarily unless people come and invite them. I heard one pastor said, "Come and pick me up by a car and send me back home by a car, so I'll go." He is willing to accept the invitation from well off people but not the poor. The poor dare not to invite. Giving honorarium from the host to the pastor is a kind of "tradition". A lecturer at Seminary said, "The pastors are well off than us. They are not living on their salary alone. They have a good extra income. You know what? Whenever people invite them to visit their home for whatever reason they received gifts from the host before they leave. You know, people seldom invite us for thanks-giving service at their home because we are not pastors." A pastor told me that he had received Kyat 100,000 from a Christian family as a gift for holding a thanks-giving service for them at their home. Who can give such big sum of money? How do they get such big amount of money? Is it a dirty money or black money? He said that he did not want to know how and where they get the money. Suspicion always arise when a pastor is driving a car worth of Kyat 300,000 and having a big house, when his salary is Kyat 10,000 per month. Some pastors and families are doing some secular business for extra income. The tiny Shan Church (less than one percent) needs more leadership and the opportunity to train their leaders within Myanmar.¹⁰⁶ We need leadership training to produce good leaders in our Shan Churches. A pastor said in his letter of resignation from the Church, "I am a blind guide. How can a blind guide lead the congregation? We all will fall into the pit." He confessed and resigned from the Church in 1993 in Northern Shan State.

Romans 2:19-23 "If you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth-- you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?"

2 Peter 1:5-8 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php> Apr 21, 2006

22. Language and Literature

Past

Bixby said in 1861, *“In the Shan country, little or nothing could be done without the Shan language.”*¹⁰⁷ on May 8, 1862, *“I have kept up the study of both Shan and Burmese during the year and have now nearly ready for the press two tracts in the Shan language.”*¹⁰⁸ and in 1868, *“Cushing learned Shan with his ear, eyes, lips and action without learning Burmese. Rev. Case said in 1883, “My time has been largely employed during the year in study of the Shan language.”*¹⁰⁹ It’s important to know Shan language in order to communicate with them effectively. Shan language is completely different from other languages. They have their own literature. Rev. Bixby, Rev. Cushing and other missionaries took Shan language as a vital knowledge they needed before reaching the Shan. Immediately Bixby put an effort to print tracts in Shan language. Later Cushing became the expert in Shan and translated Shan Bible and published Shan dictionary. Bixby said on November 12, 1862, *“These refugees (Shan) many of them can read Burmese far better than their own language though in speaking they use Shan. I regard this as most favorable to the work of evangelizing the Shan in Burmese for we have not only the entire Scriptures but also many other useful books (in Burmese), which we could not expect to have in Shan for many years nor without very great expense. Furthermore Burmese preachers can be used to advantage. Then a previous knowledge of this language to a considerable extent has enabled me to work successfully from the beginning of the mission instead of spending several years in before entering upon the work of preaching.”* *“The number of Shan who can read Burmese is comparatively small and they are found mostly in SaoPha towns. The number of Shan who can speak and understand Burmese is, of course, much larger than of those who can read.”*¹¹⁰

Many Shan can speak Burmese language well because Shan States were under Burman King for 327 years after the last Shan Kingdom was overthrown by Burman King in AD 1560 until British annexed the Shan States in 1887. Bixby was advocating using Burmese to evangelize the Shan in Toungoo because those Shan refugees understood Burmese well and the Bible was already available in Burmese language. He thought of using Burmese preachers in reaching the Shan. A need of Shan language in Shan missions is real. Many Shan are nationalistic and patriotic. They always want to keep their identity and nationality. They are proud to be called “Shan.” Early in the year 1882 in Toungoo, the Shan withdrew from the first “Burman-Shan Church” and formed a Shan Church by themselves. They felt more comfortable to use their own language. Shan language and literature were widely used among tribal groups in Shan States. It was reported in KengTung in 1906 that the children from the hill tribes in school learned to read Shan literature easily and well. The pupils in school came from six different tribes but the examinations were conducted in Shan, which was the common language for all in KengTung. The hill tribes did not have their literature before missionaries invented one for them. But Shan have their own literature and writing for more than one thousand years.

Dr. Henderson reported in 1896, *“The general outlook of the field is very encouraging. Our bazaar congregations are only about one-fourth or one-fifth as large as at first but this is not surprising. It is due to two causes; first the novelty has worn off and their curiosity is largely satisfied; second our services are entirely carried on in broken Shan a fact that we realize more and more as we learn enough of the language to know the mistakes.”* Mr. Sowards said in 1954, *“Effective Christian work in the Shan State required knowledge of more than one language. Burmese was not used very much out in the villages. An effective Christian worker should be able to speak at least two or three of the languages of the area in which he was stationed.”*¹¹¹ It’s true. Almost all hill tribes can speak Shan and Shan also can speak other languages. There are many different racial groups in Shan States. The

¹⁰⁷ Letter From Mr. Bixby, June 28, 1861. Toungoo.

¹⁰⁸ Letter From Mr. Bixby, May 8, 1862, Toungoo.

¹⁰⁹ 54th Annual Report, July, 1868, American Baptist Missionary Union

¹¹⁰ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Nov. 12, 1862, Toungoo.

¹¹¹ A Study of Baptist Work in the Shan States, By E.E. Sowards, 1954, Burma Baptist Mission, Rangoon.

closet tribes to the Shan are Kachin, Wa, Lahu, Lisu, Palong, Ahka and Chinese. That's why missionary working in Shan State required to speaking more than one language. It was also suggested in 1963 that the Seminaries in Insein should open language classes of major dialects to enable the students who were going to serve in the different parts of Burma among tribal groups to prepare themselves for immediate and effective service on graduation. The four years in the Seminary would have ample of time to learn other language. There were students in secular schools and colleges in Rangoon who would be able and willing to give part of their time free or for a small sum of weekly allowance to teach language and literature.¹¹² However this suggestion was not taken heed and materialized until today.

Present

Insein Burmese Bible School is taught in Burmese, Karen Bible School is taught in Karen, Myanmar Institute of Theology is taught in English and Kachin Bible School is taught in Kachin. The other tribes including Shan have to learn their lessons in other languages. They have difficulty in translating, preaching and teaching in Shan language when they graduated from other languages' Seminaries.

Today in Burma, many Shan can speak Shan but cannot read and write Shan well. They are doing better in Burmese. Shan may not speak Burmese well but they can read Burmese better than Shan because they all have to learn Burmese in school. Shan literature are not allowed to be taught in school. That is why Burmese are used in many Shan Churches. If we don't know Shan language how can we preach to the Shan? Preach through translator? If we don't know Shan literature how can we read Shan Bible? Most of the Shan Christians are not very good neither at English nor other languages enough to be a translator. We would get wrong translation. For example, in one instance, an English preacher said, "You should be a workaholic" but the Shan translator translated, "You should be an alcoholic" because translator did not understand the word "workaholic" but he only knew "alcoholic." One translator translates more than what the speaker actually said. Sometimes translator said completely different from what the speaker really said. Knowing Shan language is a must to work among the Shan people group. Regretfully less than 10% of Shan Christians are using and reading Shan Bible. They prefer reading Burmese Bible, singing Burmese songs and writing in Burmese. All the minutes and records are written in Burmese. Not a single Shan Church has recorded a meeting minutes in Shan. Their written communications are all in Burmese. They prefer wearing Burmese longee rather than Shan pan.

Very few Christian books are translated or written in Shan language. The Holy Bible is the only book fully translated into Shan. No other Christian books are fully translated. No Bible commentary or Bible dictionary are translated. We have to thank God and Rev. Cushing for doing such a wonderful things for our people in translating the whole Bible into our language in 1891. We don't have many Christian literatures in Shan because of the following reasons.

1. Man power.

Not many Shan Christians are working on writing and translation work.

Not many Shan Christians are qualified to do translation, writing and publication.

2. Materials.

Shortage of papers and other materials for printing.

3. Finance.

Printing cost is very high.

The financial situation in local Churches are not very strong to do publications.

Churches do not have priority in Shan literature publication.

4. Shan literature

Many Shan Christians do not read and write Shan.

Churches do not teach their children and members Shan literature.

¹¹² Progress Report of KengTung Shan Baptist Field, 1957-1963, 95th AGM, Burma Baptist Convention, December 1963.

5. Government policy.

No freedom of publication.

No publications can be made without government censorship.

No printed materials from abroad are allowed to be imported without import permit.

Shan culture, language, and heritage are in a state of crisis. They are gradually being assimilated into the Thai, Burmese, and Chinese groups. Most cannot read and write their own language. There is a definite need for Shan literature for evangelism and discipleship.¹¹³

Acts 2:6-8 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?"

Acts 21:40-22:2 Having received the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic: "Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense." When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.

23. Poverty and Faithfulness

Past

Dr. Leeds reported in 1903, "*The evangelists have been faithful and report encouragingly. But I have trained two Eurasian young men fairly well as assistants. As soon as they were able to do something and be of some use to me in each case they were caught using my medicines and working up a practice of their own outside the hospital. As I was not able to stop it they were each given broader fields in which to operate. The system of bribery is so inwrought into the nature of the people of this country that they do not look upon it as wrong. It is very trying to do all your own work in the hospital and attend to the medical work outside and then have all the other work of the station to look after.*"¹¹⁴

Mr. Case reported, "*The saddest event of the year for us is the fall of Pai Dee, the oldest Shan preacher. He was one of the first Shan converts and has been a preacher for many years. He has made some slips heretofore and has been rather lazy, yet, on the whole, has seemed to walk very well. A few months ago, however, he secured considerable money of me to go on a preaching-tour, then deserted his wife who is nearly blind and several small children, took a young woman as a new wife and ran away with her. He is a specimen of the kind of men we have to deal with in laboring for the Shan.*"¹¹⁵

Present

Temptation is very strong. The inflation is very high. It gives hardship to many Christians. Paid Christian workers are struggling to survive. The country is now the poorest and the least developed country in the world. Because of poor economy, unstable policy and inflation, the people become corrupt. This corruption is starting to infiltrate into the hearts and minds of the Christians and Churches. Some pastors are very faithful despite poverty and difficulties. Some pastors are doing extra business to earn extra money for family. A senior pastor said, "I have to work in rice field, operate grinding machine to earn extra money to support my family." Another pastor was away from home six days a week to collect firewood for his earning. Some Christians have fallen to temptation because of poor economy, poverty and financial weakness of the Church. Local pastors and full time Christian workers are not adequately paid. Finding extra job and income for the family can lead the Christian workers into moral, ethical and spiritual corruption. An ordained pastor from a Church in the North, who has acted immorally and un-ethically in fecundating pigs on Sunday even in Church compound to get extra money, has resigned from the Church after being complained by members. Some lay officers who are

¹¹³ <http://www.joshuaproject.net/profiles/text/t113721.pdf> p5

¹¹⁴ 90th Annual Report, 1904, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Dr. Leeds

¹¹⁵ 70th Annual Report, July 1884, American Baptist Missionary Union

managing and leading the Church and organization are not so considerate to their pastors. They are eager to spend millions of Kyat to build a big and beautiful church building but reluctant to give one hundred Kyat more to support their pastor. Their wrong concept is “pastor must be poor.” Four hundred Kyat a month (in 1985) for the pastor with family of four is far from enough. At least one thousand Kyat is needed. Today a pastor is paid between Kyat 5,000 to 15,000 a month when low-quality rice is Kyat 5,000, high-quality rice is Kyat 20,000 per bag and one catty beef is Kyat 3,000. An ordained pastor from the South said, “Oo ma ma thaung, thi la me zaung naing” literally means “If stomach is not full, no one can be righteous” “It is very difficult for us to remain righteous. We have to do what they do just for our survival.” Is this corrupt motto infiltrating the mind of our Christian leaders? If so what is the difference between Christian and non-Christian? Do we have to lie as the others lie? Do we have to cheat as the others cheat? Do we have to steal as the others steal?

Some pastors do not want to go to the rural area, small towns, or remote places to serve in ministry or mission. They want to live and work in the big town or city at a well-established Church for the sake of their family and children. They want to work in the office but not in the mission field for comfort and opportunity. If someone is commissioned to go out or sent out to remote area, they would resign. Going abroad is one of the dreams that Christian leaders are always dreaming of. Whenever the opportunity has arisen for Christian leaders to go abroad for training or seminars or conferences or study tour, many may apply but only a hand full of Christian workers who are working in the office or convention have more opportunity. Some may have made the trips for more than five times but the others may have to wait for ten years for the opportunity. More over, the most suitable persons are not selected for foreign trip but the most favorable people are. Why do they want to go abroad even only for three days? Some tried to go even when the conferences, seminars or meetings are already over. Going abroad is the most blessed opportunity. They don't have to pay for their air tickets, or hotel fee. All are sponsored by foreign organizations or Churches. They have a chance of seeing the outside world. They have a lucrative opportunity of bringing TV set, video recorder, camera, watch etc. back to Burma. Importation of such electrical appliances must get prior approval from government in normal circumstances. But those who come back from abroad are allowed to bring in without permit. When a man leaves Burma, he is allowed to carry foreign currency only US\$15 (in 1980s) out of the country. However, when he returned, he would bring several things back with him worth US\$500. Isn't it amazing?

Some local evangelists are being labeled “opportunists” because in some occasions they gave some wrong information to the foreign mission boards or foreign mission organizations in order to get financial or material supports. Some got foreign support for the Church or mission but it was misused for their own benefits. I have seen a pastor whose salary is Kyat 10,000 per month but he owns a car, a motorcycle, a big house, he can support his daughter to study in University, which cost about Kyat 100,000 a month. How can he afford it? Isn't it a miracle or a misery? Some pastors' wife has to do secular work to earn money for their family. Some Seminary graduates, even though they were sent to Seminary by the support of the Church, they don't serve in the Church after graduation. Some quit the ministry after serving for a while and do their own secular business. Pastors don't have medical, housing or educational allowance like other pastors in developed country. Some cannot stand the poverty and hardship and they quit the ministry. Some fall to temptation.

We should not allow this poverty to be used by Satan as his weapon to make our Church workers down, committing sin or not serving God. Faithfulness is very important in the life of leaders and pastors. Without faithfulness there is no credibility. As poverty striking the economy and livelihood of the people, some leaders and pastors acted unfaithfully to the Church, organization and to God. I have heard and seen some leaders and pastors have acted unfaithfully especially concerning money. A former treasurer of Myanmar Baptist Convention warned me repeatedly not to use a Shan leader who was not trustworthy and un-faithful in handling association's money. A leader misused Church's money by lending the association's money to a businessman and take the interest from it for himself, a leader

used Church money to do his own business, a leader did not show the account properly and put donation into his own pockets, a leader showed more than actual expense and claim extra into his own pocket, a leader cheated by claiming double in traveling expenses and allowances from the Church and organization and a leader used Church or mission properties for his own use and benefit. Some honest Christian leaders are really concerned on decaying ministries in our Churches. Despite poverty and hardship some leaders are faithfully sacrificing, dedicating and serving God. We are accountable to God. We must be good stewards.

Proverbs 30:8-9 Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, "Who is the LORD?" Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God.

Matthew 6:25-27 Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

24. Denominationalism

Past

In 1876 *"The China Inland Mission offered to let Baptists be responsible for Shan and Kachin work on the Bhamo field (they retaining the Chinese) if the station should be occupied at once."*¹¹⁶

It was reported in 1900 by Rev. Young from KengTung, *"In the interests of mission comity an attempt was made at a joint conference of representatives of the Baptist and Presbyterian designing a definite portion to each body. With the assistance of the Presbyterians it was hoped that the whole field may be developed a task, which the Baptists alone had not had the men or the resources to accomplish."*¹¹⁷

It was reported in TaungGyi in 1912, *"A Lutheran, who is engaged as a hospital assistant, subscribed Rs. 100 toward the building and undertook to raise another Rs. 200 through local contractors and himself and gave Rs. 15 monthly toward the support of the preacher"*¹¹⁸ It was reported in 1914, *"There the mission comes face to face with the outposts of the Presbyterian Mission which is pressing north in Siam. It has seemed wise, therefore, to enter into negotiations with the Presbyterian Board with a view to an equitable division of labor among the various tribes."*¹¹⁹ In the past, Presbyterian, Baptist, Lutheran, China Inland Mission were cooperating with one another and working together for common goal.

Present

Almost all Shan Churches in Burma are Baptist. (American Baptist). There is no Southern Baptist Churches in Shan States. Shan Baptist Churches are very denominational minded. They are very proud to be Baptist. They always say, "We are Baptist" "This and that is not Baptist." They use to ask, "Are you Baptist? Is he Baptist?" If any leader or pastor is coming from Baptist he is very much welcomed but not from other denomination. Their main concern is not the theological differences but the defection of their members to other denominations or groups. Especially they are very sensitive to Assemblies of God. They use to accuse AOG "stealing sheep" because some members from Baptist Church use to move to AOG Church whenever AOG has established a Church. There are very few AOG Churches in the Shan. Shan Baptist has very little ecumenical spirit. They don't even know what

¹¹⁶ 64th Annual Report, July 1878, American Baptist Missionary Union

¹¹⁷ 101st Annual Report, 1915, American Baptist Missionary Union

¹¹⁸ 98th Annual Report, 1912, American Baptist Missionary Union report from Dr. Henderson

¹¹⁹ 100th Annual Report, 1914, American Baptist Missionary Union

ecumenism is all about. Baptist leader seldom taught them about ecumenism. They are very loyal and obedience to Myanmar Baptist Convention. Whoever come from MBC they are given the warmest welcome and offered the best treatment and hospitality. I remember one small and poor Church in the North slaughtered their chickens and pig to cook a good food for MBC delegates. A daughter of an MBC officer said, "Father, you told me that the village people are poor. It is not true. You see, we have a delicious chicken meat here that we cannot afford to eat in Yangon." Shan Baptist Churches show their dislike when talking about "The Holy Spirit." They accused that whoever talking about Holy Spirit is non-Baptist. But they say that they believe in Trinity. They say that fasting and prayer is not Baptist practice.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

We have organized Great Commission Institute Trainings for Shan Churches for six times between 1994 and 2001. Some of the trainers are from Pentecostal background. We also have Baptist trainers. The trainers did not teach denominational doctrine. They taught the Bible. All the lectures are Biblical. We conducted training together with local leaders such as Stephen from the East, Htun Myat from the South and Thein Aung Kham from the North. They all are Baptist pastors. They have attended our training program many times. Stephen and Shan Churches from Eastern Shan State are more open-minded. They listened, learned, adopted and put into practice, what they have learned, in Baptist way. They also worked with Methodist Church from Malaysia and other Charismatic and Pentecostal groups in their missions. Their Churches grow and multiply rapidly. However Shan Baptist from the North use to say, "We do not recognize this training because it is AOG." Nevertheless, they kept on sending their people to the training and also invited GCI to do special training session for them in MayMyo in 1998. When I visited ShweLi Valley Shan Churches in 2001, my hometown and my home Church, the pastor of MuSe, in the beginning refused my offer for training, but later reluctantly allowed me to teach Bible to the Shan believers. MyoMa Shan Baptist Church in NamKham allowed me to teach three days but pastor of NongSanKone Shan Baptist Church in NamKham refused my offer without reason. I was baptized by the first Baptist pastor of ShweLi, my membership is still in the Baptist Church. My ordination ministers are from Baptist, Lutheran, Mennonite, and Pentecostal to show that I am ecumenical minister. I have my doctor degree in medicine and master of arts degree in theology. I have been preaching and teaching in radio for more than ten years, I have conducted training for Shan Churches many times, I have helped them in many ways in the past. Am I not qualified to teach? Why do they refuse me? Probably they consider me non-Baptist because I worked with some AOG trainers when giving them trainings. They do not want anyone from any other denomination except Baptist to preach or teach at their Church. I am not ashamed of the gospel and the truth. Jesus commanded, "Go..Teach..." There's no denomination in Jesus Christ. There's no denomination in heaven.

Matthew 13:57 And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor."

Matthew 5:11-12 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

25. Mission is Mandatory

Past

In a letter written from Rangoon in 1831, Adoniram Judson mentioned the Shan first in a list of peoples of Burma he represented as calling for help. When Eugenio Kincaid and his wife were in Ava in 1833-36 he wrote that a missionary would find a wide field of labor among the Shan. In 1835 British officials in India invited Baptist missionary to work in Assam among the Shan. Rev. and Mrs. Brown and Mr. O. T. Cutter, a printer, went from Moulmain to Assam to open mission work in Sadiya under the name "Mission to the Shan." The first printing in Shan language was done in Assam. However we have not heard about any Shan Church in Assam. There are still Shan-speaking people in Assam today who are descendants of the Shan migrants who established the Ahom Kingdom in the thirteenth century and ruled for six hundred years.

The mission to the Shan in Burma began in 1861. As reported in 1861-1862, *"The arrival of the 10,000 Shan refugees at the same time as the first missionaries ever assigned to Shan work seemed truly providential. God seemed to have sent the Shan to the mission, as well as the mission to the Shan. Mr. and Mrs. Bixby did not have to penetrate robber-infested mountainous country but settled in Toungoo with their Shan parish at their very door. They were able to give counsel to the struggling new settlement, help those who had lost everything along the way and encourage the Shan to build schools and chapels"*¹²⁰ Mr. Cross said on March 21, 1863, *"It is my opinion that the Shan Mission is now a mission of great promise work goes on silently but with power and energy it goes on. It seems to mark its character peculiarly as of God. So may it go on and not be carried on until the vast multitudes of Shan are all reached"*¹²¹ The mission to the Shan was not started among the Shan in Shan States but among the Shan refugees in Toungoo, which was a city in Burmaland. It seemed the sheep came to the shepherd; the harvest came to the reaper; as the Shan from Shan States came to the missionaries in Toungoo. Missionaries dreamed of reaching vast multitudes of Shan.

Present

Under great commission of Jesus Christ, American Missionaries came to our land and people. Mission is not optional. It is the command from Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:18-20). The main responsibilities are to Go, to Make disciples, to Baptize and to Teach. American Missionaries came and did all these to the Shan. Now there are no more foreign missionaries. Who are going, making disciples, baptizing and teaching the Shan?

Foundation of the Church is mission and foundation of mission is the Church. Without mission there will be no Church. The main ministry of the Church is mission. Many Shan leaders and pastors do not understand what mission is all about and its importance in the life of the Church. Some Church leaders think the main work of the Church is to get together on Sunday at the church and worship God, to give offering to the Church, to partake communion, to build the church building bigger and bigger, decorating more and more beautiful, raising more and more money and getting more and more membership. The Church fails to give priority to missions to go out and preach good news to unbelievers. They are reluctant to spend a little more money in missions. They use to keep Seminary graduates and pastors in their own Church. They are not willing to share with the others who do not have pastor and resources. They do not want to loose good pastors by sending them out to other places for missions. That is why in some Churches there are more than one pastor and no pastor in other places. Apostle Paul was the first pastor to plant Churches in many places. He did not stay in one place or in one Church only. The Church of Corinth sent out Paul and Barnabas to other places for missions. Is our Church willing to send someone like Paul from our Church to other places in Shan States to plant more Shan Churches? God has given us the best, His one and only anointed Son. America has given us

¹²⁰ Burma Baptist Chronicle Book I, By Maung Shwe Wa, Book II Edited By Genevieve Sowards And Erville Sowards, 1963.

¹²¹ Letter From Mr. Cross, March 21, 1863, Toungoo Mission

their best, Adoniram Judson, Josiah Nelson Cushing and other missionaries. Only 10,792 Shan believed in Christ and baptized in 140 years. How long shall we wait to see another ten thousand saved? We need to put more effort on missions. We need to develop mission strategy suitable to the Shan in their culture and tradition. The harvest of Shan is the greatest opportunity for missions. There is no mission-training center for the Shan to produce more workers in mission fields. How many missionary and evangelist have we sent out from our Churches? Mission is sending.

John 20:21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

Matthew 28:19-20 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

26. Village Leader

Past

Rev. J.A. Freiday said in 1881, "*During the second quarter accompanied by Ko Shway Lin I made several trips to the villages round about Bhamo. These villages are small and none of them gave us a reception at all cordial. In one the ill-mannered resistance of the headman made it quite impossible for us to get a hearing. No one dared listen when he said "Nay." When it is remembered that liberty of conscience is unknown here and that the people have a perfectly slavish fear of their rulers the unusual resistance which the gospel encounters over and above that inevitable resistance of a wicked heart which the uncompromising truth must everywhere encounter is easily understood.*"¹²²

Dr. M.B. Kirkpatrick reported from HsiPaw on April 2, 1895, "*I shall never forget how the headman came out to meet me at the entrance of the village and his followers brought me water in a large silver cup and a bunch of plantains. Each one of our party, as they came up to the entrance, was given water and fruit. When we were a little rested the head man sent men to sweep out the zayat and get wood and water for us. He showed us the way and at each house as we passed through the village they came out with water for us to drink. All this water is brought from near the foot of the mountain in joints of bamboo and big gourds. It takes half a day to make a trip to the spring. Soon a great crowd gathered at the zayat and we spent all of the afternoon and well on to midnight preaching to them. About half of the people were out in their tea gardens and the head man asked us to stay over for one day so that he could send out and call them in to hear the preaching. Also he would send word to the near villages. During the night we had a severe hail and rainstorm so that we could hardly have gone on had we wanted to. All day the people kept coming so that the zayat was thronged until late at night. The people want us to send them a teacher to live there.*"

Rev. Cochrane reported from MuongNai in 1904, "*A native preacher is now on his way to LaiKha to secure from the chief a grant of land for an outstation compound. On his return he will begin at once to put up a suitable dwelling for himself and family and settle there.*" The chief of the Shan was SaoPha. SaoPha had authority and power over the land and the people. There were many Shan territories under SaoPha control. When the chief gave permission every thing was fine. The chief could give the land and favor. Many missionaries had good relationship with the chief and trust from SaoPha and they received some support and favor. Since the headman or chief of the village was powerful and influential over the villagers he could either give favor or problem to Christian works by asking people to create trouble and disturbances or asking the people to come and listen to Christian message. If missionary could get the headman believed it would not be difficult to get the entire village convert. But not a single SaoPha became Christian.

¹²² 67th Annual Report, July 1881, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from J.A. Freiday

Present

In village setting, there is a leader or headman to rule the village. The headman could be a lay person or Buddhist monk. All the villagers usually obey the order from the leader. Making friendship and getting favor from headman is very important in our Shan mission strategy. Therefore paying a courtesy visit to the chief or headman and making friend with them first is the best way to begin the work in the village. Sometimes the head of the village is Buddhist monk. Village head has responsibility of organizing village activities and festivals. It is wise to approach and make friend with the chief or village leader before conducting Christian activities in Buddhist village. The headman can order the villagers not to go to Christian gatherings. Evangelizing villagers will not be very difficult if the headman believed. He should be trained to become pastor of the village. Nowadays there is a village governing council to govern the village. Make friend not enemy.

Luke 19:47 Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him.

John 11:57 But the chief priests and Pharisees had given orders that if anyone found out where Jesus was, he should report it so that they might arrest him.

John 12:42-43 Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.

27. Discipleship

Past

It was reported by Bixby in 1864 from Toungoo, *“An influential Burman disciple was found in a gambling room with cards in his possession and while it was not proved that he had actually played games of chance for money it was clearly established that he had loaned money to gambling parties for enormous profits thereby countenancing the unlawful and dishonest gain and participating in it. He claimed that on his part it was not gambling but legitimate money-letting. We claimed that he was as wicked as any of them and more so for he had had greater light and we made an example of him without delay. The Church feels the blow but is better off without such members. Still the exclusion of three, influential though they all are, in three years is a membership of nearly fifty is not a very heavy percentage. Two or three more may need the pruning knife or weeding book but the majority for aught I know walk as well as Church members usually do at home.”*¹²³

Rev. Cushing reported in 1871, *“The discipline of the Church must also be taken and slowly and prayerfully carried forward. Four have been already excluded. Other cases are prominent persons who do not attend chapel or have any desire to be among the people of God. There is one application for baptism who gives some evidence of change of heart.”*¹²⁴ Cushing reported in 1880, *“Others who have felt the hand of Church discipline have returned to Christian life”*¹²⁵ Rev. Cochrane reported in 1893, *“The number of prodigals, once professed disciples, who are still in ‘a far country’, is uncommonly large. With the lax discipline of many, a home Church, the unworthy members might still be with us in name. But it seemed best in order to secure a healthy, rather than a rapid growth, to exclude all whose life was beyond ‘rifle-shot’ of the Church covenant. These unfaithful ones are not forgotten. Every means will be used, I trust, to win them back that the Christ like spirit of gentleness and sympathy can command.”*¹²⁶ The missionaries had taken strong disciplinary action against those

¹²³ Letter From Mr. Bixby, August 10, 1864. Toungoo.

¹²⁴ 57th Annual Report, July 1871, American Baptist Missionary Union

¹²⁵ Ibid

¹²⁶ 79th Annual Report, 1893, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Rev. Cochrane

who swayed away from the Church regulation and committed sin. They were excluded from the Church. It is true that the healthy Church is more desirable than sick Church which is filled with spiritual sicknesses. Real conversion is better than just adding name to membership list. Discipleship is very important in Christian life. Christian should know their identity and responsibility.

Present

Simply taking water baptism doesn't mean that he has become Jesus' disciple.

When an existing Christian, learning much of the Bible and of what the Lord requires of him, become an illumined follower, he may be called disciple. (The discipline of a nation By James H. Montgomery and Donald A. McGavran)

Discipleship training is to train the believers to become Christ like. Discipleship training and teaching are not well conducted in Shan Churches. Many Christians do not understand well about "Christianity and Practices" even though they believed and have been baptized. Some Christians are still superstitious. Some may say that they believe in Christ but they also believe in other things like astrologers and witchdoctor. They sometimes consulted them when they are in trouble. Many Shan believers and leaders need to learn how to have good discipline. Sometimes when worship service is due to be started at 11 AM people come at 11:30 or 12. They always come late. Even the leaders and pastors are late. They may feel like more honorable when they come in late in front of many on lookers. They do not start the meeting or worship service on time. They use to wait for one another. The leaders feel angry when the meeting started before they arrive but they always come late. In the past the missionaries did not seem to care much about quantity but they care more about quality and purity of the Church. Should we today also care about quality and purity of our pastors, leaders and Churches instead of quantity? Members of a Church in the North complained about un-ethical behavior of the pastor and pastor had resigned in 1993. What about drug addiction, gambling, drunkenness, cheating, stealing? Many young people are in trouble with these problems. Do they need to be disciplined? We must have courage to discipline one another. We need to have good discipleship training program for all Shan believers so that their faith will be genuine and strong and they will become the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Discipleship training for the believers should be very much encouraged in Shan Churches for all ages. We need to train our Shan Christians to become Christ like.

Luke 14:26-27 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."

Titus 1:6-9 An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless--not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Hebrews 12:7-8 Endure hardship as discipline ; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons.

28. Power of Holy Spirit

Past

Bixby reported on Feb 2, 1863, "*It is true all genuine sympathy is the product of the Holy Spirit but its brand must be brought together to reach the highest degree of heat as light. Truth is the Spirit's*

work yet no noble truth can be viewed alone and stands in its true light."¹²⁷ And in August 1865, "We spent the evening in special prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit"¹²⁸ Dr. Henderson reported in 1894, "We are praying for God's blessings and for the guidance of His Holy Spirit in all our work."¹²⁹

They believed in Holy Spirit. They prayed for the Holy Spirit. However not a sign and wonder or miracle was recorded and reported in the letters from missionaries. The real difficulty in our effort to win Shan to Christ is spiritual power in spiritual warfare. The spiritual influence and the possession of many spirits in the life of Shan are real. Even though Shan claim to be Buddhists they also believe in spirits and worship them by offering alms and sacrifices to them. Jesus had driven out demons and evil spirits and performed miracles many times. Disciples had driven out demons and evil spirits and done miracles in the name of Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit in their missions. The lack of the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of pastors, evangelists, missionaries and believers in Shan Churches is the main source of weakness and unsuccessfulness in our effort to evangelize the Shan.

Present

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would come and we would receive the power when He comes. (John 16:7, Acts 1:8) The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost and the disciples received the power. (Acts 2:1-4). Many Shan Churches unaware of the "Power of the Holy Spirit." They may not have thorough knowledge about "Spiritual Warfare." They may not know that they have to receive the "Holy Spirit and Power" before going out to work in missions. They may not have yet experienced it. They may not have been baptized by the Holy Spirit. The Bible has clearly stated that we have to wait until we received the "Holy Spirit and Power" before we go. Some may even have doubt in the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" and the "Power of the Holy Spirit." Jesus will baptize us with the Holy Spirit. (Mark 1:8) Some do believe in the power of the Holy Spirit but they have never received it or used it in the ministry. The miracle is performed not by human knowledge or experience or intelligent but by the power of the Holy Spirit only. Some Shan Baptist Churches do not want to talk about Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Holy Spirit. They use to accuse the people who talk about the Holy Spirit as non-Baptist.

A pastor gave a testimony at KengTung GCI in 1997, "After graduating from Seminary in 1984, I was appointed youth leader in the Church. Gradually I was promoted to be General Secretary of the Wa Churches Association. But I never felt the anointing of the Holy Spirit. On December 13, 1996, one of the Wa non-believers asked me to pray for his sick daughter who was being tormented by evil spirit. The non-believer said he knew that if I prayed the evil spirit would leave his daughter. I knew I couldn't do it but only God could do it. I told the parents that only God is powerful and I am just His tool. I knelt down and prayed and asked for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. I prayed and drove out the evil spirit. That young lady came to me the next day and said she wanted to become a Christian and be baptized. After that experience I have cast out lots of evil spirits and have come to understand that education and graduating from the Bible School is not enough. You need the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Unless you surrender yourself into the hand of the Lord you will never have this power."

We have seen an ordinary Christian has driven out evil spirit. We also see pastor who cannot drive out the evil spirit. Here is a true story from Northern Shan State. "One day, a woman came to a pastor and invited him to go to her home and cast out evil spirit from her son who had been possessed by evil spirit. Pastor went with a member of his Church. He prayed and tried to cast out evil spirit many times. But to no avail. Nothing happened. He gave up. Then a member of the Church who accompanied the pastor said, 'May I try and pray for him?' pastor said, 'Go ahead and try.' Then he prayed for that evil spirit possessed man. Immediately the evil spirit left and the man got healed. The pastor came back home and told his wife about the incident. His wife then said to the pastor, 'Shame on you. Don't go

¹²⁷ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Jan. 16, 1863, Toungoo.

¹²⁸ The Missionary Magazine August 1865, p309

¹²⁹ 80th Annual Report, 1894, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Dr. Henderson

and tell any body any more.’ A senior pastor from the North came back from hunting said, “I could not sleep the whole night last night in the jungle because there were many ghosts around me and scaring me by shaking the tress and the bushes.” There are many spiritual problems in the Shan. All Shan Christian workers need to be filled with the Holy Spirit and anointed with the power when working among the Shan because there are spiritual influence everywhere in Shan villages.

The miracles are seldom seen in the life of the Church. Shan Churches seldom do “Healing Ministry” either in the Church or outside the Church. But the pastor use to go to pray for the sick when invited to do so. Casting out evil spirit is occasionally done when the pastor is invited to do. I have experienced spiritual encounter whenever I go out for mission trip such as a man started having bleeding from his nose without any cause, a man suddenly collapsed and loss his consciousness on the chair. One day when I was conducting Bible teaching at the Church in Northern Shan State, a woman came to me and asked me to go to her home and pray for her grandson who cried continuously since midnight. When I arrived there I could not find any physical problem but the baby was still crying. I realized that it was spiritual warfare. I held the baby in my arms and prayed in the name of Jesus and cast out the evil spirit. Immediately the baby stopped crying. Next day the grandma said that the baby stopped crying and slept very soundly last night. I was called to visit and pray for the sick until late hour. They said that their pastor did not do it like this.

Mark 16:15-18 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 8:15-17 When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

29. Unity

Past

New, small and young Shan Churches were completely under leadership of missionaries. Since all the missionaries had good communication and cooperation, there was no division or competition noted or reported. Shan Churches were still too young and too small to have division and conflict.

Present

I remember three Churches in ShweLi were very much united in '60s. They used to celebrate Christmas together, had summer vocational Bible training together and CE young people had friendly sports and games together every year. It's very enjoyable. But it is very sad to learn that a friendly soccer match between two Shan Churches in ShweLi in 1999 developed into a free for all fight in the football pitch involved with pastors, leaders and players. One died and several injured. A lot of financial compensation had to be paid by Churches. It's not friendly occasion at all. Unity is one of the most needed blessings in Shan Churches. Some leaders are divided in many ways in the Church. Unity is expressed superficially.

Shan Churches are scattered in the Eastern, Southern and Northern Shan State. Many leaders do not have formal or regular communication, understanding and cooperation. There are very little physical, financial and spiritual help offered to one another. When a Church builds a new church

building, the other Church will also try to build a new church building, when a Church or association holds a celebration, other Church and association will also hold another celebration as competition. There should be a healthy and constructive competitions. For instance, Eastern Shan Churches celebrated Shan Bible Centenary in April 1985 in Eastern Shan State and the Northern Shan Churches celebrated Shan Bible Centenary celebration in Northern Shan State in December 1985. When Eastern Shan Churches try to build a Bible School in KengTung, Northern Shan Churches also try to build another Bible School in MuSe. Where can they get qualified Shan lecturers and expertise to teach at these two Bible Schools? There is only one person graduated with M.Div degree in the East, and one M.Th and one M.Div in the North. In fact all the Shan Churches should work together and establish one good Bible School for the Shan within limited resources. In some Churches competition comes from certain people group, family group and social group to dominate over others. Division occurred when lay leaders are fighting for position in the Church. Shan Churches do not have division because of theological conflict since many do not have much theological knowledge. Church declines because of jealousy among leadership. Formation of Shan Baptist Convention is not successful until today because of lack of unity.

John 17:20-23 “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

30. Association and Convention

Past

It was reported in 1894 from HsiPaw, “Arrangements had been perfected to have a meeting in April with the MuongNai and NamKham Churches in the HsiPaw Church. Bhamo has ceased to be classed as a Shan station and KengTung was not then opened. Dr. Harper of MuongNai was, by reasons beyond his control, prevented from attending, so NamKham and HsiPaw Churches held a two days’ series of meetings, in which the spiritual interest was good and the Christian fellowship was enjoyed by all. During the business portion of the meetings, it was decided to organize a temporary association of the Shan Churches. All of the proceedings were left to be approved or not by the absent Churches. It would no doubt be of great benefit to the different Shan Churches to have an associational meeting every second or third year. The distances between the Churches is the greatest barrier to annual meetings but we trust some plan may be arranged and agreed upon whereby Shan associational meetings may be held.”¹³⁰

It was reported in MuongNai in 1913, “In MuongNai the Shan Christians came to Dr. Henderson during the year asking if they might plan an association. He encouraged the idea on condition that they would finance it. Much to his surprise they took hold of the scheme and by personal promises and individual plans for earning money they made it practicable. These are not extraordinary instances but are rather examples of what is taking place throughout our fields. We have every reason to be encouraged.”¹³¹ In 1915 a Taungthu-Shan Association had been formed. It was reported in KengTung in 1916, “The work of ingathering is supplemented by educational work at KengTung by

¹³⁰ 80th Annual Report, 1894, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Dr. Kirkpatrick, M. D., and wife, Rev. C. A. Raine and wife.

¹³¹ 99th Annual Report, 1913, American Baptist Missionary Union

village schools and by organization of Churches and association among the converts won.”¹³² General meeting of association was held annually.

E.E. Sowards reported in 1954, *“In our dealing with Baptist work in the Shan State we have frequently realized keenly the need for stronger local organizations through which we might work. The Burma Baptist Convention office in Rangoon is a long way removed from work in the Shan State and it would help the work considerably to have strong local organizations to assume responsibilities and to plan more wisely the forward steps necessary for the advancement of the work. In Burma Proper the organization has tended to be along racial lines with the Karen Baptist Convention, the Pwo Karen Baptist Conference, the Burma Baptist Churches Union, the Kachin Baptist Convention and the ZoMi (Chin Hills) Baptist Convention as outstanding examples. This kind of organization has probably tended to promote the progress of the evangelization of the different racial groups by their own people but especially since independence it has given rise to the Church that Mission work is divisive rather than unified.”* *“Therefore I recommend that we follow the example of the Southern Shan State Association and organize a new convention based not on racial but on geographical principles with all the Baptists residing in the area of the Shan State as potential members of a new Shan State Baptist Convention.”*¹³³

Present

Forming association and convention and working together in unity is good. We want to unite all Shan Churches and form Shan Churches Association. In fact forming Shan Churches Association is not a new idea. The first Shan Churches Association was formed in 1894 at HsiPaw but no more report about this association was recorded. ShweLi Shan Baptist Mission was formed in 1945 and later Eastern Shan State Shan Baptist Convention was formed in 1997. However they are not formed with pure Shan Churches. It includes Chinese, Palong and Wa Churches.

We’ve tried three times to unite all Shan Churches from all Shan States and form Shan Baptist Convention since 1978 but failed because of disunity among Shan Churches’ leaders combined with rejection of Burma Baptist Convention. The main reasons for being unable to unite and form one convention are misunderstanding, pride and selfishness. There are little communications among Shan Churches in Eastern Shan State, Southern Shan State and Northern Shan State thus lead to misunderstanding and lack of cooperation. The leaders fear of losing position when all Shan Churches united and become one.

The leaders, usually the secretary of each association, only see one another for a few days when they are at a business meeting of Myanmar Baptist Convention. They don’t have a chance of meeting formally and regularly to discuss about Shan Churches and Shan missions in the whole Shan States. Until today there is no pure Shan Churches association or convention representing all Shan Churches from all Shan States. Eastern Shan State Shan Baptist Convention is representing Shan and Wa Churches from the East and ShweLi Valley Shan Baptist Mission is representing Shan Churches, Chinese Churches and Palong Churches from the North. Ahka, Lahu, Myanmar, Kayin, Po Kayin, Kachin, Zomi, Asho Chin, Rakhine, Lisu, Naga and Mon have their own racial conventions and associations. But Shan do not have one to represent all Shan Churches. Without Shan convention or association it is difficult for all Shan Churches to work together for a common goal and common missions. But there are leadership pride and selfishness among the leaders from East and North.

Ezekiel 13:8-9 My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. They will not belong to the council of my people or be listed in the records of the house of Israel, nor will they enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.

¹³² 102nd Annual Report, 1916, American Baptist Missionary Union

¹³³ A study on Baptist work in Shan States by E.E. Sowards, 1954, Burma Baptist Mission, Rangoon.

Psalms 89:7 In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him.

31. Dignity, Credibility and Character of Leaders

Past

Bixby reported from Toungoo in 1863, *“He comes into the Church with a Christian character well developed and established and a fat of Scripture knowledge surpassing all the older members baptized by me. He is a man of intelligence, speaks Burmese, Shan and Karen and reads English a little. For some weeks he has given his whole time to the study of the Bible and to efforts to convince others of its truth. The well known good character of the man previous to his conversion and the manifest work of grace upon his heart and mind together with his knowledge of languages lead us to hope much from him as a preacher of the gospel.”*¹³⁴ It was reported in 1869, *“The careful daily study of the Epistle was I think of great benefit to them in their own personal Christian character. I am sure it led some of them to a very careful self-examination and whether they had any right to be teachers of the word of God.”*¹³⁵

It was reported by Rev. Young in 1894, *“The work has been temporarily retarded by the unchristian walk of one of the teachers that I discharged in November and later a teacher in the school falling into sin that necessitated her exclusion from the Church. The effect however seems less damaging than we had feared.”*¹³⁶

Present

Credibility, dignity and character of the leaders, pastors, missionaries, Church workers and Christians are very important in leadership and our witness to the Buddhists. Some of our pastors and leaders are full of dignity and good character, very dignified, reverent and well respected by others. But regretfully some of them give bad impressions to others. Some Buddhists claim that the Buddhist monks are more noble and reverent than our Christian ministers. They say that Buddhist monks live a very simple life. They do not wear expensive clothes except yellow robe, they do not live in the luxurious house but in monastery, they do not possess worldly materials, they don't work or do business, they even do not wear sandals, they are not allowed to be touched by women, they don't look up or side but on the ground when they walk, they don't get marriage, etc. Our ministers also ought to show that we are the reverent and holy men of God by our living example. The Christians must live the life of Christ and imitate Him. We must give the good witness and example to non-believers. If the drunkards are Christians, the drug addicts are Christians, the criminals are Christians, the adulterers are Christians, how can we teach and evangelize the others? Sadly to say some, not all, pastors and leaders loose their credibility and dignity because of the words they speak, the way they behave and they life style they live. The followings are the bad examples of some of our Shan pastors and leaders.

An ordained pastor was trying to make fun, making dirty joke and telling dirty story in his preaching sermon. People call him “dirty pastor.”

An ordained pastor is a heavy smoker. When asked why he smoke he said that it's good for his hypertension (high blood pressure). In fact it's not true. It makes hypertension worse.

An ordained pastor has beaten wife and children in front of the others. He has to be called back from mission field.

A pastor has misused Church money.

An ordained pastor use to carry a fighting-cock and having a cockfight in town even on Sunday.

¹³⁴ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Jan. 6, 1863. Toungoo.

¹³⁵ 55th Annual Report, July 1869, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Mrs. Bixby

¹³⁶ 81st Annual Report, 1895, Baptist Missionary Union, p295

A seminary graduate getting addicted to heroin.

A seminary graduate committed sexual immorality, has a son without married to a woman and has been excluded from the Church but later ordained and became a leader and pastor of the Church without repentance and confession.

An ordained pastor has bad moral character and resigned from the Church but still preaching, teaching and giving benediction in the Church.

An ordained pastor got drunk when he was not nominated for general secretary post.

Ordained pastors were watching TV at home when people are worshiping at the Church.

A Church deacon using foul languages and cursing football players at soccer field.

A heavy smoking deacon of a Church said, "Smoking is not a sin. The Bible doesn't say it. But drinking is surely a sin."

A former Chairman of a Church said, "One day, I went to the Church office. I found out that the key of Church locker was plied opened and some important documents, which were the complaints against the pastor, were missing. I talked to the pastor about it but he denied having any knowledge of it. Then I locked the locker with double lock. Next day it was plied opened again and the documents regarding two members who complaint against him were disappeared. The locker was kept in pastor's home. I talked to pastor again. He denied of doing it. I was so disappointed. I lost my trust in him. I resigned from the council. I did not go to this Church any more until today."

All these happenings make a handful of our Shan pastors and leaders losing their credibility, respect and trust. Some Buddhists accused, "They are worse than us." A pastor said in tears, at GCI training in 1999 in Yangon, "I confessed my sin to the Lord as I have been living like a Pharisee and a hypocrite. I will return to my home Church with a new life and new commitment." An ordained pastor knelt down to the ground and asked for prayer to release him from drug addiction.

Philippians 2:14-15 Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe.

Matthew 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

32. Christian Suffering

Past

Rev. Bixby reported on November 5, 1861, "*These men (believers) are most bitterly persecuted. One of the leaders has been severely beaten and others are threatened. They are refused water from their wells and intercourse with their people and the severest anathemas are pronounced upon them.*"¹³⁷ And on October 25, 1862, "*Public sentiment, which is powerful for good or evil everywhere, acts strongly against Christianity here and the fear of ridicule may keep back many for a time but if they are indeed pricked in the heart not simply cut to the heart sooner or later they will come. It will be according to the election of two graces. People in our country have no idea how much opposition the native Christians of this country have to meet and nowhere have I ever seen a people more sensitive to ridicule, abusive language seized him and dragged him upon the ground. If it is known that a man is and inquirer among the Burman he becomes at once an object of persecution and scorn. That Burman*

¹³⁷ The Missionary Magazine, Vol. XLII. April, 1862. No.4, American Baptist Missionary Union, Letter From Mr. Bixby, Nov. 5, 1861. Toungoo.

is a hero who comes out boldly in Toungoo for the despised Jesus. The cross is an offence everywhere but to some it is the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation."¹³⁸

Reported in 1869, "They reported in some villages who are willing to listen and receive books. In other place they are driven away sometime with stones."¹³⁹

Rev. Young reported in 1903, "In June I received by baptism the first fruits of the field. This first convert had to endure severe persecution but he has proved a steadfast and earnest man. For several months opposition was very strong. The priests who at first seemed very friendly became openly hostile as soon as active work was begun."¹⁴⁰

Rev. Young reported in 1911, "The line of cleavage between Christians and non-Christians is becoming more and more apparent. The two classes often separating one from the other to form separate villages."¹⁴¹ We do not see a missionary being persecuted or beaten by the Shan. It seemed that they dare not to physically harm the foreign missionaries probably because the country was under British or because of their good relationship. But some Shan believers were beaten, stoned, refused water from well, refused communication and association with other people and sometimes driven out from village.

Present

Christian suffering is unavoidable. Jesus said we would be persecuted because of Him. That is why some people ask, "Is your religion is a religion of suffering?" In certain places it is not easy for a Shan to become Christian. It is like the matter of life and death. When a person believes and becomes a Christian, the immediate problem is family relationship. New believer may face discrimination from other family members. They may not talk to him or eat with him at the same table. He may be ridiculed, insulted, dismembered or disinherited by the parents. If the whole family believes and converts, they will be excommunicated by other villagers. Sometimes their farms are destroyed by night, their children assaulted in the market and their belongings are stolen.

I met a young new convert who lost his wife, his two month old baby because his father in-law driven him out from his home when he believed in Christ and was baptized. Sometimes when Christians were gathering together to worship in a house, the house was stoned. When a young Christian girl went out to a shop she was slapped. By seeing these sufferings, many are scared to become Christians. In some situation new believers have to be moved out from the village to other place and a new village has to be founded for them. A young girl was beaten many times by her mother in-law because of going to a Christian Church. A housewife was beaten by her husband severely till her arm was broken when she believed and was baptized. Suffering is not only implying to physical but also to all psychological and emotional. Non-Christians may give suffering to Christians because of hatred. Christians may give suffering to other Christians because of jealousy, competition and division. Christians' suffering is foretold.

Matthew 24:9 "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated
by all nations
because of me."

Philippians 1:29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also
to suffer for him.

¹³⁸ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Toungoo, British Burma, October 25, 1862, The Missionary Magazine, XLIII March 1863. No. 3, American Baptist Missionary Union

¹³⁹ 55th Annual Report, July 1869, American Baptist Missionary Union

¹⁴⁰ 89th Annual Report, 1903, American Baptist Missionary Union

¹⁴¹ 97th Annual Report, 1911, American Baptist Missionary Union

1 Peter 2:20-21 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

33. Correspondence and Communication

Past

Rev. Bixby said in 1863, *“I have often come in from a day’s toil with an aching head, a heavy heart and a feeble, if not faltering, faith and have said to my wife, “How I wish somebody would writes to me.” “Who?” “O any body, I don’t care who, any body that loves Jesus, any body that loves us. I only want a letter.” “The truth is the heart craves fellowship, sympathy and love of which at home it is never deprived and which here it seldom gets.”*¹⁴² And on January 16, 1863, *“We want men and money and have them to carry on our work successfully but it seems to me we want one thing more, which it is in the power of the Church to give a more general correspondence between the missionaries and their brethren an intercourse full of love and confidence and words of good cheer. I would have both ministers and members of Churches write frequently to the different missionaries in a familiar manner as they are accustomed to greet one another at their annual festivals. If this suggestion could be taken up generally and carried out fully by the members of our Churches (from America) the missionaries writing in return as they are sure to do I fully believe the morale power of our missions would be increased many fold. Do you think our esteemed and loved brethren ever thought of the amount of good they might do in this way? “To do good and to communicate forget not.” I do not believe there is a missionary in Burma whose heart would not be bound with joy at the reception of a letter from any of his brethren and who would not be happier for days and weeks together on account of each a letter. “The joy of the Lord is our strength.” How vigorously a joyful mind work and how patiently it bears! I find in my heart a sort of hunger for a home prayer and conference meeting, which nothing that I find here satisfies except such letters as Christian friends write.”*¹⁴³

Dr. Kirkpatrick said in 1893, *“I submit that it is not for the best interest of the work, nor economy for the society, nor for the good of the missionary on the field to have, but one missionary family for a station in these far frontier fields. Here, where we are more isolated than any other station in Burma, for we are four days from the nearest post office or telegraph office, we are entirely alone. Before coming here I was promised an associate within a year if possible. Now nearly four years have gone and I have neither seen nor heard anything of any one on the way. We have been alone in distant frontier stations for eleven years. Promised, an associate, many times especially since coming to NamKham but no one has come yet.”*¹⁴⁴ How lonely and discouraged when communication and correspondence failed. Missionaries might feel forgotten by their own Churches.

Present

How long did it take and how difficult it was to get a letter delivered from Toungoo, Burma, to United State in 1860s? Rev. Bixby, Rev. Cushing and other missionaries had written a lot of letters and reports to missionary society in US very frequently, regularly and in detail. Correspondence and communication are very important not only informing about the work but also encouraging one another. Nowadays our Shan Churches fail to communicate and correspond with one another even inland because of various factors such as too lazy to write, no postal service and facility and do not think it is important. Communication and relationship among Shan Christian leaders are indeed very poor. They seldom write to one another. Failure in reporting about the work in Churches or missions leads to lack of enthusiasm and people don’t know what is happening and cannot offer help. Very seldom Christian workers received letter of encouragement from Christian brothers and sisters or Churches. We have

¹⁴² Letter From Mr. Bixby, Jan. 16, 1863, Toungoo.

¹⁴³ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Jan. 16, 1863, Toungoo.

¹⁴⁴ 79th Annual Report, 1893, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Dr. Kirkpatrick

seen some leaders only give verbal report, not on paper, at a quarter or annual general meeting. A leader said in his annual general meeting report, “I have nothing special to report.” Has he done nothing the whole year? Most of the Churches do not have telephone, fax or e-mail. However these should not be the reason for not to communicate. I have received quite detailed and regular report about Shan mission works from Eastern Shan State before Rev. Sai Stephen passed away but very seldom from Northern Shan State.

Hebrews 10:24-25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the day approaching.

Acts 15:23-28 With them they sent the following letter: The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings.
We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing.

34. Transportation and Traveling

Past

Travel in Shan States was very difficult and dangerous. It was reported by Rev. Freiday in 1879 that *they traveled by boat, by ponies and on foot*. It was reported by Dr. Griggs in 1895 that *“They had traveled on foot for two months*. It was reported in 1959 in Eastern Shan State that *“The area was unsettled and could only be reached thrice in a year and traveling on foot or mules and was very insecure.”* Rev. Young reported in 1894, *“The cart road now comes within about seventy-five miles of MuongNai. The government is surveying the road at present as far as MuongNai so we will have a cart road in two or three years.”*¹⁴⁵

It was reported in KengTung 1962 that *“It was much limited due to lack of qualified personal and certain difficulties in communication and condition which limit travel in the area*. It was reported in 1904, *“NamKham, twenty five miles southeast from Bhamo, on the borders of unfriendly Yunnan Province in western China, is reached from Bhamo by a way which no cart road or pony track traverses; HsiPaw, one hundred miles south from NamKham, is now connected by railway with Bhamo; MuongNai, to the far southeast of HsiPaw, is reached from the railway by a bullock cart ride of twenty days and KengTung, to the far northeast of MuongNai, is reached by another cart ride of twenty days over a rolling pathway of hills and valleys.”*¹⁴⁶ The missionaries traveled on bullock cart, on boat, on ponies, on elephant, rarely by car or by rail but mostly on foot. They walked for weeks sometimes even months during their mission trip. Sometimes they got sick on the road, sometimes they got accident, but the life had never been lost by travel accident, they had never been robbed or killed by bandit.

Present

Nowadays our evangelists travel mostly by car, seldom on foot. Younger generations do not want to walk for days or weeks. However travel by car, train or air is too expensive. Most of the pastors cannot afford for the bus fare by their own money. Travel by a car for two hundred miles may cost one-month salary of a pastor. However the Church or association usually paid most of the traveling expenses for pastors when they were sent by the Church. They also have traveling allowance. Nevertheless small salary and expensive traveling should not be the reason for not going out to preach

¹⁴⁵ 80th Annual Report, 1894, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Rev. Young

¹⁴⁶ “A Mission Land of Many Peoples” By Rev. T.S. Barbour, D.D., Foreign Secretary, The Baptist Missionary Magazine, February 1903

gospel. Some Churches are rich. They never have deficit in their budget. Some have thousands, some have millions of Kyat in their Church account. If they could afford to spend millions of Kyat in building a beautiful church building they should also afford to send preachers into missions regardless of expensive traveling cost. Most of the Churches have a car. One Church in the North has four cars. It depends on how they use it.

Poor road condition is also a hindrance to our mission work. In some area a hundred miles journey may take three days by car on muddy, rocky, uneven and dangerous road. During rainy season, car and motorcycle are useless. They have to go on foot or by cow cart. Evangelists stopped traveling during rainy season. In some areas commercial transportations are only available once a week or once in a while or not available at all. It is also not reliable. However this poor transportation should not stop us going out preaching good news. Rev. Cushing spent 52 days to get to KengTung not by car but on foot, bullock cart and ponies. Dr. Griggs traveled on foot for two months through terrain of Shan States. If American can walk, Shan can walk.

Psalms 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Romans 10:15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

35. Written Record

Past

The missionaries and organization had a very good system of keeping record of their work and reports. We appreciate very much their good recording and keeping system for we can now read their letters and reports and study their services among our people one hundred forty years ago.

Present

It is amazing to see hundreds of old papers, reports and records properly kept in library archives at American Baptist Mission headquarters in USA. Regretfully today, no writing and proper recording system is implemented in Shan Churches and associations. They use to write the minutes of the meeting but fail to keep them properly. When I try to find the minutes, record and papers regarding Shan Baptist work at Myanmar Baptist Convention Headquarter, Eastern Shan State Shan Baptist Convention Office, ShweLi Valley Shan Baptist Mission Office, many records, even the recent ones, are not found. They do not have library archive. The records are neither kept properly in file or office, nor put into computer or microchips. I have seen a Church in ShweLi which has three computers but the ShweLi Valley Baptist Association does not have one. Vice-chairman of the association said, "We don't have money to buy a computer." A Church is rich but association is poor. We will not be able to read what has happened in the past if there are no records. We may not be able to learn, change or improved our missions and ministries for the future without knowing the past. Very little pictures or photos are available as record. Shan Churches need to develop good recording system.

Habakkuk 2:2 Then the Lord replied, "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it."

Revelation 1:19 "Write , therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later."

36. Understanding

Past

Dr. Henderson expressed strongly in August 1936 against the mission board's misunderstanding about Shan work, *"One suggestion is that perhaps they ought to abandon the whole of the Shan work. Except for the sadness of it that does not affect us here in MuongNai for we are already abandoned and are carrying on with what we can put in and contributions from local Christians and others who see the need and believe in the work. Things are growing and there is a great need to encourage of which I hope to have time to speak." "I am going to ask you to put yourselves in their place and try to see how you would feel. Supposing you had been continually in the same place, shut away from the world currents, with all their suggestion of improvements and progress, for 2000 years, with no other place for your thoughts to rest except in the past, would it be fair to blame you for being conservative? Would it be just to expect all such influences to be changed in 40 years?"*¹⁴⁷

They had good understanding. They shared the need of different mission fields by sharing their resources and transferring missionaries to different places in Shan States. As we read hundreds of letters and reports from missionaries, we have not seen a single feud or argument or misunderstanding among missionaries recorded and reported. Was there no problem at all? Did they say, report and record only good things and hide away all the bad things? If it was so they did not tell the truth and we will never know the truth. The mistake or failure in the past can be our resources for the improvement and success in the future. We should understand their situation and appreciate it. We should not be ashamed of telling the failure and mistake in the past for the sake of the better future.

Present

We have to admit that there are many problems among our Shan leaders and Churches because of lack of understanding, communication, forgiveness and unity. Instead of helping one another, encouraging one another, forgiving one another, working together, serving together and solving problems together, some are trying to find fault on one another and spreading rumors and making unfounded accusations and damaging other's credibility. These are the weaknesses of our Shan leadership. When I met a leader from the North, he said to me one thing and when I met another leader, he said to me another thing. They accused one another. A senior leader in ShweLi said, "These young tucks don't agree with us what we are doing now for Shan missions." The young tucks said, "These old guys do not agree with us what we are doing now for Shan missions." Who is telling the truth? Some fail to appreciate the help, generosity and sincerity of the others. When people don't get what they want they badmouth others. Some leaders only see money as "help" to the Church and missions. They seldom see participation, teaching and training to Churches as "help" to the Church. They appreciate material help much more than spiritual help.

When Asian Outreach and I started to support 18 Shan students to study at various Seminaries and Bible Schools in Burma in 1985, two leaders from Shan Churches asked me to give them all the money I have (all the money for 18 students for four years) in lump sum to them so that they could make use of the money in doing some investments and earning more money. When I told them that I did not have the money for the whole four years because I only got the money from Asian Outreach every three-month for the students, they did not believe. They thought that I was keeping all the money. They insisted to give them all. It's a serious misunderstanding and insulting to one's generosity and integrity.

John 13:7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

¹⁴⁷ Letter From Dr. A. H. Henderson, MuongNai, August 13, 1936

1 Corinthians 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

37. Donation and Offering

Past

Bixby said on January 16, 1863, *“We want men and money and have them to carry on our work successfully but it seems to me we want one thing more, which it is in the power of the Church to give a more general correspondence between the missionaries and their brethren an intercourse full of love and confidence and words of good cheer”*¹⁴⁸ It was reported in 1900 from MuongNai, *“Daily thank offering of rice was collected from many. This was brought in on Sunday and the proceeds applied to famine relief in India.”*¹⁴⁹

It was reported in 1903 from MuongNai by Dr. Henderson, *“The Church has started a free-will thank offering fund and a little thanks offering of rice is given each morning by all who feel so inclined. This is applied to the support of the orphanage and may amount to Rs. 50 per annum. This is an instance of a heathen custom being diverted into a Christian channel.”*¹⁵⁰ It was reported in 1911 from TaungGyi, *“At the Easter and Thanksgiving services special offerings were taken, the first for Rangoon Baptist College, and the second for the purchase of lamps. Some brought rice, others drawn work, others made shawls and some sent to Rangoon or Bhamo for articles, which could be sold at a profit. One school at TaungGyi supplied presents for a Christmas tree and made a special offering of rupees 14 (\$4.67) for the orphanage at MuongNai.”*¹⁵¹ Henderson reported in 1899 from MuongNai, *“A daily thanks offering of rice from many. This is brought in on Sunday and the proceeds applied to famine relief in India.”*

Church ministries need money to function. Money comes from offering and donation of the believers and non-believers alike. Traditionally offering were not only in the form of money but also rice and other homegrown products like fruits and vegetables. It was reported in 1893 from HsiPaw that SaoPha gave a building, a land, logs for hospital and rupees 1,500 toward furnishing instruments and medicines. Shan SaoPha were not Christians but giving was one of the most important practices to gain merit in Buddhism.

Present

Shan Christians are very generous in making donation and offering since they either come from Buddhist or living with Buddhist neighborhood. But they do not know how to give and how to receive. One Christian donor said, *“If you don’t write my name on the top of the door, I won’t donate.”* One donor said, *“If you don’t hang my name of the wall I won’t donate.”* Some donors want their names to be displayed. But some want to be anonymous and be a secret donor. In one Church, it takes about 30 minutes to finish announcing the names of donors and amount donated during Sunday worship service. I asked, *“What is the idea of making such long announcement, reading out the names of the donors and amount of donation during worship service?”* the pastor replied, *“We don’t want the donors to think that we have taken away their money and put them into our pocket.”* When I listen to the announcement, some people donate very little, as little as 100 Kyat, but some people donate large amount, as big as 10,000 Kyat. How would the little donor feel and how would the big donor feel when they hear their names and amount of donation announced in front of all the people in the Church? It seems people enjoy hearing their names on donors’ list. In Buddhist monastery, the names of the donors and amount of donation are written on the wall or engraved on the stone and erected around the ground

¹⁴⁸ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Jan. 16, 1863, Toungoo.

¹⁴⁹ 86th Annual Report, 1900, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Dr. Henderson

¹⁵⁰ 89th Annual Report, 1903, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Dr. Henderson

¹⁵¹ 97th Annual Report, 1911, American Baptist Missionary Union, report from Dr. Henderson

of the monastery. They are very proud of their donation and they believe it earns them good merit. What Jesus said about giving? It is contrary.

Some of the Church leaders also don't know how to collect the money or raise fund for the Church. One of the Church members from North complaint, "I was asked to pledge for the church building fund. I did not have the money at that time. But I made faith promise that I would give Kyat 20,000 within one year. But unfortunately I could not fulfill my pledge because of poor economy. I did not have money to give. A treasurer of the Church came to my home every day and asked me to give the money. I explained to him that I did not have the money now but I would give him when I have the money. But he kept on coming and asking money almost every day. Sometimes he sit in front of my door the whole day waiting for my money. Finally I got fed up with him and I borrowed the money from friend and gave it to him." A young Shan lady studying at Myanmar Institute Theology in Yangon asks, "Is it spiritually correct for a Church to sell lottery tickets to raise fund for the Church? Tithing is very much preached at Shan Churches. Some pastors teach the members of the Church to give the tithe as a law from God and if they do not give the tithe they are stealing the money from God and will be punished by God. If they regularly give the tithe God will blessing them with the shower of blessing. If they give more they will receive more. Some Churches take membership fee monthly or yearly from baptized members. It is a compulsory offering. Some Churches organize fund raising activities such as holding concert, stage show and fund fare market. Most Churches receive money from houses and families during Christmas carol singing tour. Christmas Carol Singing is organized as fund raising activity. Some Carolers do not leave until the owner of the house open the door and give them money or gift. Getting the money is not very difficult for Shan Churches but how to use the money is the biggest problem. We claim that Church money is God's money but we fail to ask God when we spend the money.

Mark 12:41-42 Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything, all she had to live on."

Matthew 6:2-4 Jesus said, "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth; they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

38. Participation and Cooperation

Past

We have seen a good cooperation among missionaries. The missionaries moved all over the Shan States and helped one another when there was a need. Rev. W.M. Young worked in MuongNai, Southern Shan State, from 1893 to 1895 and moved to HsiPaw, Northern Shan State, he served in HsiPaw from 1895 to 1900 and moved to KengTung, Eastern Shan State and serve there until 1954. Most of the missionaries did the same. Dr. Robert Harper also worked in MuongNai, NamKham and KengTung.

Present

Some of our Shan pastors do not want to move to any other place when they've got settle in somewhere at the Church for sometimes. Some members of the Church think that witnessing, preaching

gospel and mission works are the works of paid pastors and evangelists only. They don't need to participate. Some are reluctant to participate in God's work without pay. There are very little cooperation among Eastern, Southern and Northern Shan Churches. They use to do thing separately and sometimes competitively. Shan believers and Churches in Southern Shan State are small and weak in all aspects but the strong Churches from the East and North seldom go to help.

God has given us a wonderful opportunity of preaching gospel to the Shan in common Shan (Burmese-Shan) language and DaiMao (Chinese-Shan) dialect to all the Shan people in Myanmar, Thailand and China through radio broadcast from Far East Broadcasting Company since 1989. I asked pastors from Eastern Shan and ShweLi Shan to participate in this ministry in providing sermons in Shan. However until today no one from ShweLi has contributed any. All pastors in ShweLi are DaiMao. But none of them has given a sermon for DaiMao program. Late Rev. Sai Stephen from KengTung had contributed about 40 sermons before he passed away.

Shan believers in PangLong are poor. They wanted to raise money so that they could have their own Church and pastor. They wanted to go to ShweLi Valley and collect offering from Christian brothers and sisters there. ShweLi is a border town with China and having good business and there are some rich Christians in MuSe. But their letter of request to give them permission to come to ShweLi for fund raising visit was turned down by ShweLi Valley Shan Baptist Mission. No one can organize any Christian activity or collect any donation from their Churches and members without their permission. If we call one another as "Christian brothers and sisters" we should love, care, concern and help one another.

1Peter 1:22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

1John 3:17-18 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

1John 4:20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.

39. Meeting and Fellowship

Past

Bixby reported in November 1863, "*Where could we get the fund for such an undertaking? It was so ordered that I should arrive at Rangoon just in time to attend the second annual meeting of the Burma Bible and Tract Society, an organization which though small and young is already doing a great and good work for the enlightenment of Burma and as the President called on me to state to them the condition and prospects of these frontier tribes I had a good opportunity to present this subject and to press upon the society the claim of the Shan to the printed as well as the preached gospel.*"¹⁵² Missionaries met in Rangoon for business meeting at the Baptist mission headquarter. Most of the missionaries working among other people groups in Burma came to annual general meeting.

It was reported in 1894, "*Arrangements had been perfected to have a meeting in April with the MuongNai and NamKham Churches in the HsiPaw Church. Bhamo has ceased to be classed as a Shan station and KengTung was not then opened. Dr. Harper of MuongNai was, by reasons beyond his control, prevented from attending, so NamKham and HsiPaw Churches held a two days' series of meetings, in which the spiritual interest was good and the Christian fellowship was enjoyed by all. During the business portion of the meetings, it was decided to organize a temporary association of the*

¹⁵² Letter From Mr. Bixby, Nov. 23, 1863, Toungoo, The Baptist Missionary Magazine, May 1864.

*Shan Churches. All of the proceedings were left to be approved or not by the absent Churches. It would no doubt be of great benefit to the different Shan Churches to have an associational meeting every second or third year. The distances between the Churches is the greatest barrier to annual meetings but we trust some plan may be arranged and agreed upon whereby Shan associational meetings may be held. A monthly workers' meeting has been formed, at which we meet and talk over the work.*¹⁵³ It was the first time we have seen missionaries and Churches from all over Shan States planned and met at HsiPaw to discuss about missions among the Shan and form Shan Churches Association. But we did not know whether they met again later.

Present

Members of the Church meet at worship service and fellowship gathering. Churches meet occasionally at special time of celebration. Leaders meet at business meeting. But there's no opportunity of Churches from three Shan States meeting and having fellowship together. There are no formal meeting or fellowship among leaders from Shan Churches from all Shan States. Once in a while they meet at the meeting of Myanmar Baptist Convention. They don't think it is necessary since they neither work together nor organized activity together. They do not have a combine agenda in mission work. Many of them they don't know one another.

When we organized GCI training in TaungGyi in 1995, some believers, leaders and pastors from the East, South and North came to live and study together at one place. This is the first time they have had the opportunity of being together to study the Bible, to learn and to have fellowship together. One of the most difficult problems for them to have such a meeting is lack of willingness, spirit of unity and desire of the leaders, the poor communication and transportation. They seldom write to one another except sending formal invitations to participate at special function and celebration. The bus may take 5 days from Eastern to Northern Shan State and the cost of traveling will be about Kyat 50,000 for one person. It is too expensive for a Shan believer. We need to have formal and regular meeting among leaders to know one another, pray for one another, encourage one another and work together in unity.

Acts 2:42-44 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common.

Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

40. Jealousy and Selfishness

Past

Rev. Bixby said on January 16, 1863, *"I discover sometimes little petty jealousy among this preaching band, immediately our power is gone, every man becomes a dead weight to my spirit but when this is repented of and the current sympathy is restored, every man becomes a wing to waft me heavenward."*¹⁵⁴ Jealousy among preaching band destroyed the power of the Holy Spirit and the preachers died spiritually.

Present

Jealousy is one of the strongest weapons Satan uses to destroy God's servants. There are jealousy among the leaders regarding their position, salary, benefit, housing, achievement, education, opportunity, etc. They seldom congratulate and proud of the one who has achieved great success in

¹⁵³ 80th Annual Report, 1894, American Baptist Missionary Union

¹⁵⁴ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Jan. 16, 1863, Toungoo.

ministry but rather try to find fault and do smear campaign by badmouthing and false accusation. When someone is going up, instead of lifting him up higher, they try to pull him down with jealousy. When someone is teaching well, preaching well and serving well in the ministry, some would ask, "Is he a Seminary graduate? Is he ordained?" and try to discredit him. Some pastors of the Church do not want anyone who preach and teach well to preach and teach at their Church because they fear that people will not want to hear them later. Some do not want to give opportunity to others who are better. They want to be popular but do not want other to become more popular. Jealousy and selfishness are to be cast out from Shan Churches.

Philippians 1:15-18 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Philippians 2:3-5 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

41. Dictatorial Control

Past

Who was the boss of the Baptist mission among the Shan 140 years ago? Foreign Mission Board sent missionaries but they did not dictate, manipulate and control the work of missionaries. The mission board in Burma also did not control Shan mission work. Individual missionary had freedom to work, to communicate with their supporting Churches and report their work to mission board back home in America. We saw the missionaries coming to Rangoon and having meeting with other missionaries who were working in different part of Burma. They worked freely in mission fields.

Present

According to Baptist principle a Church has autonomy to run its own ministries. Under Church administrative system, Church Council has full authority and power over the pastor, deacons, Church and its ministries. In some Churches the Chairman or the secretary is the most powerful man to control the Church activity and direction. Some leaders are controlling the Church as secular business entity and running the Church as social club. In some council or board meeting, the members argue and fight like atheists. If they are not elected for the position in the Church they leave the Church. They have forgotten that Christ is the head of the Church and Church is Christ's body. They fail to allow the Holy Spirit to lead at the meeting. Appointment or dismissal of pastor is also decided by Church Council. Ministries are also planned and executed by the council. If the council is working, the job is done. If the council is lead by the people who are spiritually strong then the life of the Church will be strong. But if the Church Council is lead by the people who are not spiritual but just business oriented lay people, the spiritual life of the Church will be very sick. Sadly to say some leaders in the Church Council are not very matured spiritually. Some are Christians by name only and have little Christian character. In selecting the members of the council and the leaders, they seldom care much about their spiritual qualification and maturity. In one Church, I was told, the lay leaders, members of the board of deacons, used to drink heavily and frequently got drunk. These leaders even insisted that they would be allowed to preach on Sunday. If not they would not join the Church Council and support the pastor. In some Churches the spouse of the chairman or secretary or deacon is not a Christian. How can such persons be a leaders of Church of Jesus Christ?

In some Churches pastor is the most powerful leader. No one can say anything to him or do anything against him or decide anything without his agreement. The Church Council cannot make any decision against him. He is the only one who can make decision in all matters. No one can take disciplinary action against him and dismiss him even though he is liable. He declares, "As long as I am alive, no one can take my position as senior pastor. I'll never resign." He controls the Church as dictator. When I visited a Church in Northern Shan State in 2001, the Chairman of the Church Council came to me and said, "We want you to teach the Bible to our Church. But our pastor does not agree. We don't know why."

Col 1:18 And He is the head of the body, the Church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy.

1 Peter 5:2-3 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

42. Pride

Past

The past missionaries had a wonderful servant-hood humility in serving God among the Shan. They humbled themselves to the poor, ordinary Shan, Buddhist monks and SaoPha. They tolerated and forgave the misunderstanding and insult of the people. They had never fought with the people who argued with them, who ridiculed them, who mistreated them. They did not look down on the poor and uncivilized people. They came and served the Shan, not to be served by the Shan.

Present

God hates pride. The bride breeds enemies. The leaders of the Church should understand that they are chosen as leaders to serve, not to be served. Are the pastors serving the members of the Church or being served by the members of the Church? There are some good and humble pastors and leaders in Shan Churches. But some are not. Pride has destroyed our unity and relationship. Some of the leaders take pride at their position in the Church. Some use to say, "I am ordained pastor. Only I can do that." Some say, "I am the chairman of the Church, without my permission no one must do anything in the Church." In the Church, people are treated differently according to their title and position such as ordinary members, deacons, Seminary graduate, un-ordained pastor, ordained pastor and senior pastor etc. The ordained senior pastor and ordained pastors are the most respected and put at the highest position in the Church. The title "Reverend" is very important to a minister. Any pastor who has the title "Reverend" is very much respected because they are reverend even though sometimes their dignity, character and credibility are doubtful. They do not allow any one to lay hand on other people and prayed, give benediction, conduct baptism and communion unless they are ordained ministers. Laypersons in the Church are the least respected persons even though they may be spiritually matured and have good character, credibility and dedication in Church work. People also think highly of Seminary graduate and consider them as "Expert in the Bible" and listen to them whatever they teach whether right or wrong. Though the laymen may have good knowledge of the Bible by self-study and special training, preaching and teaching well, people don't consider them as qualified persons to teach the Bible. When a laymen teach, people use to lookdown on them and ask, "Which Bible School or Seminary he graduated from?" and they use to say, "He did not go to Bible School. He is not a Bible School graduate." etc. Our most successful and faithful servants such as Rev. Kham Maung from MuSe, Rev. Ai Pan from NamKham, Rev. Ai Hmoon from SeLan, Rev. Kham Ye from NamKham, Rev. Park Ka Sai, Rev. Ai Noi and Rev. Ai Chein from KengTung are not Bible School graduates.

However their Bible knowledge, their faith, their dedication, their work, their ministries and their achievement are awesome. None of the present ministers can match with their achievement.

Some ordained pastors are very much proud of themselves being called reverend and they lookdown on those un-ordained pastor and layperson. Some are acting like abbot. They use to seat on the highest place, given favor and served by others. Some of our pastors and evangelists are gaining enemies instead of friends when discussing about religion and faith with other non-believers because of pride. Sometimes the members of the Church put the pastors so high and make them so proud of themselves. Members of the Church are not allowed to asked questions regarding their sermons or teaching. They are taught that asking questions to the pastor is not appropriate, rude and it is a sin. We seldom see people asking pastor any question.

Mark 10:25 “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Romans 12:10 “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.”

John 13:14-15 “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.”

43. Responsibilities

Past

We have learned that those missionaries were very responsible to their work, their calling, their mission board and their Churches. They reported everything back to US and their Churches all the time, very detailed, sometimes almost every week. Reporting is very important to keep the people informed of the work, the situation and the need so that the people know how to help and pray for the missions. They carried the responsibility of improving the health, giving the education and preaching good news to the Shan. They had achieved the purpose of being sent to the Shan.

Present

Accountability! Some leaders are very responsible in their appointment, position, calling and serving faithfully. But some are not. Some do not give their report to the Church and association regularly and truthfully. Sometimes they even say there’s nothing special to report. It is amazed to see how can a minister or secretary of the association has “nothing” to report. Have they done nothing the whole year? Some Church leaders do not know that they are accountable not only to the Church but also to God. They have to give all the account to the Lord on judgment day. It seems that some leaders do not even fear God. Some do sinful things either openly or secretly. One member of the Church said angrily, “You pastor will go to hell. We will go to heaven.” Some leaders teaching the right but doing the wrong. Some leaders are teaching wrong theology and leading the congregation to the wrong way. One pastor confessed, “I am a blind guide. How can a blind guide lead the congregation? We all will fall into the pit.” We are answerable to God when we see Him. When we know that we are answerable to God and accountable to Him, the fear of the Lord will develop in our hearts and our motive and action will be right with God. We are not appointed by men only but by God. We are not paid by men only but by God. God calls us and sends us for His mission. We are totally accountable to God.

A leader of the ShweLi Shan Baptist Mission asked me to send my report to them even though I was not sent by them to do the work.

Matthew 23:13-15 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the Kingdom of heaven in men’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land

and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.

1 Corinthians 7:24 Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.

44. Bible Reading and Study

Past

It was reported from Toungoo in 1863, *“We go directly to the field and each evening or in some portion of the day a Scripture lesson is given and the same day or the next it is given to the people here a little and there a little precept and example. Study, prayer, praise, preaching, enters into the work of each day. Thus we have a live “Theological Seminary.” Next to accuracy we enucleate earnestness that we may have the former we carefully study the scriptures that we may be sure of the latter we weigh well men’s wants with our obligation we try to get into sympathy with humanity while at the same time we drink in the spirit of cross. Our models are the Apostles and our Lord.”*¹⁵⁵

It was reported from NamKham in 1904, *“Sunday services and weekday Bible Study were constantly carried on.”*¹⁵⁶ It was reported from KengTung in 1961, *“Bible Study will be held in KengTung beginning the 9th through the 21st October. This is the first time classes of this kind are to be held.”*¹⁵⁷ And in 1962, *“A Summer school is suggested for the children and adults to study “Basic Christian Beliefs” and “Christian nurture.”*¹⁵⁸ It was reported from TaungGyi in 1969, *“Evangelistic committee and Youth are jointly organizing summer Bible Study and short-term Bible Study program.”*¹⁵⁹

Present

Bible reading, teaching and study are very important in Christian life. Some Shan believers love reading the Bible as holy words of God. They use to keep the Bible on higher place, never put on the ground, keep under the pillow and never step over the Bible. They read the Bible very carefully, deeply and solemnly. But many do not read Bible as much as they should. Many Shan believers do not know how to read the Bible, how to study the Bible. Very few pastors have finished reading all sixty six books in the Bible. There is no proper Bible Study program conducted in Churches. Sometimes it is organized occasionally. Bible commentary and dictionary are not available in Shan language except Holy Bible. More Biblical books are needed to be translated into Shan.

When I translated Our Daily Bread booklets into Shan language and published quarterly by Youth for Christ in Myanmar, I discovered that only few Shan believers read it because many Shan Christian don’t know Shan literature. They prefer reading Burmese. Many Shan preachers do not have good knowledge of the Bible to teach properly. In fact many believers are very hungry for the words. When I was teaching Bible at a Church in Northern Shan State, a deacon of the Church, who was a Bible School graduate but has resigned from ministry, said, *“Some parts of the Bible are just makeup story. Not true story. I do not believe every word in the Bible.”* Then I asked, *“Shall we tear off from the Bible the parts that you think is a makeup story?”* But he said, *“No,no,no. You must not do it to the Bible like this. It is holy.”* How can it be holy if it is just a fiction? Shan Churches need a lot of teaching sound doctrine and Biblical Truth. Shan Churches should have regular Bible Study program taught by qualified teachers and leaders who have thorough knowledge of the Bible.

¹⁵⁵ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Jan. 16, 1863, Toungoo.

¹⁵⁶ The Baptist Missionary Magazine 1904

¹⁵⁷ KengTung Shan Baptist Conference Annual Report, 1960-1961

¹⁵⁸ Annual Report On KengTung Field For The Year 1961 - 1962

¹⁵⁹ Minutes of The 101st Annual Meeting of The Burma Baptist Convention, November 1969, Rangoon.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

45. Prayer Life

Past

Rev. Bixby asking questions in October 1862, “*Who will water it with their tears? Who will pray for the Shan without intermission, at least twice every day, during the year, which you will enter about the time this reaches you?*”¹⁶⁰ It was a challenge from Bixby to Churches in America to pray twice a day for the Shan mission. “*The preparations for the meeting on the part of these rude people were most ample and pleasing. Near the zayat, which by the way is one of the best I have ever seen made wholly by natives they had constructed a large booth of bamboo and grass, which would convene at least a thousand natives. On one side a broad platform was made several feet above ground with a nice bamboo floor and a very pretty balustrade quite encircling it except the door. On three sides very comfortable seats were made a desk or bench all of bamboo. Fifty or more of the Christians assembled at different times for prayer. We spent the evening in special prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit.*”¹⁶¹ The missionaries prayed for the anointing of the Holy Spirit at large evangelistic meeting. “*We need more native help to carry on the work with any advantage. Our only resource is to pray the Lord of the harvest to advantage laborer.*”¹⁶² Dr. Kirkpatrick reported in May 1893, “*At the chapel we have a sunrise prayer meeting every day.*”¹⁶³ Sunrise prayer meeting every day!

Present

Prayer is power. We are always taught and asked to pray. But sometimes we don’t know how to pray. Professor J. Herbert Kane said, “Christian missions have not been very successful on the great continent of Asia. After 250 years of Protestant missionary work, slightly less than 3% of the population is professing Christians.”¹⁶⁴

The great revival takes place in Korea in 1907 because of the power of prayer. Today the world largest Church is in Korea. How many Shan leaders and believers pray every day in the early morning? A survey shows that a Shan believer only pray three minutes a day including prayer for the meal. Pray for the meal is just like a routine or Christian ritual. The prayer life of the Shan believers need to be improved. Some Shan believers don’t know how to pray. Some may be praying for many years everyday but still do not know how to pray. Some pray very short and some pray very long. Some actually not praying to God but indirectly saying something to the people who are listening. I have heard a pastor pray for 45 minutes in Church service making many people falling asleep. They call it “complete prayer.” A member said “prayer time” is “sleeping time.” At one occasion, a pastor reminds me not to ask a certain pastor to pray for the meal because he would pray “from Genesis to Revelation” and the meal will get cold by the end of his prayer.

Prayer is the communication with the Lord. There will be no light if the bulb is not connected to the source of light. There will be no spiritual input if we don’t communicate with the Lord in prayer. When I attended Sunday worship in a Shan Church I heard a pastor prayed in a very strange, artificial, hysterically long voice, not with his own natural voice. Quite interesting. Why did he pray in such artificial hysterical voice? Imitating the voice of an angel? More holy? Fasting and prayer are seldom organized by Churches or done by individual. They think that fasting and prayer is not Baptist practice. But some Baptists believe in fasting and prayer and they do it. “Chain Prayer” is popular in Baptist Churches. In some Churches the prayer time is only on Sunday service and Wednesday prayer meeting.

¹⁶⁰ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Toungoo, British Burma, October 25, 1862.

¹⁶¹ The Baptist Missionary Magazine, August 1865, p309

¹⁶² 55th Annual Report, July 1869. American Baptist Missionary Union

¹⁶³ 79th Annual Report, 1893. American Baptist Missionary Union

¹⁶⁴ Christian missions in Biblical perspective by J. Herbert Kane, Baker Book House, Michigan, 1979, p321

Some Churches don't have Wednesday prayer meeting. No other regular prayer meetings are organized. Normally only one person pray for all prayer requests. Unison prayer is not Baptist practice except Lord's prayer. A member asked, "Do we need to close our eyes when we pray?" Because he saw a pastor prayed with his eyes wide opened. Prayer life of Shan Churches needed to be revived.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Jude 20 But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 6:5-8 And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

46. Training

Past

Rev. Bixby reported in July 1864, "*Therefore I selected several young men and brought them home with me my second tour. Not one of them have had ever been to Toungoo to school neither before nor had any of them been baptized. I preferred to take those whom others had no claim and to have the entire training of them myself. I have fourteen not all of my selection however for some came to me afterwards and begged to be taken in.*"¹⁶⁵ Dr. Kirkpatrick reported in 1895, "*The rainy season Bible class for our preachers, teachers, Bible women and others has been regularly attended and full of interest. The average attendance was thirteen.*"¹⁶⁶ Dr. Kirkpatrick reported in May 1898, "*We spent about two hours a day in Bible study and prayer. Our hope for the evangelization of the Shan is in training on the field Shan converts for the work.*"

Present

What is training all about? Training means;

To develop habits, thoughts and behavior,

To make proficient,

To make fit and get into condition,

To bring into particular shape or position.

We use to conduct training but fail to achieve the goal.

Sometimes it is not training but lecturing.

Special short-course training programs such as leadership, praise and worship, ministry planning, spiritual warfare, evangelism, mission and Church planting are very much in need in Shan Churches. Training programs are occasionally organized and taught by MBC or local teachers but not on regular basis. Sometimes trainings are not given by qualified trainers. It is beneficial to learn from qualified experienced teachers to keep up with the development of the modern world and missions. Some pastors and leaders use to think that they know it all because they are Bible School graduates and they are pastors and do not participate in training and try to learn more. In fact there are many things that they don't know. I noticed during our GCI training programs, some of the pastors did not come in and listen

¹⁶⁵ Letter Of Moses Homan Bixby 25 July 1864, The Baptist Missionary Magazine, February 18, 1965.

¹⁶⁶ 81st Annual Report, 1895 Baptist Missionary Union

to the teaching even though they were there doing nothing. They might think that they did not need any training any more from any body.

Some use to come to the training just for fun, not really want to know, learn, apply and develop in their life and ministry since the traveling expenses were paid for, meals were provided free and allowances were given by organizers. They have nothing to loose. A pastor gave a testimony and expressed his appreciation only on the food provided. We have organized training programs for Shan Churches from all Shan States for eight times from 1994 to 2001. Some have attended three times but no obvious changes were seen and they did not put into practice what they have learned. Some do really learn and apply in their ministry, their life and benefited a lot from it. It is worth giving training to the Eastern Shan State. Eastern Shan State Shan Churches have grown spiritually and numerically from 26 Churches to 70 Churches in ten years. We need to organize more effective trainings for our Shan Churches and leaders. There are no Shan Seminary, Shan Bible School, Shan Training Center for the Shan. Shan Churches' leaders have no chance of studying abroad. There are no correspondence courses available.

Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.

1 Timothy 4:7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather,
train yourself to be godly.

2 Timothy 3:14-17 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of,
because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy
Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is
God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the
man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

47. Praise and Worship

Past

It was reported in 1879, "*Rev. Cushing went to Rangoon to attend to the long delayed Shan printing more than a month of illness followed but by the end of November a small hymn-book, the Gospel of Mark, most of Acts and fifty-six pages of the dictionary were printed.*"¹⁶⁷ Dr. Kirkpatrick reported in 1893, "*My wife has written and translated hymns and has recently had a tract printed, which I believe is the first original Shan printed in Burma.*"¹⁶⁸ It was reported, "*Ray had translated a number of hymns into various languages in Burma and some had been set to native tune. In "50 and 60" the only hymns that many local Christians learned to sing were set to Western-style music that was utterly alien to the local population.*"¹⁶⁹ Unfortunately we do not know which songs were written by Ray Buker in native tune.

Present

We use to say we go to Church to praise and worship God. We call our program "worship service program." But regretfully some of our praise and worship are not acceptable to God because there are no spirit and truth as Jesus demands "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24)

One hundred years ago there was no contemporary praise and worship songs. Most Churches are singing Baptist hymnal and worship in traditional way. Nowadays, many Churches in the world,

¹⁶⁷ 65th Annual Report, July 1879, American Baptist Missionary Union

¹⁶⁸ 79th Annual Report, 1893. American Baptist Missionary Union

¹⁶⁹ "Against The Clock" The story of Ray Buker, Sr., Olympic Runner and Missionary Statesman By ERIC S. FIFE

Pentecostal, Charismatic, Anglican, Baptist and Catholic alike singing modern new praise and worship songs in their Church worship services. When we taught Shan Baptist Churches the modern praise and worship songs in Shan they enjoyed singing but they do not use it in their Church worship service. Shan Baptist Churches consider such modern praise and worship songs are non-Baptist and they should not use it. Some Churches use praise and worship songs as introduction to worship, not included in their worship program. Some even say it is a warming up for worship. Young people sing contemporary inspirational Burmese songs in Church worship service as special music. Some say it is an entertainment. They do not want to change their one hundred-years-old worship style.

They do not like the worshipers raising their hands, clapping their hands, dancing and making noise in worshipping God. They said that worshipers must keep quiet in the Church. When I taught Praise & Worship based on Psalm 149 and 150 at a Baptist Church in NamKham, a lay leader said, "Don't shout in the Church, don't clap your hand in the Church, don't dance in the Church, it is an insult to God." Shan Churches needed to be taught how to have real praise and worship acceptable to God.

Psalm 96:1-3 Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

Psalms 47:1 Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.

Psalms 149:3 Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp.

Psalms 150:4 Praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute,

48. Christian Literature

Past

Bixby reported on November 23, 1863 from Toungoo, *"It has often given me pain that, after telling the people about Jesus I could not give them one single page of gospel truth, that they might refer to it after we have gone."*¹⁷⁰

Since new type had to be designed and cut, the actual printing had to be delayed. Rev. Bixby said, *"After getting into our new house I went to Rangoon with the hope that at least one small tract might be printed in the Shan language before my departure to the Shan States and also to make preparation for our contemplated journey."*¹⁷¹ *"This incident greatly encouraged me in the work of tract distribution for if one in a hundred is real and understood it is well worth the outlay."*¹⁷² Bixby said in 1862, *"I gave away several tracts and in a few moments groups of men were gathered here and there listening to one of their number as he read the words of eternal life."*¹⁷³ Phak Ka Sai of KengTung came to the Lord in 1902 through a gospel tract he received from Rev. Cushing in 1870. Distributing gospel tract was one of the main evangelistic strategies in the early mission.

Present

Christian literature in Shan language is not developed. We do not have many books translated or written except the Holy Bible. Distributing gospel tract to the Shan is not very common nowadays because of the following reasons.

Not many people are able to write gospel tract in Shan.

¹⁷⁰ The Baptist Missionary Magazine, May 1864.

¹⁷¹ Letter From Mr. Bixby, Nov. 23, 1863, Toungoo, The Baptist Missionary Magazine, May 1864.

¹⁷² The Baptist Missionary Magazine, Vol. XLII. April, 1862. No.4. American Baptist Missionary Union

¹⁷³ Ibid

Shan Churches failed to produce enough gospel tracts in Shan language.

Not many people are interested in reading Shan.

Not many Shan believers are willing to distribute gospel tracts to the Buddhists.

Expensive printing.

We need to produce more gospel tracts in our effort to reach the Shan. Non-believers may not be interested in reading Bible (The big book). Short Bible passages in tracts will be useful. We do not have enough gospel tracts to be given to the people of other faiths. Shan believers must have the courage to pass the tract to the Buddhists as the American missionaries did one hundred years ago. If American can do it, why can't we?

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

49. Translation and Publication

Past

Rev. Nathan Brown started translating few Bible verses from Old Testament into Khamti Shan language in 1836 when he was in Assam, India. In 1864 one manuscript spelling book and one manuscript vocabulary were written in Shan, also one manuscript of Shan-English, Burman-Shan. Religious books and tracts such as "The Catechism and View", "The Golden Balance", "The Way to Heaven", "The Investigator and Glad Tiding" were all translated into Shan. In 1880 Rev. Cushing published "Elementary Handbook of the Shan Language." In 1881 Rev. Cushing reported that he had translated the "Epistles" and Book of the "Revelation" and have thus completed the New Testament in Shan. In 1881, a Shan and English dictionary was printed. In 1882, a tentative edition of the Shan New Testament was published. The New Testament was completed in 1882 and passing to a second edition in 1887 and to a third edition in 1903. In 1893, Dr. Kirkpatrick reported from HsiPaw, "*We are very glad to get the Shan Bible and all of our Christian workers are eagerly studying the Old Testament. We gave each of the preachers a copy for a Christmas present. One man who has been a Christian for many years and is now doing good work as an assistant preacher never owned even a New Testament until he came here a few months ago.*" This indicates that the whole Bible in Shan language was finished in 1891 and published in 1892.

Present

No other translations have been done except Holy Bible and Hymn Book.

The following are some publications in Shan. Most of them are in small booklets and tracts.

Produced by OMF, Thailand.

1. Does our culture get us there?
2. Prodigal son
3. Who is Jesus ?
4. Tabernacle
5. Ten Questions
6. Building Disciples
7. Church Planting Movements
8. Wholeness through Christ
9. Song Book
10. The plan of God
11. The Savior
12. Tiger/ Crocodile

13. Victory over death
14. 10 Prophecies
15. Road to life
16. Creation picture tract
17. Following God
18. Faith in God
19. Guide to the Old Testament
20. Chronological teaching

Produced by others

1. Jesus Christ comic tract (Bible Art Series, The Standard Publishing Co. USA)
2. Shan Choir Book by Sai Htun Shwe @ Sai Beaun Kham
3. Eternal God who has power and authority booklet by Harn Yawngwe, 1987
4. Our daily life by SGM, UK.
5. Savior by SGM, UK.
6. Stronger and newer every day by SGM, UK.
7. Jesus Christ is Savior by Dr. Sai Htwe Maung.
8. Our Daily Bread in Shan Language by Dr. Sai Htwe Maung.
9. Four Gospel in one book with illustrations by Dr. Sai Htwe Maung
10. The Book of Psalms in large bold letters by Dr. Sai Htwe Maung.
11. Our belief in Eternal God by Rev. Dr. Sai Htwe Maung.
12. About Eternal God by Rev. Dr. Sai Htwe Maung.
13. About God Jesus Christ by Rev. Dr. Sai Htwe Maung.
14. New Testament & Psalms in new Shan writing by Dr. Sai Htwe Maung
15. New Shan Hymnal in new Shan writing with musical note by Dr. Sai Htwe Maung
16. Gospel of Luke in hand-writing published in 1979 by unknown publisher.
17. Shan Choir Book by Sai Hla Kyan 1999.

Revelation 14:6 Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth - to every nation, tribe, language and people.

50. Audio-Visual Production

Past

ShweLi Shan Baptist Mission reported in 1958, “*The audio-visual aid play a very effective part in our evangelistic work in the plains as well as in the hills. Our mission program in the form of a sound movie projector and a portable generator has done a great service for spreading of the gospel among the heathens. 10 Buddhist families and 2 animist families have been won to Christ during the past year.*”¹⁷⁴ Hundreds of people sitting on the grass, watching Christian movies in the open-ground at night, is a good memory to me. People of all ages love movies. In the village the opportunity of seeing movie is only once in a year or even longer. The missionaries and evangelists use to bring movie or slide projectors to the villages and show them Christian movies and tell the gospel.

Present

There is no AV department or production program in Shan. ShweLi has produced four musical audiotapes, Yangon has produced two, KengTung has produced two and I have produced eight, in 140 years. The only video dubbed into Shan language was Jesus film. It was done by the help of KengTung

¹⁷⁴ ShweLi Valley Shan Baptist Mission, NamKham, N.S.S. Report for the year 1957-58, 90th AGM, Burma Baptist Convention, 1958, Rangoon.

Shan Churches. We need to produce more audio and video in Shan language. Nowadays many Shan are singing Karaoke and watching VCD. We need to produce gospel audio and video in Shan to reach young people. There are some good singers and music band in Shan Churches but they fail to produce good gospel music.

John 6:30 So they asked him, “What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?”

Matthew 13:16-17 But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

51. Spiritual Revival

Past

It was reported by Rev. W.M. Young, “A great revival happened at KengTung in 1906. A great interest among the hill people; wonderfully clear traditions; many professing faith; harvest ready; Baptized thirty and interest spreading over entire state.”

Present

Eastern Shan Baptist reported in 1991, “Many people are more interested in economy than spirituality because the place is so close to Thai, Lao and China. Thus it makes our members become weaken spiritually. Religious education is also declining.”¹⁷⁵ A healthy man does not need a doctor but the one who is sick. If we think we are not sick we do not need to take medicine. But if we are sick and pretending that we are healthy then the sickness will take our life.

What revival is all about? Revival is to reawaken the spiritual life of believers and bring again into activity and prominence. Because of various reason Churches may decline in spiritual power and the life of believers are sick and dying. In some Churches, members of the Church are not given enough good spiritual food by weak pastor. A man shared with me his ill feeling against the pastor. He said “I was born in Christian family. My father was one of the founders of this Church. But my wife and my children are not believers except the one you lead to Christ and baptized in 1975. I want my wife and others to know Christ and believe. One day during Christmas time, I asked my family and my non-Christian neighbors to cook a good food for Christmas celebration. I invited pastor and Church leaders to come to my home and have a Christmas worship service, preach gospel to my non-believers family members and my neighbors. Pastor never come to my house and visit me in normal circumstances. This time I hope he will come. Certainly he comes. When the time has come to start the service, the pastor said, ‘Let us start our program.’ Then I begged pastor to wait for a few minutes because my non-believers family and neighbors are still in the kitchen. I want them to hear the message. Please wait. The pastor was very angry and said, ‘That is why I don’t want to come to this house. It makes me sick.’ I was so upset and disappointed. How can a pastor behave like this?” Some members do not want him to continue as pastor. They want him to retire. But he declares he will never retire. He will serve until he dies. Does he need revival or renewal? A grand son of late Rev. Kham Maung had a strange dream. He did not understand the meaning of the dream. Three months later he came to attend our Great Commission Institute Training in TaungGyi and in Yangon in 2001. After the training he interpreted his dream by himself saying, “We need to revive the Church.” He asked me if I could help him teaching Biblical truth to the Church in his hometown. I agreed to do. I went with him to the Church in April 2001. After traveling for three days from Yangon we got there. To our surprise we were told by his sister and Chairman of the Church Council that the pastor refused to allow us to teach Bible without

¹⁷⁵ 114th Annual Meeting of Burma Baptist Convention, Rangoon, December 1991.

formal application on paper. The Chairman of the council was so keen and helpful. He sent letter of application on our behalf to the pastor (pastor controls the Church) to give us permission to conduct Bible teaching to Church members. He knew it would be beneficial to the Church and the people. He knew we have done many GCI training for Shan Churches all over Shan States. However the application was turned down by giving reason that the pastor did not have enough time to prepare for the training. Some members of the Church said to me, "The pastor just want you to go to him, kowtow to him, beg him and ask him personally. He wants to see people pay respect to him. He wants to show his power and authority." I listened. I went to see him in the evening. I prayed for the power of the Holy Spirit before I go because I knew it was nothing but the Spiritual warfare. When I got to his house, I told him about the purpose of our coming. Before I ask for a permission, he said, "You can do it in the Church by yourself. But I don't have time to participate or help you. I have to go to see my wife and dry up my plum."

Churches, believers and leaders need revival. Someone who is filled with the Holy Spirit should do spiritual revival program. Non-spiritual person cannot do spiritual revival. When I was in Eastern Shan State I was invited to teach the Bible to Churches at their conference. They were so happy to learn the Biblical Truth and had invited me to go and teach them again. But the darkness cannot stand the light. The darkness cannot accept the light. All the sins under the darkness are exposed.

Romans 8:5-8 Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

Colossians 12:13-14 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

52. Theological Seminary

Past

In the year 1863, just two year after Rev. Bixby started mission work among the Shan in Toungoo, he started having a Theological Seminary with six students. He prepared them to become preacher. In the year 1864, there were six Shan, six Burmans and fourteen mountaineers are under training. Mr. E.E. Sowards reported in 1954, "*The proposals for a Director of Evangelism for the Shan State and for the establishment of a Shan State Bible Training School were quite unexpected to the executive Committee at the January meeting in 1954, because there had been no time to prepare the report beforehand for their consideration. We have tried for over fifty years and the Seminary at Insein have not met the need for trained workers in the Shan State. The work has grown to such an extent that some reliable source of better-trained pastors and workers is a very urgent need. After prayerful consideration and discussion, the recommendation for the establishment of a Shan State Bible Training School seems to be the best way to meet the need of the work. The great need of most of the fields in the Shan State is for many more and much better trained pastors and Christian workers. The Kachin Bible Training School in Kutkai trains only Kachin workers, using the JingPaw language and thus is not in a position to train pastors for the TaungThu, Shan, Lahu and Wa fields. The present Shan Bible Training School at NamKham is designed to meet a local need and is not well situated for work for the whole Shan State. Saya Ai Pan readily agreed with this in talking with him here in Rangoon. The Karen and Burmese Seminaries at Insein are too far removed from the Shan State. Insein is barely above sea level while the average altitude of the Shan State is probably between 3,500 or 4,000 feet above sea level, so the climate is quite different and students coming to Insein have a problem of climatic readjustment.*

The environment at Insein is quite different from that of the villages in the Shan State to which they are expected to administer on their return and there have been serious problems of the readjustment of graduates of the Insein Seminaries after their return to their fields. After fifty years' experience, it seems conclusive that the work in the Shan State cannot depend upon the Seminaries at Insein for the training of the workers they so badly need. Both Burmese and Karen are foreign languages to the Lahu, Wa, Ahka and some other races in the Shan State. While the TaungThu are fairly well aquatinted with Burmese, it is not in common use among the other races of the Shan State. In view of the above facts, I recommend the establishment of a Shan State Bible Training School at TaungGyi, using the Shan language as the chief medium of instruction but teaching its students to read and speak Burmese in order to make use of the Christian literature in Burmese which is much more extensive than that in Shan. The whole Bible is available in the Shan language. Shan is the official language for the Shan State and is used rather commonly by most of the races in the Shan State in their dealings with other races not using their own language. For example, Lahu, Wa, Ahka and Palong are apt to be more familiar with Shan than with Burmese."¹⁷⁶ Sowards suggested to have Shan Bible Training School in TaungGyi and use Shan language as teaching medium. But Shan language was never used ever since the Bible school begins.

In 1956 Saya Ai Pan opened a Shan Bible Training School in NamKham teaching in Shan language. It was in fact a real Shan Bible School for the Shan. But when Shan State Bible School was opened at TaungGyi they recruited Saya Ai Pan to serve at that school and NamKham Shan Bible School was closed. There was no more Shan Bible Training School ever since.

Present

Today there's no Bible School for the Shan teaching in Shan language. Bible School in TaungGyi is not for the Shan only and not teaching in Shan language but Burmese. We cannot call it Shan Bible School. It is a Burmese Bible School in Shan State. Eastern Shan Baptist Convention has opened an Evangelist Training School in KengTung in 1999. We need to have a Bible School or Seminary for the Shan, teaching in Shan, training the Shan, preparing the Shan and producing evangelists and missionaries to serve the Lord in the great harvest of Shan.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training .

They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air.

No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others,

I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

¹⁷⁶ A Study of Baptist Work in the Shan States By E.E. Sowards, 1954, Burma Baptist Mission, Rangoon.

Thank God for His wonderful grace to our people.

My deepest gratitude to all the missionaries who served, who suffered and who gave their life for the sake of the gospel in Shan missions.

My greatest appreciation to our fore fathers who served the Lord faithfully.

My sincere thanks to those who are serving God among Shan Churches and our people faithfully and honestly.