



December 22, 2009

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!
1 Corinthians 1:3

My heart is especially filled with thankfulness during this remarkable time of Christ's birth. I would like to begin this letter by thanking everyone who has been supportive of our ministry among the Karen people.

I would like to share with you a little bit about myself. My father died when I was seven years old leaving my mother to take care of me and my younger brother and sister. We grew up poorly. I, as an eldest brother, I was my mother's right hand and I tried my best to help her care for my brother and sister.

I married Naw Hser Paw when I was 26. We had 12 pregnancies but only 10 children survived. Due to tyranny committed against the Karen people, we had to flee to Thailand for safety. Yet, in the midst of instability, the Lord blessed me with the opportunity to attend the Bible school and He used me for His kingdom work.

God also blessed my children and gave them opportunities to get some training. Three of my children successfully finished Bible school and work or help in the mission field. They are Naw Klee Moo Hgay (living in Thailand), Naw Eh Roe Klay (Spokane, WA), and Saw Hsar Tugaw Hgay (Phoenix, AZ). Four of my children finished medics training and were able to help in clinics to care for the sick and the wounded on the border and in the refugee camp. They are Saw Ler Wah (Sweden), Saw Ler Hgay (Phoenix, AZ), Naw Htee Moo Hgay (Sweden), and Naw Thalei Hgay (Phoenix, AZ). My son, Saw Du Hgay (Phoenix, AZ), also learned some automotive mechanic training in the camp. My daughter, Naw Thaw Thee (Phoenix, AZ), assumes the household responsibility and helps her family in any way she can. Our youngest daughter, Naw Kleewan Hgay, was inflicted with Malaria so severely that she became mentally disabled; we have to care for her full time. Now, Naw Hser Paw and I are blessed with 17 grandchildren and one is on the way. We are also excited about the upcoming wedding of our daughter, Thalei Hgay.



I found to my surprise that the Lord still uses me and my family in a significant way in the United States. I am a part of organizing Arizona Karen Baptist Church (AKBC) in Phoenix, AZ. Saw Du Hgay and Naw Thalei Hgay are teaching Sunday School and Saw Hsar Tugaw Hgay is leading choirs at AKBC. We are blessed to be worshipping at Monte Vista Church led by Pastor Stan Crews. Many generous and supportive individuals support our church. We appreciate their encouragement and Christian love. We are happy to make new Christian friends in Phoenix and it is a privilege to work together towards laying the foundation of our church in Christ.

In 2009, the Lord surprised me with another task he has for me. Never had I dreamt that I would be in such a position. I received the privilege of visiting some Karen communities in the United States and finding them a place to worship. As I travelled and had discussions with pastors and leaders of several Karen communities, I found that we are in agreement to form Karen Baptist Churches in U.S.A. (KBC in U.S.A) This initiative is supported by the National Ministries of American Baptist Convention and we are thankful. As we are in the dawn of organizing KBC in U.S.A, we need prayers and support from everyone.

It never ceases to amaze me how helpful people in America are. I am grateful to the U.S. government, churches, and individuals for welcoming the Karen refugees and helping us to start a new life in America.

Peace of Christ to you and your loved ones!

Sincerely,

Tha Hgay and Family