



Christian Freedom International



MARCH 2016

CHANGE IS ON THE HORIZON FOR BURMA...

"Remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering." Hebrews 13:3



IS CHANGE COMING TO BURMA?

PICTURED // STUDENTS AT A CHRISTIAN
FREEDOM INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL INSIDE
THE JUNGLES OF BURMA

“ BURMA HAS HAD ONE OF THE LONGEST ONGOING, CIVIL WARS IN THE HISTORY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA.

In a nation of more than 56 million people, Christians make up less than 4 percent of the population. Buddhism comprises over 90 percent of the population and is the official state religion of the country.

This past November Aung San Suu Kyi led the National League Democracy to a landslide election victory in Burma. It was the first free election held in the past 25 years in a country that has been ruled by a brutal military dictatorship for many years.

Only God knows the future of this nation.

Burma has had one of the longest ongoing, civil wars in the history of southeast Asia.



On October 15 of last year, eight of the armed ethnic groups signed a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement with the Burmese junta. It should be noted that just as many groups did not sign, but the agreement nevertheless “silenced the guns in two thirds of the conflict areas. The ceasefire is both fragile and tenuous, at best.

Christian Freedom International has been working on the front lines of Burma for many years taking aid, medicine, Bibles and other assistance to Christians in active war zones throughout the country.

CFI has also assisted in helping thousands of Christians in Burma flee persecution.

Despite the recent election and fragile ceasefire, the persecution of Christians in Burma remains high.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom USCIRF continues to recommend in 2015 that Burma be designated as “tier 1 country of particular concern,” or CPC, under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA).

According to the law, the applicant must be interviewed by at least five board members, followed by a 90 day study period for the applicant to examine the “essence of the religion, marriage, divorce, and division of property practices in that religion, and inheritance and parenting practices in that religion”.

The State Department has designated Burma a CPC since 1999, most recently in July 2014.

To put that in to perspective, other Tier 1 counties include: China, Egypt, Eritrea, Iran Iraq, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, and Vietnam, to name a few.

According to the USCIRF, “Burma has undertaken notable political reforms in a relatively short period of time...However, these steps have not yet improved conditions for religious freedom and related human rights in the country

Worse, last August, Burma’s government passed a stringent and controversial religious conversion bill. In other words, anybody who wants to convert to another religion, would have to get government approval.

The conversion law creates local “Religious Conversion Scrutinization and Registration Boards.” Under the law, anyone wishing to change their religion will have to be over 18 years of age and will be required to file an application with a local government board, including the reasons for the conversion.

If the board approves the conversion, the applicant would then get a certificate of conversion. Obviously, the composition of these local boards will be ethnic Burmese Buddhist officials, who are biased against conversions from Buddhism to other religions especially Christianity. Information collected about the applicant is also forwarded to the national government.

➤ IN SPITE OF THIS, CHRISTIAN FREEDOM INTERNATIONAL REMAINS HOPEFUL FOR BURMA.

HELP



KEEP OTHERS INFORMED ABOUT *the* PERSECUTED CHURCH

PLEASE

PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ALONG WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED READING IT.



PICTURED // OUR PAKISTANI CFI CO-WORKER WHO WORKS AT HBI ON A RECENT TRIP INTO BURMA

Christian Freedom International remains committed to the cause of Christ in Burma like never before. In addition to aiding the persecuted Church in Burma, CFI runs a Bible school along the Burma/Thailand border where we train indigenous young men and women to be future pastors, missionaries, teachers and leaders in Burma.

Our plans for this year are aggressive as we are bringing in new staff and launching many new outreach initiatives throughout Burma. Our goal is to see Burma for Christ in our lifetime.

In addition to ministry training, CFI also teaches our future Christian leaders a variety of practical skills so that they can be self supporting, such as agriculture, cooking, weaving, and silk screening.

In fact, our students help support themselves and the Bible school through the sale of hand screened tee shirts that you can purchase from them online through our website store.

CONTACT US!

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WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Please pray for Burma. Pray for our aggressive outreach this year. Find out about volunteer opportunities by contacting our office. And support the Persecuted Church in Burma by telling your friends to buy a tee shirt from our students at our Bible School.

Thank you and please, remember to pray for the persecuted.

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Christian Freedom International is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). Members of the ECFA are held to the highest standards of financial responsibility. Gifts are used for the project identified unless our Board of Directors, in good faith, determines that the changing situation in the Persecuted Church requires applying them to another urgent project. Your gift to Christian Freedom International is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.