

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I really don't know where to begin. For those of you who know my wife Chris and I, you are aware that for the last 4 years we have taken multiple trips to the country of Myanmar (formerly Burma) to spread the Gospel. We began this journey with the church in Keizer, Oregon and have continued our own efforts with additional Gospel meetings and teachings in the Bible schools there. As you undoubtedly are aware, their fragile democracy was overthrown by the military in Myanmar on the 1st of February following a national election that was moving the country towards further reforms. Since that time, thousands of residents have been jailed, beaten and tortured---and untold hundreds have been executed. Communications out the country have been sporadic at best with the military shutting down the internet, arresting journalists, closing newspapers and seizing cell phones to see if citizens are communicating with the outside world. Banks have been closed and Western Union will no longer deliver funds into the country as a result. The country of India is turning back those in the military and the police who have fled to that country who refused to participate in the destruction of their people, and their future is sadly, predictable. Neighboring China, who has hundreds of garment factories and other interests in Myanmar has refused to condemn the actions and is seen by citizens in Myanmar as supporting the junta. Unlike Serbia under the rule of Slobodan Milošević where hundreds of thousands of military deserted and citizens fled to nearby countries, there is nowhere for citizens of Myanmar to go.


This morning, I received this note from one of my Bible students:

The mobile internet service has been shut down in Myanmar since 15 March and I am doing my lessons through wifi which may be cut off later. If you don't hear again from me in the next 2 days, please let the world know that Myanmar people are under injustice repression. Today four people were killed in Kalaymyo and from Feb 1 until now more than 200 people had been killed by the military. We are on a battlefield. Smoke and gunshots sound continuous. We can even sleep well at night. Every day, everywhere I hear the crying of our people. How much pain do we need to take? We will continue to restore our democracy till the end. May God bless you and your family always!

(It was one year ago that I had the privilege of teaching Paul's writings to the church in Rome at a bible school in Kalaymyo)

My wife Chris received this note two weeks ago from one of her students:

Help us, please! They fire now! A lot of people are stuck in that place. I'm so sorry to

ask you for a help without asking any problems of you and your country. But  I have no idea now. Could you please give me an idea to save our children and people

from this situation? I couldn't think anything right now. Every place is full of fear as like as the hell. I also hands and legs are shaking a lot.

They fire the people and ambulances right now. HELP!



We have many such communications and each time our heart breaks beyond its limits. The photographs of those tortured that we have seen is unimaginable. There is much more that I could add, but I need to come to the point of this note.

Myanmar, above all---needs your prayers and prayers of your congregations. The open door for the Gospel is being forcibly shut by those in power as they destroy their people. Please, let your Brothers and Sisters know of what is going on.

In this country, we also have—for the time being and with the Lord's blessing---a voice to those in power. My first contact with one of my US Senators (who happens to sit on the Foreign Relations Committee) about the situation in Myanmar was met with a response about the injustices in *China*. I had to write again to emphasize that Myanmar is not in China. I would ask---beg, actually—that you contact those in the Senate or House in your districts and make them aware of what is going on. Ask your friends who live in other states to do the same. I have non-Christian neighbors who have reached out to me who know of our efforts over the years who have committed to make contacts with our elected officials. As Christians, I feel, we can do no less.

Above all...pray. Then pray again. And again.

Ever in His service,

Brian Leavitt, Lobster Valley church of Christ