



Our History with the People of Burma

as told by Donald Farrell



My passion and heart's cry for the people of Burma began with my first visit to Thailand and Burma in 2003. I had, at that time, developed a 501©3 known as *Bread of Life Fellowship*, as a vehicle for me to serve the world's most marginalized and desperate peoples of the world.

It was during this trip that I was blessed to meet Steve Gumaer, Founder of Partners Relief and Development, and spend several hours accompanying him as he purchased supplies for refugee families. I then had the opportunity to travel with team members from Asian Tribal Ministries into several refugee camps on the Thailand/Burma border. One of my strongest memories is having the chance to sing songs in many languages with the children in one of the jungle camps. (See photo below left.)

My spirit sank deeply as I learned more about the decades-long oppression and deep needs of the Burmese people. This experience affected me so profoundly that my outreach to the Burmese community continued stateside upon my return. My wife Annie and I learned about a large group of Burmese refugees living in the Fort Wayne, Indiana area.

This started us on our personal ministry of collecting clothing, furniture and household goods to help these refugee families set up their new homes in Fort Wayne. (Annie is pictured above right, sorting clothing in preparation for a delivery.) A friend whom we shared the vision with provided us with the use of his company truck for these deliveries, and later gifted us with our own smaller truck to continue this work. The Burmese community welcomed us warmly after each delivery we made, sharing tea and stories of their lives with us in their community center. They even presented us with a framed certificate of appreciation following our third or fourth visit. (See photo below, right.)

In the years following my trip to Burma, Annie and I made friends with several other Burmese families in our own Illinois neighborhood that had fled to the U.S. We continued to learn more and more about the plight of their families and loved ones "left behind" and were able to send financial help to their family members still in Burma.

I have never forgotten my experiences in Burma, my time spent with Steve and the members of Partners, and the ways we developed here in the U.S. to continue our service to the Burmese people in our own back yard.

It is our vision that, through Annie's Resale for the World, we are now resuming our support of the people of Burma. We will continue to advocate for the Burmese people and others in similar situations, and spread the word of the needs that still exists in their everyday lives.

