

The Macedonian Call

The Birth of Adventist Church in the Chin Hills

(သတ္တမနေ့အသင်းတော် ချင်းတောင်သို့ရောက်လာပုံ)

By Pastor Ngul Khaw Pau

The Macedonian Call:



On March 13, 1944 Tonzang was fallen into the hands of Japanese. I escaped into India. I was a driver in Calcutta where I met Vanlalrawna, an Adventist evacuee from Lushai Hills. He tried to convince me with Adventist beliefs. But I was a devout Baptist, an office bearer of Christian Endeavor (CE) Society since its establishment at Tiddim in 1940. As a former Baptist he was tactful to convince me. I accepted the present truth.

Both of us returned to our respective places in 1947 after WWII was over. My new found faith could not penetrate the strong Baptist communities. It was a strange religion to them. ABM was the only popular religion in the Chin Hills. Catholic Church has established her church operating free clinics and dispensaries but it was not sought after. New religion was ridiculed.

I wrote a letter to Aizawl, Lushai Hills. The letter was received by Pastor W.G. Lowry and his wife Helen Lowry who replied it promptly. Their reply came into my hands on December 14, 1952. It read, "We received your letter. According to your request, we have sent two evangelists, Zakhuma and Lalkhuma. As they are unable to speak in Tiddim, you can meet them at Darkhai in Hualngo area. We have translated your letter and already sent it to Burma Union Mission office in Rangoon."

Pastors C.B. Guild and Robert H Pierson were the presidents of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Burma and Southern Asia region respectively. At the year-end meetings in Rangoon, Pierson motivated Arthur E Anderson, the principal of Myaungmya High School to accept the call to be the pioneer missionary to the Chin Hills.

In April 1953 the survey team, composed of Pastor Guild, Pein Kyi, Freddie Batin, Myat Pe and Anderson, arrived in Kalembo by Dakota flight. Accompanied by Rualchhina Vangchia, Anderson proceeded to Rih Lake in Falam Township to meet Pastor Lowry. All the rest moved toward Tiddim, 56 miles from Kalembo and Tonzang, 26 miles north of Tiddim. On their return trip to Kalembo, they entered the Siyin Valley to visit Thuklai known as Old Fort White.

After he met Lowry, Anderson returned to Kalembo where he met Go Za Kham who accompanied him to Tiddim. On April 14, 1953; they met me at Tiddim Civil Hospital showing me the letter that I wrote. He got it from Lowry at Rih. "Did you write this letter?" he inquired. I answered affirmatively. "According to your request, I have come to help you. Are you willing to work with me?" he entreated. "If the Lord spares my life from this casualty, I will," I assured him.

Anderson Arrives in Tiddim:

Accompanied by Lois, his wife and three sons-David, Leslie and Daniel-Anderson arrived at Leilum, Tiddim in October 1953. He rented the house of a police officer, Khual Khan Tual.

Anderson Wins 26 Souls in Tiddim:

From January to March in 1954, Anderson conducted an evangelistic meeting with the help of Go Za Kham as interpreter. On May 8, Pastor PA Parker, the president of the church in Central and Upper Burma (CUB Section) baptized fourteen persons as the first fruits in the Chin Hills. They were Kam Zam, Cing Za Huai, Go Za Kham, Phung Kai, Tel Khan Ning, Ngul Khaw Pau, Suak Khaw Kai, Man Cing, Cin Nang, Thual Cing, Cin Za Suan, Cing Khaw Dim, Khual Do Thang and Vung Khan Man.

The second batch of twelve precious souls was baptized on October 16 by Parker. They were David Anderson, Leslie Anderson, Ciin Ngaih Man, Lian Khup, Kham Za En, Vung Thawng, Zam Za Kham, Thang Khaw Zam, Vung Za Niang, Thang Hau, Thuam Kai and Go Khaw Hau.

With the help of Kham an interpreter, Anderson had evangelistic meetings at Kaptel and Laitui and won a number of souls for the Lord. With the help of Zakhuma and Lalkhuma, there were some converts also in Darkhai and Bukphir. He is a good speaker and many people adhered to him.

Government Orders Anderson to Leave the Chin Hills:

In April 1955, as Anderson was digging a service well in the mission compound with the help of Lois outside the well a telegram was handed to Lois. Anderson climbed out of the well and both of them read it. It said, "Return to your original post within three weeks." He was in the Chin Hills less than two years but he made achievements – He organized Lawibual Church, got permission for the mission land from the government authorities. He built the mission house with his own hands. When he left, the house was almost complete. Kham and I continued to finish the inner walls left by Anderson incomplete. It is a double walling house.

Work Extends to Kale Valley:

In October 1955, words reached us that Ngul Khaw Thang and Tial Cung who served the Union Military Police were interested in the present truth. With our kerosene projector, Go Za Kham and I went down to Kalemio to meet them. But Kam Nang, the headman of Kalemio was interested in the Sabbath truth. On January 29, 1955; he invited us to tell him the Sabbath truth but he had cleverly planned for a debate with the Baptist leaders including Rev. Robert Johnson, the last missionary to the Chin Hills and Rev. ST Hau Go, educated and well known personnel of the Baptist Church. Rev. Johnson testified, "I keep Sunday as the seventh-day Sabbath."

Hau Go was ashamed of Johnson's ignorance, slipped away out of the meeting. Nang promised to become an Adventist after he sold his big swine breeding firm. But heart failure took his life not long after and he never became an Adventist. Ngul Khaw Thang and Tial Cung who listened to the debate later became workers for the Lord.

Hau Go translated DM Canwright's opposition against the Adventist Church and distributed 6000 copies at the Zomi Baptist Convention celebrated at Tiddim in March 1956. In response to this opposition, Phung Kai and I prepared a tract, "Koi zaw?" and distributed 700 copies.

Thingunau or Siyin village Opens her Door:

Upon hearing the current news of the debate between the Baptist leaders and the Adventists, Suang Khaw Kam, headman of Siyin village invited Kham and me to conduct evangelistic meetings at his house for three weeks. At the end of the meetings twelve households, 86 precious souls in number, were ready for baptism.

Among them were Kam, the headman himself, Thuam Kam, his father in law, the founder of the village and former headman; Subedar Vum Tual, an army officer (retired) and a number of other respected persons of the former church and the village. Kham Tuang, one of the founders of the village rushed with a sword toward Kham and me to kill us because he was angry for the conversion of many respected persons. But he was held back by some strong men.

The Siyin Church was organized as the second church next to Lawibual Church in Tiddim. Later Capt. On Poom, Capt. On Za Nang, Capt. Ngo Pum, Shuang Ngo, Kim Ngo, Hang Khaw Lian, Khuppi and Thuk Kim who were respected persons of the township strengthen the church.

The Siyin Valley Opens her Door:

As Pastor Baw Dee was appointed as the Chin Hills director to lead out the work in the Chin Hills in 1956, I transferred to the Siyin Valley in 1957, arrived at Khuasak on July 21. I conducted an evangelistic meeting a few days after my arrival. Pastors W.L.Murrill and R.H.Woolsey baptized twelve precious souls as the first fruits in Siyin Valley on November 12, 1957.

The twelve precious souls baptized were Suang Khaw Thang, Ngam Thawng, Vum Za Dal, Cing Za Vung, Khup Niang, Subedar Thuam Cin, Cing Khaw Lian, Ciang Khaw Man, Kip Za Nang, Sing Khaw Ngin, Mang Hen Thang and Niang Kam.

In 1954, the grandest Golden Jubilee celebrated at Khuasak to commemorate the first Chin converts, namely two couples - Pau Suan and Kham Ciang, Thuam Hang and Dim Khaw Cing. More than five thousand people attended the jubilee. Pau Suan and Kham Ciang were the grandparents of Kenneth Suanzanang who accepted the present truth but he was just in his early teens when the first twelve were baptized. He was prevented by relatives for being the grandson of the first Christian converts.

After he finished his High School Final examination he attended Matriculation class at Kyauktaing High School where he was baptized by Pastor WL Murrill on December 8, 1962. I feel honored to be a part of the conversion of Suanzanang, the descendant of the first Christian convert. When he became a worker, I often told him to show my appreciation, "Thansiamas and you are the most persistent persons among the workers," Now he is the president of Upper Myanmar Mission.

I conducted evangelistic meetings at Limkhai, Voklak, Thuklai, Buanman, Lophei and Pumva. At Limkhai, Suang Za Ngin, Mang Tual and his wife were converted. Mang Tual was the son of a chief, the first educated among the Chin people. Siyin Valley is one of the most difficult places to work for because it seems they are content with being the home of the first converts. They believed themselves as if they were the chosen people as the Jewish nation was.

The Three Angels' Messages Spread to Tonzang:

Tonzang is my native village and the home of the chief who ruled Tonzang and Tiddim townships except the Siyin Valley who have their own chieftainship. It is also the strong foothold of the Catholics. My colleague Kham promised me, "If you get a single convert within three years, it will call for celebration. You can kill one of my oxen to celebrate."

I arrived Tonzang on May 21, 1962. I conducted an evangelistic meeting but no house could accommodate the audience. I was allowed to use the assembly hall of the State Middle School by the headmaster, Mang Za Lian, one of my boyhood friends. However, he was a drunkard then. But he was converted after the elapse of ten years and became a prominent leader of the church. Less than a year, twelve precious souls were baptized but the promise of an ox from my colleague was never claimed.

[This article was sent to Ken Suanzanang, president of the Adventist Church in Upper Myanmar during the Golden Jubilee Celebrated in March 2003 at Tiddim to commemorate the entrance of the missionaries in the Chin Hills but it was never printed]

Pau was Known As One of the Three Mighty Evangelists in Myanmar:

In April 1998, at the memorial service of Pastor V. Kipzanang, the executive secretary of MYUM, Pastor Daniel Nangno, ministerial secretary of MYUM then said, "The death of Pastor V. Kipzanang is a great loss to the church in Myanmar because he is one of the three mighty evangelist in Myanmar. The writer inquired, "Who are they?" He answered, "Ngul Khaw Pau, Edwe Tha and V. Kipzanang." - Editor