

Auburn Presbyterian Church
Billion People Praying for Burma Campaign

WHY ARE WE PRAYING FOR BURMA*?

We call it “Burma” because Myanmar is the name given by the current dictatorial government.

Here Is a Short History of Burma, new to some, a review for others. You can see that the people of the country have tried to return to civilian democratic rule, but have not been successful. A civil war continues pitting small minority group militias against the superior power of the well-armed government troops. The majority of the population is basically enslaved and used by the government to work for them at the government’s whim.

The only power that can break this diabolic hold on the people of Burma is God. Let’s pray together that God will intervene in this nation’s system and bring peace, freedom, and unity. He is even able to change the hearts of the rulers. He did it for Saul/Paul in turning a murderer into God’s servant. He can do it again for the leaders of the junta. God has countless ways to achieve victory in this situation. We can pray in faith believing He will act. We can trust Him to bring peace, freedom, and unity to Burma.

- The Union of Burma achieved independence in 1948 and continued as a parliamentary democracy.
- In 1962, the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP), a military oriented regime, seized power. For 26 years it brutally put down any resistance. Torture, political imprisonment, and violation of human rights were common.
- On 8-8-1988 hundreds of thousands of demonstrators in towns and cities throughout Burma demanded the BSPP be out and a civilian government be elected. Soldiers fired on the demonstrators and killed thousands.
- On September 18, 1988 there was a coup by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). The SLORC pledged that elections would be held after “peace and tranquility” were restored in Burma and proceeded to fire on the demonstrators with machine guns killing as many as 10,000. They continued the reign of terror long practiced by the BSPP.
- The lead opposition party was the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi. In July 1989, she was placed under house arrest and others of the party were also arrested.
- Surprise, a free vote did happen on May 27, 1990. Of 485 parliamentary seats contested, The NLD won 392 (over 80%). Ethnic minority parties opposed to the SLORC won 65 more seats. The army led group received 10 seats. The junta’s response was to change the rules and say the election was to elect representatives to draft a new constitution. The dictatorial party that was so roundly defeated stayed in power.
- Aung San Suu Kyi received the Nobel Peace Prize while under house arrest. She was released in July 1995. Early in 2001, she was again placed under house arrest. Recently, she was placed in jail and then was sentenced to more years of house arrest for allowing a stranger into her house. The person broke in uninvited during the night eluding the guards.
- The junta has continued adding to its reputation as a ruthless murderer of Burma’s people. This is true even today as we get report after report of killing, raping, enslaving, and pillaging of villages.

- In 2007, there were anti-government protests. Included in the demonstrators were thousands of saffron robed monks filling the streets of Rangoon and other cities. The regime cracked down hard on the demonstrators and herded the monks back into their dwelling places. The world media looked a few days and then turned their backs.
- In 2008 Cyclone Nargis hit. The government basically ignored their citizens there until the world clamored loudly to be let in to help. The government was busy sending troops to the minority areas to burn villages, kill, rape, take villagers captive, and to drive thousands into hiding in the jungle.
- In June, The Burma Army began forcing villagers in the area to provide recruits or pay fines of up to 300,000 kyats (about \$250 US). Light Infantry Battalions (a total of about 150 soldiers) increased patrols on the road linking Kyauk kyi and Mone and began the rebuilding of the road. The Burma Army shot dead Saw Maung Nyut, 48, from Paw Pi Dor village, northwest Karen State on June 9.
- July 7 a report came that 500 villagers who were now in hiding had not been able to carry enough food and were facing shortages. They also said that heavy rain meant children were facing health problems and becoming sick. Villagers remain constantly prepared to flee, and will continue hiding until Burma Army troops return to their camps and local resistance soldiers are able to clear landmines.
- Two young women were brutally raped and then murdered recently. One was pregnant, the other a mother with a young child.
- Forcing villagers to carry loads for long distances for Burma Army use, taking animals, rice, and other food and possessions, raping, torturing, killing, beating, crop destruction, landmine laying, village burning and other terrors continue. How long must this go on? Local to multi-national organizations have done what they could to help but the need is greater. Let's pray.

On June 28, 2009, Former First Lady, Laura Bush, wrote an article published in The Washington Post titled, "Do Not Forget Burma." It is also attached to this email for your further information.

PLEASE PRAY FOR BURMA. THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER. GOD HEARS AND ANSWERS.

ASK OTHERS TO PRAY FOR BURMA – PASS THIS E-MAIL ON TO ANYONE YOU THINK MIGHT RESPOND. TO HAVE A MILLION PRAYING WE NEED TO CONTACT MANY PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS. THE MORE PEOPLE PRAYING THE MORE KNOWLEDGE OF THE NEED WILL BE SPREAD. THE NEXT GLOBAL DAY OF PRAYER IS MARCH 14, 2010. LET'S SEE HOW MANY PEOPLE WE CAN HAVE PRAYING BY THEN.

WHEN YOU HAVE A COUNT OF INDIVIDUALS SAYING THEY WILL PRAY, PLEASE REGISTER AT www.hopeforburma.com/becounted.php. If you prefer, you may register by sending an e-mail to pray@hopeforburma.com. Please include your organization's name, if applicable, and the total number of people praying. If you have submitted a count previously, let us know if the new count replaces the previous count or should be added to it. You may also complete and mail the enclosed form.

Reference used for a portion of this information was authored by Thomas R. Lansner, adjunct professor at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. <http://journalism.berkeley.edu/projects/burmahistory2.html>