

First Quarter 2004

Partners

world

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Urgent Prayer


Partners

I want good kids.

My kids. I want them to be a little bit better than everybody else's kids. Not a lot. Just barely. My baby ought to start walking a few weeks earlier than the rest. My second grader ought to read her first chapter book faster than her friends. How about a main part in the school play with all the parents watching? That would be my kindergartener.

I don't only want them to excel academically, in athletics and the arts. I want them to have a better character as well. I want them to give their toys away to the refugees without me suggesting it. I want them to gladly give up the comforts of their own warm bed and clean bathroom to go on a trip to the border to play with the orphaned refugee children.

It is not always that easy. My children, like most children, refuse to conform to my idea of the perfect child. They have not read the books I have read and do not understand how adults think about children. When planning for our trip to give the orphans their Christmas gifts early in December, my second grader (who has yet to make it through a chapter book) responded like this: "No fair! Why do they get to open their presents before us?" When I

demanded that they choose some of their toys to give to the refugees, my kindergartener (who is afraid of getting water in her ears and sucks her fingers when she is tired) picked out two broken toys that she did not want anymore anyway. When being offered two open arms by a nice Karen lady at the orphanage, my two-year-old (who did not walk until she was 14 months and has severe temper tantrums in front of people who teach parenting seminars) frowned like she had seen a monster, screamed and turned away.

They do not always perform like we want them to. They are people. They make their own choices. We can only do our best, set a good example and pray.

The example part pierces my heart like a knife sticky with peanut butter and jelly. What do I sacrifice to help people in need? It is easy to ask my girls to give up a Barbie doll or two. But what do I give up? Don't my offerings sometimes look like broken toys that I do not really need anymore anyway?

Is it my character that needs to be worked on? Is it my heart that needs prayer? I hope my children don't spend time comparing me to other moms and wishing that I could be

better than average in character, beauty and knowledge. I would fall short, I know it.

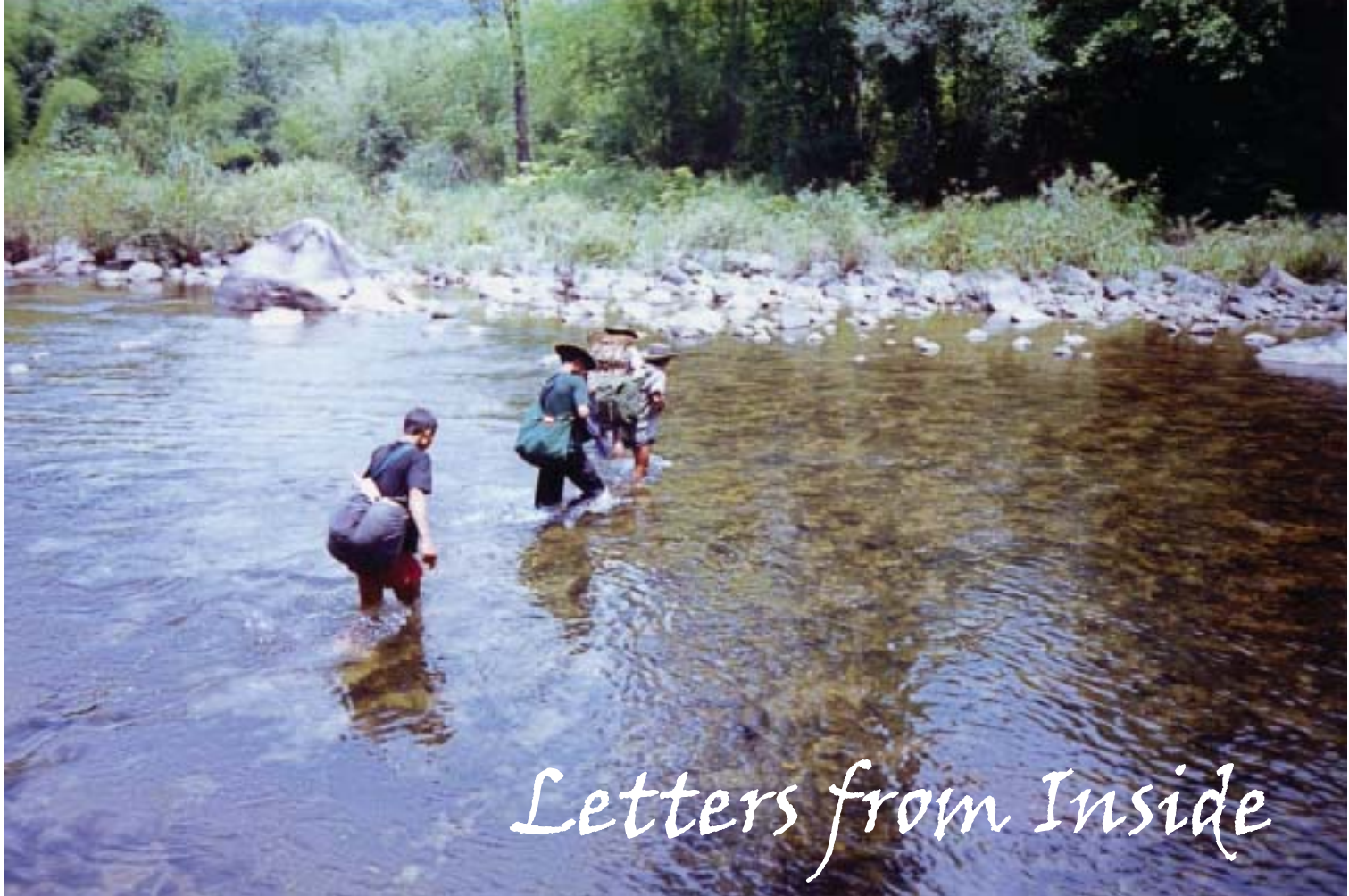
What I want them to see is a mom. Somebody who cares about people in need. Somebody who wants to make a difference in the world. Somebody who is as far from perfect as Norway is from Thailand. Somebody who while learning to walk will fall, but then will get up and try again.

While reading this issue of Partners World, think about what God wants you to do for the people you are reading about. How can you be an example for your children, your spouse, your neighbors or co-workers? How can you turn your disappointment in your children (or anybody else that you are expecting things from) into a lesson for yourself? How can their shortcomings bring you closer to God and His call in your life? I know He is working in my heart, and I believe He will in yours too.

Oddny Bumaer



The "kindergartener" with her friends in the refugee camp



Letters from Inside

Saw Timothy and his team crossing the Moei River

This is a letter from Saw Timothy, who recently brought aid to people from 10 villages that were attacked. Partners helped provide the food and medicine that this team took into Karen State, Burma. Because of your prayers and support, you have directly impacted these suffering, yet thankful, people.

To Partners:

May the Lord our God bless you and look after you all. We would like to explain to you about our trip inside Burma meeting and helping the villagers.

We crossed the Moei River to the Burma side. We brought with us food and medicines for the fleeing villagers. Early in the morning of September 19, 2003 at 6 AM, we started our trip to the area where the enemy had invaded the villages and forced them to leave their villages. It was not easy to climb the mountains, because of all the rain. It was muddy all along the road.

As we proceeded to the battlefield area, we were met by the fleeing villagers. We distributed food and medicines to them, encouraging them in this situation. As we were so close to the enemy, we had to be very careful moving from place to place.

On this trip, I came across many things which made me feel unhappy. The children had no chance to attend school. The old-aged people had to leave their villages, climbing the mountains, walking in the muddy road which made them exhausted. The younger people had to flee their villages so there were no more people to take care of their farm lands. To make matters worse, the enemy planted land mines on the road and even inside the village. The villagers told us that 10 of their buffaloes and cattle were killed by landmines, and goats and pigs were also killed. Some people had to flee for their lives, so they could carry only a small amount of their belongings with them.

In some villages, the enemy forced the villagers to build an outpost for them. They used some of the villagers, those who could not flee, as porters. They

forced them to carry food, supplies, arms, and ammunitions for them.

We thank Partners for supporting us on this trip. Because of his help, we could distribute food and medicines to needy people.

We would also like to request all our friends to pray for us, that the Lord will help our people out of this terrible situation.

Yours Sincerely,

Saw Timothy
September 29, 2003



One of the children fleeing the Burma Army



Somewhere to put down **roots**...

The wind howls through the crack in the slats as I sit on the bamboo floor inside this refugee children's home. It must get cold here at night.

The long, narrow house is on a hillside, in the middle of a steep, winding mountain range. The road to get here is nicknamed, "Death Highway" because of its many hairpin turns. I am in Umphiem Refugee Camp, at a children's home for 87 boys and girls, aged 8 to 17. All of them are refugee children from Karen State inside Burma; many are orphans as well. They have come here to find a **chance for change**.

During my visit, I meet Saw Than Cho. He is a brave young man of 13 years, who boldly stands up in the midst of the other children to tell his story. In Karen, he tells how his village in Kaw Ker Lek District was overrun by Burmese soldiers. Because he was strong, the soldiers forced him to become a porter for the Burma Army. He was forced to carry food, ammunition or guns—whatever the soldiers wanted—with little food or provisions for himself. Saw Than Cho was 10 years old.

But Saw Than Cho was also clever. He escaped from the soldiers and was safe for a while. But then he was caught and made, once again, to be a porter. Again, he escaped. And a third time, the soldiers found him. For a third time, he was forced to do slave labor. And a third time, he ran away, but this time he did not stop running. Accompanied by some teachers and evangelists from his village, they walked for nine days, hiking through the thick jungle, traveling at night, afraid of what was behind the next tree or boulder. Finally, they reached Thailand. Saw Than Cho was now 11 years old, and now he was safe.

Two years later, Saw Than Cho and the children in the home are smiling, laughing, and well-fed. I watch them as they joke with each other, at times look bored or annoyed (as teenagers typically do), and smile shyly at the Westerner sitting across from them. Not all 87 youth are present on this Saturday morning. Some are out looking for vegetables, some are taking special classes, and a few older ones are attending vocational training. After lunch, the children will have some free time to play volleyball or soccer, draw, sing and play the guitar, or study. They will help cook and clean the two boarders where they sleep. They will also attend a daily devotional time to hear more about God's love for them. Many children in the home are Christians, but more are Buddhist or animist. All of the caregivers are Christians who daily show the children what it means "to love in deed and truth."

Won't you help be a part of giving Saw Than Cho and others at the Umphiem Children's Home **a chance to put down roots, a chance for change?**

- Lori Jensen



Saw Than Cho telling his story



Lori with Umphiem Children's Home in Umphiem Refugee Camp



and find a chance for **change.**



A Place to Heal

What is the value of bringing a child of war into a place of safety? Immeasurable. What is an education, a place to heal, a future worth? Priceless. Yet for hundreds of young victims of war, they can receive these invaluable things only because of your involvement.

Partners currently supports hundreds of children of war who have been orphaned or separated from their relatives. We provide homes for them so they can be part of a new family—a place where they receive education, good nutrition, and spiritual care.

These homes are refuges of safety and security, of love and hope. We cannot view a child as just an isolated victim; they are part of an entire household who all need love and support. So instead of supporting an individual, we want to give you the opportunity to **be a part of the whole family!**

The average cost of running a home for 20 children is just \$150 month. For just \$25 a month, you will have a significant part in the lives of the children in their homes. Or, as an individual, church, or family, you can sponsor an entire home. Either way, you will personally be a part of

caring for a children's home in a refugee camp—from your front door to theirs.

Beyond monthly financial support, we encourage you to contact the home you help sponsor by writing letters, sending photos and postcards. In turn Partners will provide you with an introductory packet, information about your children's home and pictures, as well as periodic updates on their activities.

If you would like to help give children of war a **Chance for Change**, please fill out the form below and send it along with your check in the enclosed envelope.

Yes! I want to give children of war a **Chance for Change!**

I commit to support a children's home MONTHLY in the following amount:

\$25 \$50 \$ _____

I/We would like to sponsor an ENTIRE children's home. Please contact me with details of homes available.

Check or money order payable to "Partners Relief & Development"

Credit card payment Amount \$ _____ Visa Mastercard

Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____ / _____

Name on Card (please print): _____

Signature of Cardholder: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone No: _____ E-mail: _____

(must be included if paying by credit card)

Children's Christmas Project Update



Cries of "Open it! Open it!" are all I can hear. Around me are children huddled over their gifts, hesitant to unwrap such brightly covered presents.

I think they want to treasure the moment as long as they can. After shouts from their friends to open their gifts, they carefully begin to u n w r a p their special packages, not wanting to tear the

colorful paper. As the children look inside the wrapping, I see their eyes light up and smiles come to their faces. They are in awe to see a coloring book, a toy truck, a Lego set, a stuffed animal. They are quiet at first, and then the laughter comes. Squeals of delight and excitement fill the air as they begin to play. Their joy is real. For a brief moment, they are no longer children of war—they are carefree, laughing kids with a brand new toy.

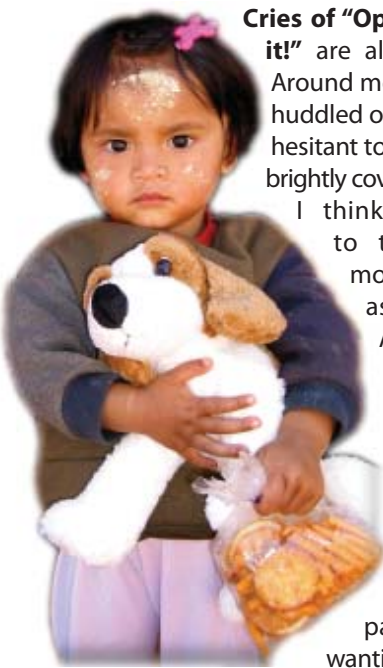
Because you sent gifts and financial support, Partners was able to provide Christmas presents to over 1,100 children living in 22 children's homes and hostels in five refugee camps and six marginalized villages. In addition, for the first time we were able to provide gifts for 90 caregivers as well.

A special Thank You to both Cathy Powell of St. George, Utah and to Elin Furunes' class in Norway for sending literally a truckload of presents! We appreciate everyone's love, prayer, and generosity this Christmas season!

- Jiew Khongpan, Children's Projects Coordinator, as told to Lori Jensen

Winter Warmth Project Update

Partners handed out 2,200 warm sweatshirts and winter jackets to refugees, orphans and displaced people this cold season. Your financial support has made it possible for many refugees and IDPs to survive another cold winter in the mountains. Thank you for getting involved!



Thank you's



Birthdays with a meaning

"One of my colleagues asked people at the school where he works for money for the Partners Winter Warmth Project. When he came to my party, he brought with him 3,900 Norwegian kroner (almost \$500 USD). People really thought it was a good idea."

Aashild Saurasunet turned 60 last November. Instead of presents, she asked people to give money for the Winter Warmth Project. By the end of the party, she had raised 11,500 kroner (almost \$1,500 USD). What a great way to celebrate 60 years of life!

Hermann Gjerde did the same more than a year ago on his 60th birthday. Thank you Hermann (now 61) and Aashild for using your special days as a way to help the refugees. We hope many follow your example, not only by giving to the poor, but by being an inspiration to others.

A for Effort!

Partners would also like to extend special thanks to **Brenda Maylander** for sending the tips from her paper route to help the refugee children; all the kids and teachers at **Fairhills**

Christian School for skipping lunch once a week in order to send food to the refugee children; everyone at **Friends Church** in Fairbanks, Alaska for hosting with a fantastic Partners fundraiser dinner; **Calvary Chapel St. George** for raising funds to support our work with war orphans; **Elin Furunes** in Norway and her school for raising money for Partners and to **YOU** for caring, reading this, praying, and being a part of our team.

God bless you!

Partners World is printed quarterly and delivered free-of-charge to those interested in the situation of refugees from Burma in Thailand.

Partners Relief & Development is a registered charity in Canada, Norway and the United States.

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Partners' Mission is to proclaim and demonstrate God's love to the victims of natural disaster, oppression and poverty. Most names used in this newsletter have been changed to protect the identity of the people involved.

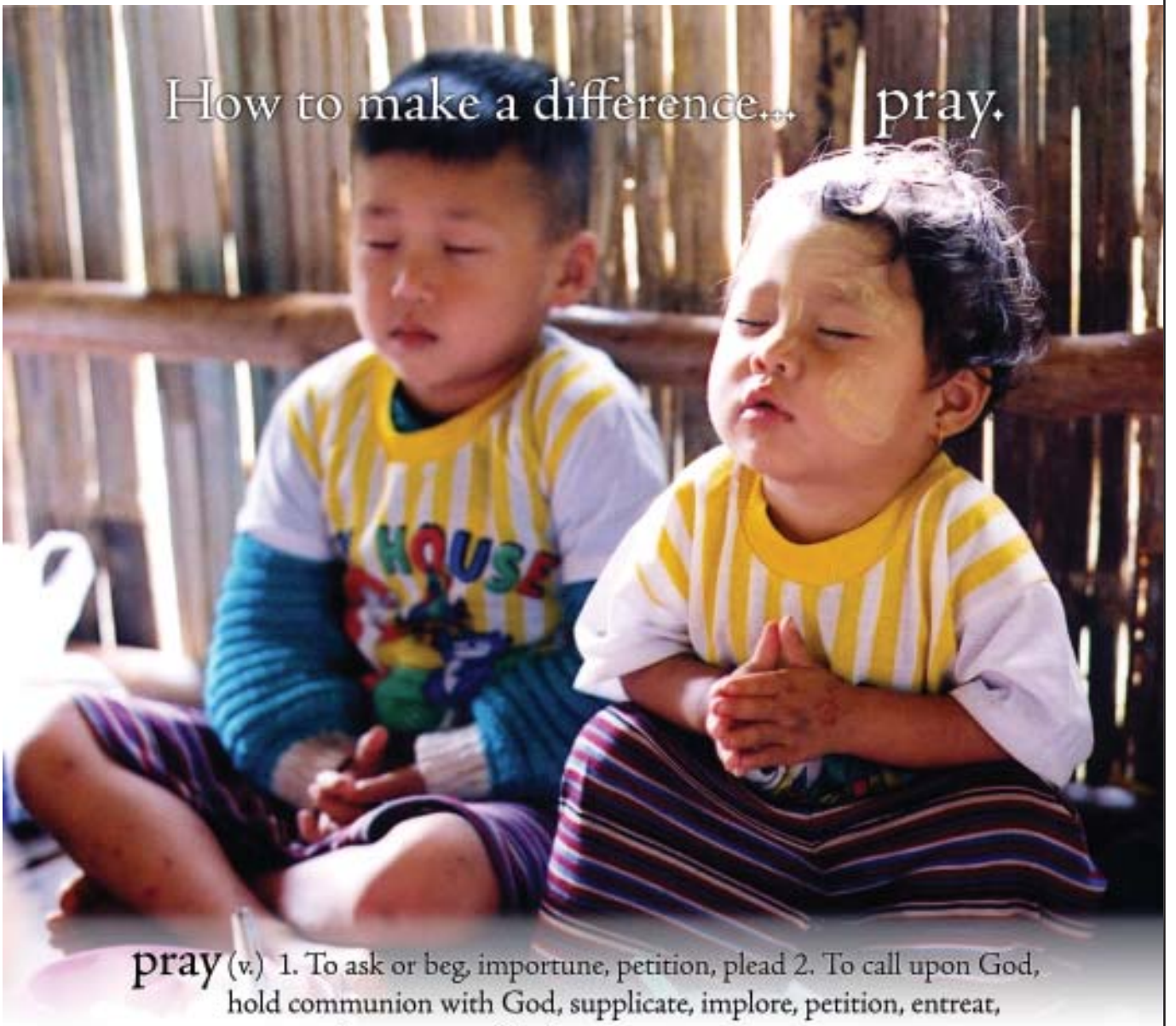
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How to make a difference... pray.



pray (v.) 1. To ask or beg, importune, petition, plead 2. To call upon God, hold communion with God, supplicate, implore, petition, entreat, commend someone to God.

Urgent Prayer Needed

Your prayers are urgently needed. In January 2004, Partners received word that 1,000 new Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) had camped along the border of Karen and Karenni State inside Burma. Their villages had been looted, burned down, and then landmines were placed along the roads and public places to prevent the villagers from returning. They have suffered exposure, disease, and death. There is no end to their suffering in sight.

Please **pray for them**. Presently, they are without food, surrounded on all sides by hostile soldiers, and their odds of survival wear thin with each passing day. On January 11th, three of them starved to death and were buried by a visiting team of ministers. **Pray also for the relief teams** inside this area who protect the IDPs, provide medical aid, and minister God's love to them.

This is Burma under military rule: over two million people uprooted and displaced, approximately 600,000 orphaned children of war and 50,000 child soldiers. These are people just like me with kids like mine. They don't have the luxury of thinking about school, fashion, or things on their "to do" list—no, they are simply under a harsh sun looking for a tree root to feed their toddlers. By prayer, please join Partners in **an appeal to our Father for an end to the war in Burma**, for good to overcome evil, and for comfort to rain down on the innocent and afflicted civilians.

For more information on how you can pray, and to get a picture of what it means to be displaced by war, please visit: www.partnersworld.org/prayer_page.html.

Praying with you,
Steve Gumaer





Today's Quote:

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

- Edmund Burke

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