BAREFOOT DOCTORS TRAINING PROGRAM REPORT

January 12 – February 27, 2015

by

Jung Dangshing

Frontier Labourers for Christ

Edited by Mary Lois Ferraro
A Brief Profile of Frontier Labourers for Christ (FLC)

Frontier Labourers for Christ (FLC), an evangelical mission organization based in Chiang Mai, Thailand, serves the hill tribes of Myanmar, Thailand and Laos. For over 35 years, FLC has reached culturally and linguistically diverse hill tribes with spiritual and physical development such as Bible training, Barefoot Doctors training and the installation of drinking water systems. The overall purpose of FLC is to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the hill tribe peoples in Thailand, Myanmar and Laos through its many ministries.

We want to thank all of you for being our faithful partners in the ministry of Frontier Labourers for Christ (FLC). God has truly blessed the work. The following are a few highlights accomplished through God’s power and your prayers:

**Barefoot Doctors Medical Training**

Jung Dangshing

The Barefoot Doctors School has two main purposes: one, to help those who are physically sick, and two, to bring spiritual healing. This is indeed a vibrant work.

Some might wonder why we need medicine to preach the Gospel. Myanmar (Burma), recently opened up to Western eyes, suffers from civil unrest, political turmoil, decades-long war between rebels and government, and has very limited medical facilities in remote regions of the country. With such conditions, the Barefoot Doctors, who have been trained medically and spiritually, are able to help the people in need. They become doctors for entire communities. When individuals receive healing, the whole community respects the Barefoot Doctors and listens to what they have to say. This opens tremendous doors for them to share the Gospel message.

In a war torn country like Myanmar, rebel armies control certain areas and the government controls other districts. Outsiders are forbidden to go into villages in restricted areas. However, through the local leaders’ requests, Barefoot Doctors are allowed into sensitive areas and are able to treat the sick. They are given the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ. At the same time, they are able to encourage and spiritually revive the Christians who live in difficult and remote areas. This is the value of the Barefoot Doctors. They are able to penetrate areas where others cannot go.

Nineteen Barefoot Doctors (7 women and 12 men) from Myanmar were trained for seven weeks: one week of Bible, one week of Community Health Education (CHE) training and five weeks of medical. This is the second year that they returned for training. Two students were not able to return. The students represent eight language groups from Myanmar (Lahu, Akha, Wa, Myu, Ngo-Chang, Karen, Pa Oo and Rawang). In addition to 180 hours training they received in 2014, the Barefoot Doctors have completed another 180 hours course work in preparation for providing primary village health care, preventative medicine, community development and Bible. From reports they brought from Myanmar, they have treated more than 1500 patients in nine months. In addition, they are preaching and evangelizing wherever they go. Most of them are serving the Lord in the areas least touched by the Gospel in Myanmar.

The volunteer teaching staff consisted of 12 medical instructors (five from Samaritan’s Purse, Canada, and seven from the States), two CHE facilitators and two pastors (one from the States and another from the UK). Under the leadership of Rick Astone MPT, Dean of the Barefoot Doctors Training Program,
and Dr. Bjorn Nilson MD, Medical Director, the seven weeks of the Barefoot Doctors training went extremely well.

This year Dr. Nilson and Rick decided to use a book called *The Burmese Border Guidelines* which is specifically designed to assist community health workers practicing in remote regions of Myanmar as primary textbook to teach the students. The book is adapted from the international treatment guidelines and medical literature of the World Health Organization (WHO) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that focus on common diseases present in Myanmar’s remote regions. In addition to the textbook mentioned, teaching lessons and topics were planned based on medical problems the students encounter in the field.

Abraham and Timothy translated for all the classes and did an outstanding job. Sarep Pung continued teaching basic computer to the students in the evenings. Pungsar and kitchen staff prepared 150 delicious and nutritious meals for the students and instructors. In fact, many students gained weight during the training. We also thanked our wonderful students. Their eagerness to learn was exhibited in their concentration and attentiveness. Every day they helped wash dishes, clean the kitchen and dining areas, and took care of the grounds after study hours. Please continue to pray with us for each of the Barefoot Doctors as they treat the villagers with love and healing in Jesus’ name.

The Barefoot Doctors School this year was a great success. All of us on the staff of FLC received many blessings from the program, too. Everyone was busy at that time, from taking care of meals and housing guest and doctors, to checking on the barefoot doctors themselves and their needs, getting teaching supplies, translating teaching materials, purchasing and packing of all the medicine, etc. It was a tremendous task and everyone was needed to make it all run smoothly. The Kalnin Leadership Center (KLC) was buzzing with activity. I am very thankful for our dedicated staff and helpers who pitched in to make it a great success.

Frontier Labourers for Christ expresses special appreciation and thanks to the instructors, churches and varying individuals for their time, financial and prayer support, donating medical equipment and gifts for the students.
A double blessing we received this year was 21 CURE Kits, humanitarian aid of medical supplies, weighing over 1050 lbs. with the total value of $42,000.00, donated by Project C.U.R.E. for the barefoot doctors. Through the thoughtfulness and kind cooperation of the Boeing Company and Thai Airways, the CURE kits were transported from the US with the THAI’S newly purchased Boeing 787 Dream Liner aircraft.

We had a wonderful CURE Kits Delivery Ceremony on January 30 to thank God and to rejoice that God has made all this possible. It was indeed a miracle to see 21 boxes of medical supplies arrive in Chiang Mai.

We praise God for this, and to see the barefoot doctors so happy to receive the medical supplies.

Thitima Maneepairoj, THAI Vice president of Corporate Image and Communications, Friedrich Wiest, Boeing Field Service Team Leader, officials from the Thai Airways, government officials, the Akha, Mien, Lahu and Karen evangelists attended the ceremony.

After the ceremony the Barefoot Doctors demonstrated how to use the donated medical supplies to the officials from Boeing and Thai Airways. Your prayers were answered and we want to thank all of you. Praise the Lord! Thanks also to Project C.U.R.E., Boeing Company, Thai Airways, Paul Ferraro, the US FLC board and other individuals that have contributed to this very important project.
Taunggyi Dental Training

After the medical training in Chiang Mai Thailand, we had an intensive dental training in Taunggyi, Shan State, Myanmar, partnered with mPower, an organization that is dedicated to provide basic dental training to the indigenous Christians as a tool to take the Gospel. Taunggyi is the capital of Shan State, Myanmar, where FLC evangelist Abraham and his wife Zamiram and family are serving among Shan, Pa Oo, Burmese, In Tha and other ethnic groups in Taunggyi area.

Craig Hunter, DDS, Curt High, DDS, Dan Kleith, DDS, Wayne Lose, DDS, and Linda, Executive Director of mPower, taught the students the concepts of preventive dentistry and how to clean teeth, how to give injections and extract teeth. They began with basic dental head anatomy, basic terminology, the four parts of a tooth, tooth identification, tooth numbering systems, etc. After one and a half day of lectures, the instructors let the student give injections to each other. From the third day, they began to extract teeth under close guidance and supervision of instructors. The students saw 105 patients in three days and extracted 145 teeth! Some of their patients were local non-Christians. The students had the opportunity to work with both adults and children under 12 years. Most of their patients were from an orphanage center for children with physically and mentally challenged children.

We turned Abraham’s church sanctuary hall area into a temporary dental clinic. It was a busy week for Abraham’s family and church ladies who took care of meals, housing barefoot doctors, logistics arrangement and getting patients for the students’ practice. There were 15 people in Abraham and Zamiram’s three-room house. The kitchen was always buzzing with food preparations. Mayram Sar, Abraham’s daughter, prepared delicious and nutritious Burmese food for us, and she is a wonderful cook. Ninram and Pesarram were very helpful with interpreting for the instructors.

Daham Dee, Bolu, Kaw Daik, Yawhan, Mama Naing, Khin Sein, Nensungbra & Elizabeth with their certificates after completing dental training

Frontier Labourers for Christ expresses special appreciation and thanks to the Wayside Chapel for sponsoring this training.
The Ferraros Meet the Barefoot Doctors  
By Mary Lois and Paul Ferraro

On a Monday morning in February of 2015, we sat at the back of the classroom in the Jones Building waiting to meet the Barefoot Doctors and their instructors. “Paul and Mary Lois, please come up now,” Jung’s request made me tremble a little as I walked to the podium at the front of the classroom, “What could I say to doctors! And how would this encounter effect change? But Jung was already introducing us to the Barefoot Doctors.

“Meet Paul Ferraro, Chairman of the US FLC Board of Directors and his wife Mary Lois, Secretary of the Board of Directors.”

I looked out at the young, smiling faces and the warm, brown eyes of these tribal-born Burmese people, soon to be doctors, who would travel to the unreached areas of Myanmar to treat the sick and to preach the Gospel. Suddenly, I remembered the inoculations we had gotten before coming to Thailand. “In the U.S.,” I explained, “we get shots, or immunizations, to protect us from disease. Our doctor recommended a typhus shot and a particular strain of flu inoculation for this trip.” I continued by asking them if they knew of such immunizations and if they gave them to their patients. We in the West have access to any and every kind of medicine needed, but, I wondered, do they?

Paul spoke next, encouraging the students to continue their studies and impressing upon them the importance of their work. “You will go where none of us can go, and you will do what none of us can do.” The students listened intently, “but we go with you in spirit.” Paul thanked them for their dedication and devotion to FLC and then prayed for God’s care and guidance over them. As we returned to our seats, I silently thanked the Lord for this opportunity to meet the “Barefoot Doctors,” and for helping me to understand the significance of their work. As I looked up at the big map of Burma posted on the wall near where I sat, I also realized the magnitude of this work.

Later in the week, Jung, Nangsar, and the entire staff surprised us with a 50th Wedding Anniversary cake, and the Barefoot Doctors gave us each a gift from Burma. The staff took photos of Paul holding his Rawang basket and me wrapped in a hand stitched embroidered shawl. At that moment, I felt united with these beautiful people, and I wanted to aid the work among them in the future, the change had occurred in me! Thank you to everyone who made our visit so significant and memorable.
My teaching experience at the Barefoot Doctors School
Dr. Susan Parker, MD

I participated in the Barefoot Doctors program from February 15 – 28th, 2015, the final two weeks of the second year of the current students’ program.

I covered the following topics:
1) Some Very Common Sicknesses
2) The Teeth, Gums and Mouth
3) Gout
4) Health and Sickness of Older People
5) Addictions
6) Medication review
7) Clinical examination – combined teaching session with Drs. Buie and Nilson

I taught for ~ 14 hours, using Powerpoint presentations, diagrams, photos, etc. didactic teaching, Q and A format. I assisted in some other sessions, input to case presentations, etc. All were presented with assistance of excellent translators.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Barefoot Doctors School and I hope that I was able to engage the students, providing useful knowledge and skills for them to use as they return to their work in Myanmar. The students enjoyed interactive teaching and this teaching method should be encouraged. Pictures and videos are very helpful and engaging, as one says, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” As a female instructor, I feel that access to a female translator would be very helpful. I am sure that the female students have questions about patients and personal concerns that could not be addressed with a male translator. My fellow instructor, Lynda Audia also strongly supports this recommendation.

Dr. Nilson’s wealth of knowledge regarding the health problems in Myanmar was an incredibly useful resource for me. Dr. Jim Buie and his wife Gayle have participated in the program for many years and their first-hand knowledge of “how things worked” was very reassuring. I have nothing but positive comments about the support staff, facilities and accommodation.

Luke 9:6 “Preaching the Gospel and healing people everywhere” is a perfect summation of the goals of this wonderful program. It reflects the dedication and effort of many individuals that contribute to teaching and supporting the Barefoot Doctors.
This being my initial opportunity to serve with the Barefoot Doctors of Burma, I came with an expectation to provide health education to 19 students from various remote villages in Myanmar. Instead they have taught me many lessons.

For instance, one young woman shared her story of when she needed medication for her patient, she had to sell one of her pigs to provide the funds for the medication required. Then, she travelled from the northern border of Myanmar to China to purchase the much needed medication for her patient.

This woman taught me a wonderful lesson in humility and self-sacrifice. She demonstrated Christ’s love in action, by placing her patient’s medical needs ahead of her personal needs. How can I grow to be more like this woman?

Another story of a young female Barefoot Doctor graduate from the class of 2012 was tragic. She had returned to her Myanmar village eager to practice the philosophy of her school: “Preaching the Gospel and Healing People Everywhere” (Luke 9:6). Sadly, she and her baby died following her delivery. Now, oxytocin is included in each student’s medical kit to help prevent future maternal fatalities.

The subject of “Nutrition: What to eat to be Healthy” led me to transfer our Canada’s Food Guide into their corresponding “main foods, Go, Grow and Glow” food groups. Food pictures helped the students identify foods belonging to each group. Students’ facilitated lessons on special diets for specific health problems: anemia, rickets, hypertension, obesity, constipation, diabetes, goiters, heartburn and stomach ulcers. Their knowledge and growing confidence was exciting to witness.

“Prevention of sicknesses” covered both hygiene and sanitation. During the study of “worms and intestinal parasites” the students were divided into 3 groups and presented on common worms and parasites to their peers. They taught on how they were spread, effect on health, prevention and treatment. Students use hand puppets (I’d brought from home) as creative teaching tools. Active participation encouraged their learning to be more fun and memorable.

“Healing without Medicines” emphasized the use of clean water for prevention and treatment of various health concerns. The students were encouraged that one of their important jobs was to educate people about sensible and limited use of medicines. Natural remedies were provided for common health problems. Each student was provided with a first aid kit from Toronto and were very appreciative to have this practical resource.

“Smoking” and related health impacts were presented with several visuals to support their learning. The use of a spinning wheel as an interactive teaching tool received excellent feedback. One student said that the variety of questions inspired her to read more on different topics. Also, the students were able to successfully recall the information they had learned.
Lastly, positive feedback was received on the “counseling session” dealing with active listening, self-care and grief support. They were involved in role play dramas to stimulate discussion of potential scenarios. The students found it encouraging to have some tools to help to comfort the hurting people they have encountered. Looking forward, the use of visuals, interactive teaching and teaching tools are recommended as beneficial methods to enhance student learning.
My 2015 experience teaching at the KLC Barefoot Doctors School
Dr. Joseph Nawrocki, MD

As always it is a pleasure to be at the KLC and to enjoy the gracious hospitality that is rendered by the staff and by the students. The students seem to be progressing with their medical knowledge. To go to the next level to allow them to participate more fully in rendering medical care, hopefully, is the goal of next year - their last year of the 3-year program.

This is only my second year participating, and so my input will be limited and may only be my view and not the big picture. As I observed more of the common sense medical knowledge delivered this time, (how to help a baby latch onto a nipple, how to deal with feelings, how to take a temperature, etc.), I was able to reflect. However, I was left wondering if these specifics are needed as much as the didactic knowledge of doing a thorough history, basing the questions and information obtained on a broad differential in their thinking process.

It seems to me that being able to analyze the data, make a proper diagnosis, and treat appropriately is more important. I know both approaches are needed and, given time, both can and should be taught. However, time is very valuable in having only 6 weeks per year to prepare them to handle the medical load they will encounter in their villages and individual cultures that will influence their delivery of care. What kind and what depth of care does KLC Barefoot Doctors School want to instill in them?

I think obtaining a curriculum of what KLC and the Barefoot Doctors Programs wants to accomplish and deliver would be a good goal. Obtaining one from a similar type program and then adjusting it to fit KLC would save a lot of work and re-doing. This would allow instructors to go by the curriculum rather than not knowing what is expected and deviating from the book. That should allow the students to advance equally, knowing what is on the curriculum and what is being expected to be learned. Learning is one thing and application is another.

How to accomplish this with so many instructors from so many different areas of the world, all looking at each area a bit differently, is quite daunting, but the base of knowledge should be the same. To know if the students are receiving the knowledge required to be at the standard KLC wants is the big question, and standardization is needed in many areas from the spiritual to the medical to whatever KLC has set as the standard. Medically, I think an exit test each year and a final exam would allow KLC and those making the final decision to know if instructors are accomplishing the goal of educating Barefoot Doctors would be good. Finding a program with an exit test for medical care providers would save a lot of work and time.

I know I am rambling, but this year left me disturbed and not knowing if I am helping an unknown goal of KLC. As physicians and medical care providers, we are taught to be independent and thinkers. The food and facility were excellent. Times up, “gotta go.”
Teaching Bible to the Barefoot Doctors
Dr. Jim Winter

For the past two years I have had the privilege of being part of the team sharing in the Bible teaching program at the Barefoot Doctors School at the Kalnin Leadership Centre, Chiangmai – sharing the ministry with Jon Ulm – and, this year, with Bob Johnson, both of whom are serving as pastors in the USA.

It is significant that, under the direction of Jung Dangshing, the Bible teaching precedes the excellent medical training the students receive - placing the Word of God at the forefront of their lives and ministries. We select Biblical topics and subjects that we believe will help and equip them as they serve the Lord in difficult and sometimes dangerous situations – seeking to ground them in God’s truth for their own spiritual well-being and for their ministry to others. For example, this year Bob Johnson gave some inspiring teaching on the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ from Luke’s Gospel, and I taught from Ephesians 6:10-20 where Paul instructs us in spiritual warfare.

The students are eager to learn and it is clear that they are open to what God is saying to them through His Word, and longing to pass this on to those whom God has called them to serve. Very few of the students have a good grasp of the English language, but this is not a barrier to teaching as we are ably supported by two excellent interpreters, Abraham and Timothy. One comes away from a week’s fellowship and teaching inspired by the dedication of these young men and women and encouraged that through their selfless service the Kingdom of God is being established in some of the remotest parts of South East Asia.
Greetings, I apologize for not writing any reports lately. I’m very encouraged to learn that you are all doing well and praying for us too. May God bless you abundantly.

In the past two to three months, I was able to serve Him not only in our church, family, and surrounding villages, but also in evangelizing the mountain villages. I taught villagers God’s Word and about healthy living, and I also treated the sick. I taught the adult villagers from the Word of God and taught the kids songs, Bible stories, Bible verses, and about salvation and sin.

Because of your prayer support, I am able to serve in Jesus’ ministry full-time. I was able to see about 200 patients in Mai Heh, Homun, Bahtan, and Nawgwe villages. The most common problems we faced were hypertension, gastric ulcer, the common cold, dizziness, headache, back pain, knee pain, anemia, ear infection, itchy skin, numbness to extremities, and diabetes. I also saw cataracts, goiter, and tissue growth in the eyeball. I did my best in treating these problems. I will continue serving Him through proclaiming the gospel message and treating the sick.
First of all, I would like to praise the Lord for His goodness. When we were back to Burma after the Barefoot Doctors School, I was able to take part in an evangelistic medical team. We went to Mai Heh Lahu village in Tachileik area. We taught health lessons and Bible lessons to the villagers. Some villagers came to the Lord and were baptized. Again in April, I was able to take part in a short-term summer youth camp where I was able to teach health lessons along with Bible lessons and treated the sick.

Right now, I am evangelizing in Kyaing Lat, a new town located 30 miles away from Tarlay which is located between Tachileik and Kyaing Tung. Kyaing Lat is on a new road connecting Burma to Laos, which will be built soon. At the moment, I am praying for a motorcycle for my transportation. Due to transportation limitation, I am much confined in the town. However, this confinement enabled me to know a nurse in town and I was able to observe when she treats the sick.

I also received words of appreciation from many patients I treated last year. They said that they were healed completely. Many of them brought more patients to me for treatment. I am very grateful to FLC mission and all the supporters for giving me the opportunity to serve Him through medical treatments. May God bless all of you. I am praying for next year’s training. I apologize for writing you through Facebook. Thank you very much again.
Barefoot Doctors Experience
Melissa Fonseca

This is my second time in Thailand, and I feel it is God’s providence over my life. I’m grateful for the opportunity given to me to be part of the Barefoot doctors program for the duration of classes this year.

I was privileged to help in the area of administration; some of my responsibilities were as follows: Updating teaching schedules, updating blogs, taking pictures, connecting teachers with correct staff to help with needs, hosting the teachers, keeping records for the work of each student, and lastly, learning and having fun while serving. I gained so much knowledge serving the students and the teachers. I was the liaison between the two and what an advantage for me to be connecting with these two groups for the improvement of the whole: the individual and the program.

I am someone who thrives on experiencing new surroundings and meeting new people, especially from other cultures, I believe everyone is unique and has something valuable to offer. One of the most significant things I experienced while in Thailand was meeting nineteen students coming from varying areas from the country of Myanmar. These lives that at one point I was unaware of, in so minimal a time, what was unknown was becoming familiar.

I truly miss them all. Each student has taught me diligence when situations are hard, they have taught me to pray without ceasing, and to keep my eyes fixed on Jesus, no matter how difficult a situation might get. My difficulty may not be their difficulty, but the important lesson is to remain close to the vine, Jesus, because without him we cannot do anything.

I am greatly inspired by each student and their commitment to the Barefoot Doctors program. I observed that they are really thankful for the opportunity to learn because they put forth a continual effort to study and equip themselves with tools from the medical and dental fields in order to implement the knowledge and skills in their communities for the development of a better country and for the most important purpose, which is advancing the Kingdom of God.

I have been so encouraged by these nineteen students that I want to take advantage of all the resources I have in the States to further my education in the nursing field and perhaps one day in the future, I can have a bit more impact in the lives of new students who will be part of this excellent program.
Photo Gallery

Bible instructors, translators & barefoot doctors

Jung, Bob Johnson, Jim Winter, Timothy, Sarep Pung and Abraham

Barefoot doctors with their traditional outfits
2015 CHE training

Anita Terry from Canada teaching the barefoot doctors

Dr. Janet Warren and Anita Terry from Canada at the barefoot doctors school
Dr. Jim Buie and physical examination class. Dr. Buie and his wife Gayle teach every year at the barefoot doctors school.

Dr. Wayne demonstrating how to give injection.
Kaw Daik giving injection

Abraham’s family from left: Deeram, Mayram Sar, Ninram, Zamiram, Abraham, Pesarram & Khin Ram Aung
uhm...you need to see the barefoot doctors.

Children from an orphanage center looking at each other while they are waiting the barefoot doctors to call them

A little girl from an orphanage center Taunggyi, Shan State, Myanmar.
Dr. Jeff Kornelsen teaching the barefoot doctors

Dr. Bjorn Nilson, our Medical Director teaching the barefoot doctors

Dr. Susan McDowell
From left: Dr. Jeff Kornelsen, Dr. Susan McDowell & Dr. Bjorn Nilson at CURE Kits Presentation Ceremony

Rick Astone, Dean of the Barefoot Doctors Training Program at the CURE Kits presentation Ceremony. Rick and Alice, his wife are from California and they have been teaching every at the barefoot doctors school since 2008.