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The Voice of the Martyrs Canada



WHAT DOES IT MEAN
TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN
MYANMAR (BURMA)?

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“In spite of sorrow, loss and pain,
our course be onward still;
we sow on Burma’s barren plain,
we reap on Zion’s hill.”

~ Adoniram Judson

By Floyd A. Brobbel, CEO for The Voice of the Martyrs Canada

“If we arrest you again, you will not leave prison alive.” With this chilling warning, “Pastor Luai” (not his real name) was released from prison for the seventh time. His teachings on how Christianity differed from Buddhism frequently put him in difficult situations with local authorities. Though the pastor’s evangelistic work led many Burmese people to acknowledge Jesus as Lord, it was also the cause for his arrests.

Pastor Luai’s suffering provides an example of the persecution followers of Christ face in Myanmar. Within tribal communities, Buddhist monks and local authorities oppose Christian evangelistic activities. Pastors regularly face arrest and are typically held for a few days at a time. In the case of Pastor Luai, however, the imprisonment lasted for several months. While incarcerated, prison guards regularly tortured this dedicated evangelist in an attempt to demoralize and discourage him from continuing his ministry upon release. Since Pastor Luai wouldn’t break under the pressure of torture, he was threatened with death.

Persecution is common for Burmese Christians, as their church was established on a rich history of suffering. Christianity in Myanmar can be traced back to the missionary efforts of Adoniram Judson, who arrived in 1813 with his wife Ann. Despite enduring several tragic losses during their ministry, Adoniram translated the Bible into Burmese, and churches still use a revised version of his translation to this day.

Most Burmese Christians come from the Chin and Karen tribal groups and, though widespread persecution is being perpetrated by the government and the Buddhist majority, churches are continually growing in this restricted nation. While tolerance levels vary from state to state, Christians do not have the same privileges as members of the Buddhist majority. Many believers find that their rights and freedoms are violated with impunity, as there is little to no legal recourse made available to them.

The long-lasting civil war also puts the church at risk, as armed ethnic militia groups and the Burmese military often target followers of Christ. As a result,

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countless numbers of them are killed, detained or forced to flee in regions where the fighting is severe. Additionally, converts face increased persecution from their opposing families and communities.

Eventually, Pastor Luai and his family left Myanmar and settled in a bordering city in Thailand. The Thai government allows Burmese refugees to enter this city, but they cannot move beyond city limits without a special passport. The city serves as a refugee centre where

those who have fled Myanmar are often taken advantage of and relegated to slave labour. Here, Pastor Luai believes God has called him to establish a church and minister to beleaguered Burmese refugees.

When I asked him how he maintains his ministry focus despite all the struggles, Pastor Luai said he often reflects on Galatians 2:20:

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Pastor Luai also told me that many displaced Burmese people will eventually return to their homes. Therefore, his prayerful goal is to ensure that every new believer who returns will be equipped to live for Christ as "salt" and "light" in Myanmar.

As you read the following pages of this issue, please pray that the Gospel will continue to advance throughout Myanmar. Pray that mature leaders like Pastor Luai and his family will continue to preach and teach passionately and boldly. Finally, take time to observe what God is speaking to your heart. How is He asking you to respond?

Grace and peace,

Floyd



The goals of VOM are expressed in our "Ministry Purposes" as follows:

1. To encourage and empower persecuted Christians to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).
2. To give practical relief and spiritual support to the families of Christian martyrs (Matthew 25:36).
3. To equip persecuted Christians to love and win to Christ those opposed to the Gospel (Romans 12:14).
4. To help believers rebuild their lives and Christian witness in countries where they have formerly suffered oppression (Nehemiah 1:3; 2:5).
5. To promote the fellowship of all believers by informing the world of the faith and courage of persecuted Christians, thereby inspiring believers to a deeper level of commitment to Christ and involvement in His Great Commission (Hebrews 13:3; Galatians 6:2).

Spending of funds is confined to board-approved programs and projects. Each restricted contribution designated towards a board-approved program or project will be used as designated with the understanding that when the need for such a program or project has been met, or cannot be completed for any reason determined by the board, the remaining restricted contributions designated for such program or project will be used where needed most. Gifts from individual donors of \$10 and more are acknowledged and receipted with an official receipt for income tax purposes.



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After zealously persecuting Christians for decades, a Myanmar Army officer received accusations that led to severe military discipline and a life-changing encounter with six imprisoned pastors.

BECOMING "PAUL"

While growing up, Khin Maung wanted to be part of something bigger than himself. So, after completing high school, he joined the Myanmar Army and quickly rose through the ranks, eventually reaching the level of lieutenant colonel. As an officer who commanded his own battalion, he developed a reputation for demonstrating brutality towards his soldiers, reserving his harshest treatment for those who were Christians.

Khin had learned to hate followers of Jesus at a young age. In addition to being raised in a rigidly Buddhist Burmese family, two of his uncles were influential Buddhist monks. At age 11, he spent nine months as a novice, wearing the traditional maroon robe and living among adult monks at a local monastery. While there, he learned that Jesus was a disciple of Buddha, and that He was crucified for disobeying instructions that had forbidden Him from preaching. In addition, Khin was taught that when Jesus died, He became an evil spirit. "From that moment, I thought Christians were crazy," he says. "I decided that I didn't want to have anything to do with them."

Khin took every opportunity to publicly mock and embarrass the Christian soldiers in his battalion. If they prayed, he interrupted them. If they read their Bibles, he beat them. When they ate, he knocked their meals off the table and made them clean up the mess. "I kicked them with my military boots and whipped them with a rope," he adds. "I kicked [one soldier's] teeth in." As cruelly as he treated his own soldiers, Khin treated civilian Christians worse, especially the ethnically Burmese people who had left Buddhism to follow the teachings of Christ.



“Whenever people converted to Christianity from Buddhism, two of my military friends and I would go and whip them to persecute them,” he explains. “I thought their God was only a God of the Chin people, and that He died a very terrible, dishonourable and pointless death. I thought He was a foreign God.” Thanks to missionaries who worked among them in the late 1800s, today’s Chin ethnic group in Myanmar is predominantly Christian. As Christianity spread among the Chin people, they began to face increasing persecution from other ethnic groups, as well as Myanmar’s military.

In his hatred for Christians, Khin often forced pastors to get drunk in order to ruin their reputations, and he also zealously oversaw the demolition of a church. “We asked the fire department, an officer of the village, and some members of the military from our unit to help us with the demolition,” he admits. “We destroyed everything together.”

Upon hearing that Christians believed the crucified Christ was still alive, Khin even devised a plan to personally persecute Jesus if he ever met Him in person: “I told Jesus, ‘You need to be on guard. If I ever see You, I will shoot You.’” But Khin was soon to face extreme discipline himself, exposing the fragile loyalty of his soldiers.

After a night of heavy drinking in 2003, he awoke after midnight and discovered that his gun was missing. Khin knew he was in trouble. There’s a common saying in the Myanmar Army that “the value of a soldier’s gun is equal to ten lives.” When Khin dutifully reported the missing weapon to his superior, he was immediately accused of selling the gun to a rebel army. Three officers subsequently tied Khin’s wrists together and stood him on a chair before hanging him by his wrists from the ceiling. Then they kicked the chair out from under him and proceeded to beat him for hours with metal rods. The beatings continued on and off for three days, during which time Khin was

provided no food or water. By the third day, his body was so swollen and bloody that he could no longer feel pain. “I wanted to die,” he says when speaking of that horrific ordeal.

Then, at around 1 a.m. on the third day, after his torturers had left, Khin had a supernatural vision. “I could see Jesus,” he recalls. “He was on a cross in front of me. There was also a lot of blood coming from many parts of His body, just like [what I was experiencing]. I thought, ‘This can’t be true.’ I looked to my left and then looked to my right, but I always saw this vision of Jesus on the cross – no matter where I looked. At that time, I had goose bumps and started to shake all over my body.”

After about ten minutes, the vision faded and a commanding officer from his division entered the room accompanied by those who had been beating him. “Let him down!” the officer demanded. “We are all soldiers. He has been serving in the military for 30 years. Why are you treating him like this?” The commanding officer then arranged for Khin to be taken to a hospital for treatment.

DISCOVERING “TRUE LIFE” IN PRISON

After being released from the hospital, Khin was sentenced by a military tribunal to two years’ imprisonment for allegedly selling his weapon. He was one of 40 prisoners confined in a cell, which he describes as dark, dirty and crawling with bugs. Khin’s only comfort was the blanket that he used to cover himself as he slept on the cold, hard floor.

Among those crammed into Khin’s cell were six Christian pastors. He challenged them whenever they shared the Gospel with him, but they always responded to his attacks with patience and love. They wisely answered his questions about Jesus and pointed him to passages of Scripture refuting what he had been taught as a child.

On June 9th, 2003, Khin made a promise to the men: “I told them, ‘If Jesus is a true Saviour, if He can save me from my suffering, then I will serve Him until I die.’” The pastors surrounded Khin and prayed for him. One of them also regularly spent two hours a day teaching him about the Bible. During their three months together, the two men developed a strong friendship that made Khin feel comfortable asking deeper, more probing questions about Christianity. Then, one evening at about 9 p.m., Khin’s friend died in his sleep.

Shortly after his friend’s death, the case against the remaining five pastors was resolved and they were released from prison. For two months, Khin felt completely alone. Then, on December 11th, 2003, prison

Prayer Changes Everything

By the late Michael Chongluai, Former President of Evangelical Bible Seminary in Myanmar

*"Thou art my God, and I will praise Thee: Thou art my God, and I will exalt Thee.
O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever!"*

~ Psalm 118:28-29 KJV

The nation of Myanmar has gone through much political, economic and spiritual hardship since the army took power in 1962. Based on a population of almost 58 million, more than 80 percent are Buddhists, while only about six percent are Christians. In 1986, God made a way for us to help establish the Evangelical Bible Seminary (EBS) in Yangon, Myanmar, which began with just ten students. It was the first interdenominational theological training institute in this predominantly Buddhist country.

Although the seminary mainly focusses its mission on teaching during the summer months (from March to May), the students are involved in outreach ministry as part of their training. Through this evangelistic outreach, God is helping us to win lost souls for His Kingdom!

Since most Christians in Myanmar come from poor families belonging to the nation's hill tribes, the ministry of EBS has had to rely on God's help and provision to further its mission work. While doing so, the seminary humbly operated out of rented houses for about 20 years. During that time, in early 1995, a piece of land about three acres in size was secured. Located 15 miles from downtown Yangon, this land was situated in a village that had no proper road.

As the village headman had sole authority at that time, I obtained written permission from him to build five small houses, which I gladly built for EBS within a four-month period. However, on April 22nd, 1995, the Mingaladon Township authorities – including general administration officials, police officers and members of the fire department, as well as municipal and village authorities – came to our property

and destroyed all five houses. The township authorities also expelled and discharged the village headman. After losing everything, we visited several other local authorities and those of surrounding townships asking for help, but to no avail.

God answered our humble prayers, for we were eventually able to meet with Martha, who represented The Voice of the Martyrs Canada in 2003, to discuss the possibility of a ministry partnership. In the years that followed, we received encouraging visits from VOMC's Canadian founder, Klaas Brobbel, and his son Floyd, who presently serves as the ministry's CEO.

In 2005, Myanmar's government slowly began changing its policies and, by God's help and guidance, we were able to move in July 2006 to the seminary's current campus. Even so, the township authorities continued to make things difficult for us. They would periodically enter the campus, demanding "donations" and causing us to live in constant fear and insecurity.

We thank God and praise His name for allowing some further major political changes to take place in 2015. The new government has finally put a stop to the village authorities' weekly and monthly "guest/visitor reports," and today township officials no longer come to our campus asking for financial contributions.

This is a very positive and helpful development in the country, and we give glory and thanks to God. Acknowledging that "prayer changes everything," the members of our ministry team are now praying that His work will continue smoothly and be multiplied one hundredfold! 🙏



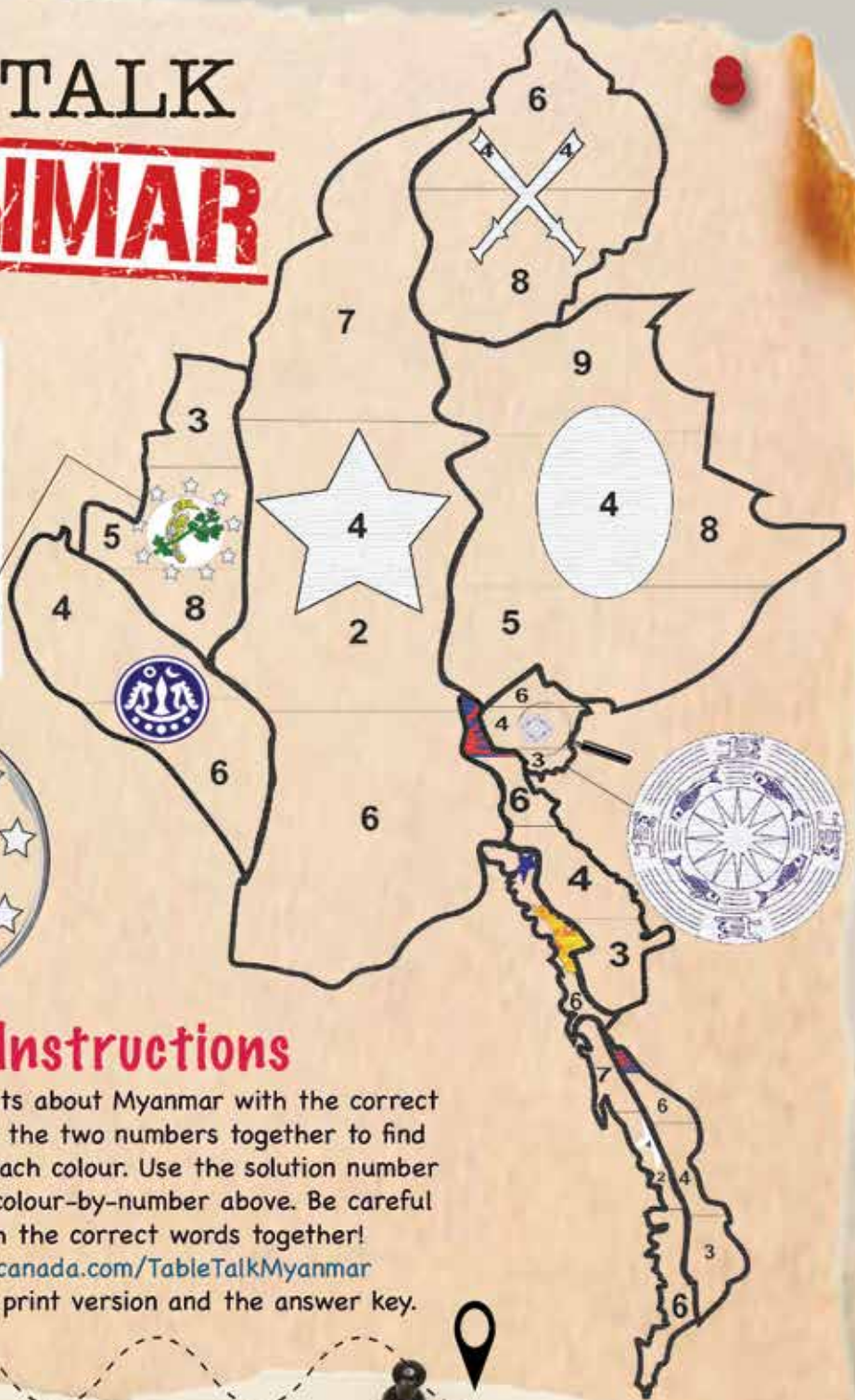
Photo: Evangelical Bible Seminary, Myanmar



TABLE TALK

MYANMAR

The regions on the map represent the states of Myanmar. The predominant ethnic group of each state is represented by its tribal flag. This activity only portrays eight of the approximate 135 different ethnic groups found throughout the country.



Instructions

Match the facts about Myanmar with the correct answers. Add the two numbers together to find the value of each colour. Use the solution number to fill in the colour-by-number above. Be careful to match the correct words together!

See vomcanada.com/TableTalkMyanmar for a larger print version and the answer key.

- (2) Name of the largest river.
- (1) Myanmar's capital city.
- (2) Largest ethnic group.
- (3) Highest mountain.
- (2) The equivalent of a hurricane, but near the Indian Ocean.
- (1) Famous temple.
- (7) The name of Myanmar's northernmost state.
- (3) Ultimate goal of those practising Myanmar's prominent religion.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) Burman | — White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) Nirvana | — Burgundy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | (4) Irrawaddy | — Red |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | (6) Golden Pagoda | — Yellow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | (2) Kachin | — Orange |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | (1) Cyclone | — Blue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | (1) Naypyidaw | — Light Green |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | (5) Hkakabo Razi | — Dark Green |

Along the Way

Suzanne's Story

The citizens of Myanmar, a country known for its political instability and extreme violence, face multiple conflicts that are commonly instigated by the government. In the midst of these conflicts, Christians are often the first people to be targeted and attacked by the military, frequently resulting in a large number of serious casualties and the burning of churches.

This artwork depicts what has become an all-too-common experience for followers of Christ in Myanmar – one that the artist, Suzanne, couldn't keep bottled up inside. So, she took to her paints to express one treacherous journey that was required by her family so they could provide assistance to a broken and beaten people group in Myanmar's Karen state.

Suzanne (pictured in this artwork carrying a backpack), along with the rest of her ministry team, had to tread under the cover of night. Ahead of them was a road patrolled by the military that needed to be crossed. If spotted, the soldiers would shoot first and ask questions later. In the above scene, the team is travelling with their horses and mules through the rice fields, praying they will avoid conflict. With only the light of their headlamps to illuminate the path before them, they carefully draw nearer to the patrolled road where all light is extinguished.

Suzanne recalls them having to tread quietly that night as they approached the crossing. Flooding her mind's eye, the recollection of traumatic experiences instructed her quiet steps. Memories of the team physically piggybacking the wounded through Myanmar's remote jungles, rescuing young boys seconds after these children had their limbs blown off, and weeping among the ruins of burned churches, all reminded her of what would result when encountering the military. Still, the members of this dedicated mission team pressed forward, trusting in God to be their sole guiding "Light" amid the darkness of this bleak night.



HIS WAY

“So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

– Galatians 6:10 ESV

NOVEMBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
5 BAHRAIN Pray that new Christians will become grounded in God's Word so they can stand firm amid persecution.	6 MOZAMBIQUE Pray for the encouragement of those ministering to displaced and traumatized Christians.	7 INDONESIA Continue to pray for members of the Hati Yesus Maha Kudus Church, which was attacked on Palm Sunday in 2021.	1 LEBANON Pray for the return of church leaders who left the country because of economic instability.	2 MOROCCO Pray for the success of Bible-smuggling operations so that many lives will be impacted for eternity.	3 JORDAN Pray that Christian leaders will unite in serving the country's large number of refugees.	4 CAMEROON Pray that God will supply the needs of believers whose villages were destroyed by Boko Haram.
12 NEPAL Pray that the government will stop its oppression of those who convert to Christianity.	13 KENYA Pray for Christian widows and orphans recovering from attacks by Islamic militants.	14 SAUDI ARABIA Pray that Christians who are persecuted by their families will connect with the family of God.	8 SYRIA Pray for pastors who are faithfully ministering in this nation, using 1 Peter 5:1-4 as a guide.	9 KUWAIT Pray for more evangelists to minister throughout the country, reaching the Kuwaiti people with the Gospel in creative ways.	10 TAJIKISTAN Pray for Christians in the northeast, which is dominated by a radical form of Islam.	11 VIETNAM Pray that those who've been blinded by ancestor worship will see the truths revealed in God's Word.
19 LIBYA Pray for the strengthening of a fellowship of believers who are attending an online church.	20 INDIA Pray for our suffering Indian brothers and sisters in Christ, using Romans 5:3-5 as a guide.	21 UGANDA Pray for Sister Ruth, the widow of a martyred evangelist.	15 EGYPT Pray that children's Bibles will be distributed to eager readers who are receptive to the Gospel.	16 NORTH KOREA Pray that attempts by governing officials to interrupt Christian radio broadcasts will not prevail.	17 MAURITANIA Pray that more Christian workers will reside in Mauritania and share the Gospel throughout the country.	18 LAOS Pray that Christians will remain faithful amid tremendous suffering and loss.
26 ALGERIA Pray for believers whose churches have been closed by the government.	27 CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC Pray for increased opportunities for believers to boldly witness, especially among spiritually seeking Muslims.	28 TURKMENISTAN Pray for those endeavouring to effectively distribute copies of the Bible in the country.	22 AZERBAIJAN Pray for the continued faithfulness of those who are under spiritual attack.	23 SOMALIA Pray for greater unity and trust among leaders of the Somali church.	24 SRI LANKA Pray for those facing governmental discrimination because of their Christian witness.	25 KAZAKHSTAN Pray that Kazakh Christians will heed God's call to serve as church leaders.

Artist: Suuzanne Eubank
 Artwork Title: "Night Movement Behind the Lines"
 Medium: Oil Paint

Design Concept Credit: The original map/territories drawing for the page 7 activity.



Scan to access digital calendar

MYANMAR

Weigh In

1

Seasons in Myanmar are classified by the monsoon cycle. A monsoon is the name for a major wind system caused by the climatic effects of the Indian Ocean. Reversing its direction once a year, a monsoon can result in either abundant rain or drought, depending on the direction of the winds.

Myanmar is the leading producer of the highest quality jade (a green-coloured precious stone), providing approximately 95 percent of the world's supply. Most jade is found in northern Myanmar, along a route referred to as the "Jade Traet."

3

The government of Myanmar strongly prefers that all its citizens follow Buddhism to create "national unity." Known for violating the basic human rights of the country's inhabitants, governing officials often initially target Christians in their efforts to convert them to Buddhism.

In 1989, after a violent military coup, the government of Myanmar suddenly changed the country's name from Burma to Myanmar. Yet, many people living within this country reject the new name and still refer to their nation as Burma. On many maps, "Burma" is often written in brackets to reflect this.

2

(2) The majority of Myanmar's jade mines are owned and operated by the government. Citizens typically only have access to the waste that these companies dump. These sites are dangerous and, often, any substantial finds made by citizens are taken away from them. Despite the dangers, hundreds of thousands of people have flocked to these mines in hopes of attaining a better life. Theorize what would influence people to take such desperate measures in their search for the precious stones.

4

(4) A coup is a sudden, violent and unlawful seizure of power from a preexisting government. There have been multiple coups in the country's history, making it a politically charged nation. Take some time to research one of these coups, and some of the contributing factors that led to the conflicts. In your opinion, was the coup a justified response on behalf of the military? Why or why not?

(1) Monsoons are an integral part of the climatic system of Myanmar. The monsoon rains are relied upon to grow crops, raise cattle, collect water, and generate power, which provides 47 percent of the nation's electricity. What effect would an erratic monsoon cycle have on the people of Myanmar? What aspects of life would become difficult if the monsoons were late, early, too wet or too dry?

(3) Christians are not only persecuted by the government, but also by members of their own communities. Often, they have challenges finding jobs, receiving promotions and, at times, are even denied access to shared resources like water. What would you do if, no matter how hard you worked or how much education you received, you were always passed over for decent jobs because you followed Jesus? How would that affect your family? What feelings would arise in you?

Way Out

Approximately 80 percent of Myanmar's population strictly adheres to Buddhism. With Christianity representing only six percent of the country's overall population, proper Bible training is hard to come by. To combat this rising issue, VOMC partners with credible ministries in Myanmar to facilitate projects that equip believers for evangelism and discipleship. One such project supports an in-country seminary, and a second project provides seminary students the opportunity to train with pastors in various villages. This gives the students practical ways to apply what they have learned in seminary while also receiving mentorship and support as they serve local churches. To view the scope of VOMC's International Ministry projects, please visit our website at www.vomcanada.com.

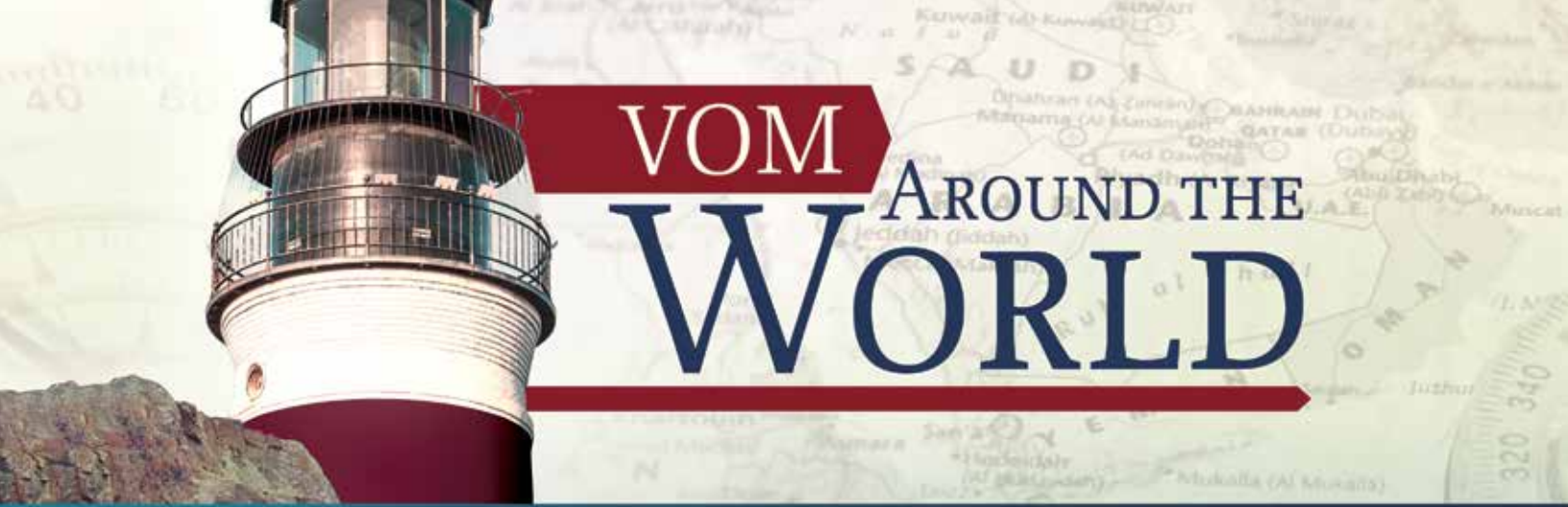
One Way

The ultimate goal in Buddhism is to reach "nirvana," an end to the cycle of life's suffering and rebirth. Buddhists long for peace and an escape from suffering. Since it is unknown if they had ever repaid for all of their bad deeds, there is no assurance that they will reach nirvana during their lifetimes, causing them to repeat the rebirth cycle numerous times. The only way to reach nirvana is by good behaviour, spiritual and physical labour, and meditation. This, in turn, means each person must be their own saviour.

The Bible teaches that salvation cannot be found within ourselves, but only through the provision of Jesus Christ. No number of good deeds or spiritual practices can save a person eternally (Acts 4:12). Although Jesus never promised a life here on earth without suffering, His followers have the assurance of everlasting life in heaven after death. Christians never have to worry about paying for each committed sin or the threat of being barred from heaven because they forgot about a mistake that was made in the past. Rather, Jesus fully paid the penalty for all their sins through His perfect sacrifice on the cross. With this assurance, Christians are able to freely experience the love of Christ and live with the joyful expectation of their eternal home.

Sources: *Understanding the Times – A Survey of Competing Worldviews* by Dr. Jeff Myers and Dr. David A. Noebel; <https://www.gemsociety.org/article/jade-sources/>; <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/monsoon/>; <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/buddhism/>; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/22/myanmar-militarys-lucrative-jade-industry>; <https://operationworld.org/locations/myanmar/>; <https://opendoorsanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Myanmar-Media-Advocacy-Dossier-ODI-2023.pdf>

Recommended Reads:
"Ann Judson" by
Sharon James (adult);
"Return of the White
Book" by Rebecca Davis
(children).



VOM AROUND THE WORLD

Preparing Disciples to Be the ‘Salt of the Earth’

“...you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.” - 1 Peter 2:9 NKJV

One of the best ways to combat persecution is to equip the church in hostile and restricted regions of the world. And even though Christians are considered a minority religious group in Myanmar, there is great potential for the church’s younger generation of believers to serve as courageous witnesses for Christ amid the country’s hostile environment.

To meet the growing need for effective theological training, The Voice of the Martyrs Canada has partnered for many years with the Evangelical Bible Seminary (EBS). Through this ongoing long-term partnership, many seminary students are being thoroughly equipped for ministry as faithful and fruitful disciples of Jesus Christ.

In addition to providing systematic theological training, EBS focusses its mission on soul-winning. During times of special Summer Outreach Ministry, the students are provided opportunities to incorporate the principles they have learned during the school year by going into other villages to preach the Gospel. As a result, many souls are being won, enabling the Kingdom of God to further advance throughout Myanmar.

One student writes: “The local host is a reverend, a graduate of EBS, who preaches the Gospel among Buddhist people in Yangon.... After a few days of Bible lessons, when many people came to listen to the preacher, by God’s grace, nine people repented of their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour! I was very blessed to be involved in the summer ministry, and now will continue on with my studies. May God bless our school and those who support it financially.”

Another student writes: “By God’s grace, I get to experience meeting wonderful people of different languages, cultures and cuisines, who love and accept us – and feed

us.... I am very grateful to be involved in our school’s summer ministry...and very blessed to study here at EBS because God uses His people – including friends and partners in foreign countries – to supply all my needs physically and spiritually. I want to praise Him for giving me a new life in Jesus Christ, and for allowing me to learn His Word at EBS with good health and peace of mind.”

Yet another student writes: “During this summer of 2023, I joined a team that went to some villages to share the Gospel. My parents are very thankful to God because, since I began attending Bible school, they’ve seen the Lord slowly transform my mind and my previous bad behaviour.... I want to thank God for changing my life and bringing me to this school to study His Word. I thank all the friends and partners of EBS for their love, prayers and support. I want to be a faithful servant of God by being a good example to my family, friends and the people of the village.”

Please pray for God to continue working in the students’ hearts and lives, so they can be effectively disciplined and equipped to proclaim the His Word to those around them through the power of His Holy Spirit. 🌍



Photo: Evangelical Bible Seminary, Myanmar

officials led him to a small courtroom outside the prison, where he was surprised to see an old friend – the owner of a liquor store he had frequented.

The store owner had come forward and confessed to taking Khin's gun. He told Khin that he had borrowed the gun to go hunting, intending to return it later. But on his return, he saw the officers beating Khin, and was too afraid to admit that he had taken it. The judge ordered Khin's release, bringing an end to his six-month imprisonment.

"Hallelujah!" Khin cried out, giving his life to Christ in that moment. Shocked by his choice of words, everyone in the room glared at him. "Are you crazy?" one soldier asked. "Are you mad?" Khin responded: "I'm not mad. I asked Jesus to do something – to release me – and He really did!"

The judge told Khin that he was cleared of the charges. He was also offered a promotion from the army with the promise of being transferred to a new battalion. But Khin declined the promotion. "I made a promise to Jesus," he replied. "I don't want to do this anymore, even if you promote me." Military authorities then gave him a month to more carefully consider the offer, but Khin was resolute. "The moment they released me, I did not think about that anymore. I went right away to church."

When Khin met with the church's pastors, they offered him clothes and food. But he was quick to correct their misperception. "I did not come here to get support from you," he explained to them. "I just want to hear more about the Jesus that I was told about in jail." Excited by Khin's zeal for Christ, the pastors decided to help him attend a Bible school for two years.

PAYING A PRICE FOR HIS COMMITMENT

Khin, who by now was essentially alone, eagerly began his studies at the Bible school. His wife had left him while he was in prison, and all but one of their six grown children had stopped talking to him because they were ashamed to have him as a father. Still, Khin

cherished the opportunity to study the Scriptures. And as he studied, he began to learn more about the persecution of Christians throughout history. "The important thing is that they remained faithful," he acknowledges.

After graduating from Bible school, Khin hiked up a small mountain nearby where he camped for three days, submitting his life fully to Jesus Christ and praying for guidance. "I wanted to confess to God and ask

for His forgiveness for all the very bad things I had done to many Christians," he explains. "I also wanted to dedicate my life to the Lord. I promised God while on the mountain that no matter what happened – even if I needed to die – I would do what He wanted me to do."

While praying on the mountaintop, Khin made the transition from Myanmar Army officer to soldier for Christ: "I risked my life shooting guns and killing other people, but that war is not important. The more important war that I am fighting now is against the devil. [It is] the war I will fight, even though I suffer, for the rest of my life."

When Khin started teaching others about Jesus in early 2006, persecution quickly followed. He regularly endured various forms of opposition – from beatings to false legal charges, such as "undermining the Buddhist religion" and "destroying a Buddhist shrine." After experiencing persecution himself, Khin felt compelled to make amends with those he himself had formerly persecuted.

In 2008, he visited a village where he had persecuted about 20 Christians. "I apologized to the people and they cried, hugged me and welcomed me," he recalls. "It felt so good. They gave me a new name: 'Paul.' I was very happy to get that name, which they still call me today."

Khin began sharing the Gospel in another Burmese village during 2017, but his efforts were quickly met with violence after the community's head monk told residents to stop him. One man threw a rock at Khin, hitting him on the back; while another threw a piece



Photo: VOM International

of wood. Then, three women released their dogs on Khin, urging them to attack. While running from the dogs, he tripped and hit his mouth on a pile of bricks, knocking out four upper teeth. One of the dogs then bit into his right calf muscle.

The next day, as Khin lay in bed recovering from his painful wounds, a village elder visited him to apologize for the attack. The elder also promised to report those who were responsible for the attack to the authorities. But Khin told the elder that he wouldn't be pressing any charges; he had forgiven everyone. "Jesus forgave me for my sins, so I can forgive [them]," he told the elder. "Jesus taught us to love others."

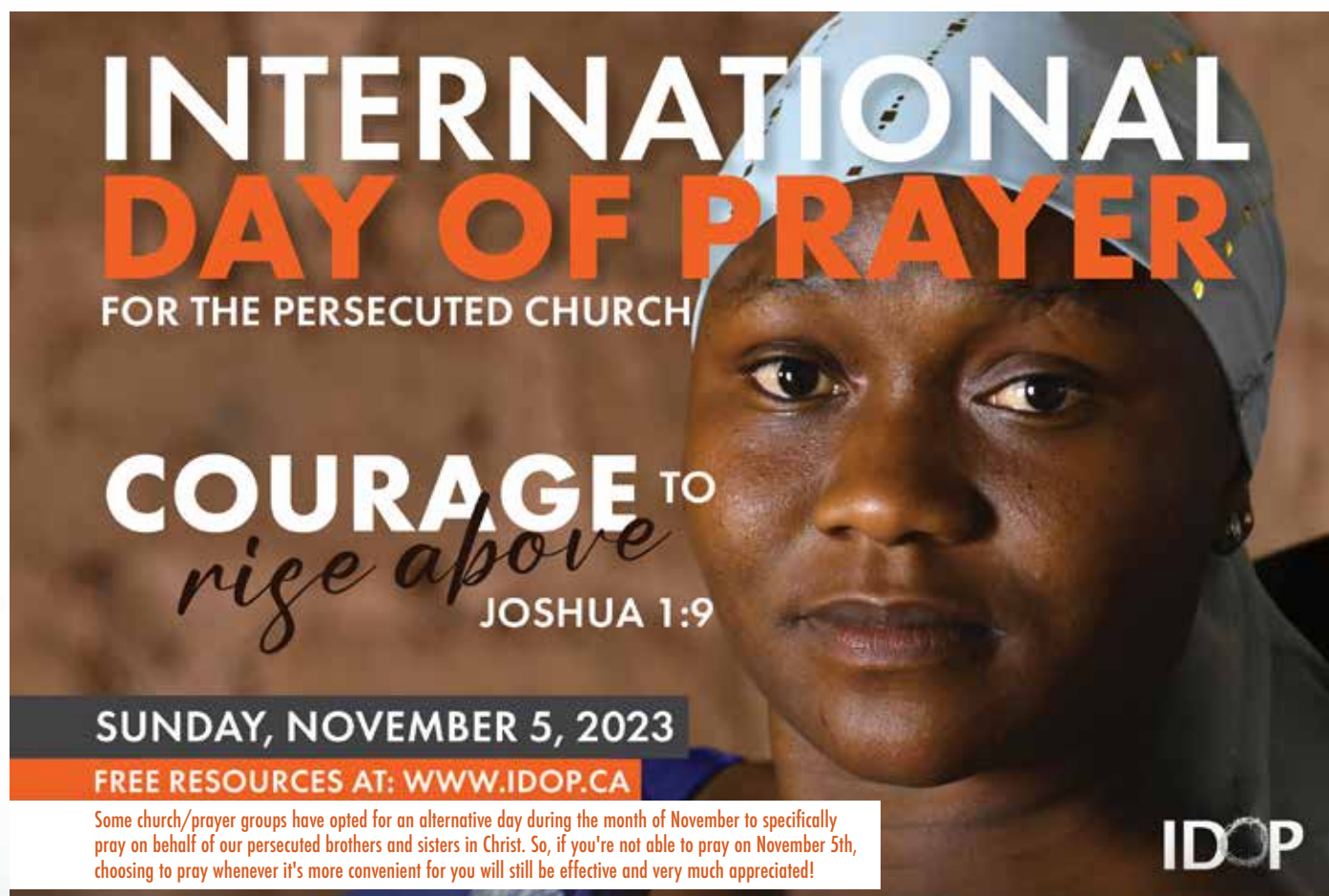
When the elder shared Khin's message of forgiveness with those who had attacked him, several of them visited Khin at his home. He gladly shared the Gospel with these repentant villagers and, a week later, four of them accepted Christ!

With help from The Voice of the Martyrs, Khin got a series of rabies vaccines, as well as four dental implants to replace his lost teeth. "It was very difficult to share the Gospel without my teeth," he adds. "I couldn't speak clearly. After fixing the teeth, I could speak and share the Gospel really well!"

Though Khin has suffered estrangement from his family and considerable physical suffering since coming to know Christ, he understands that the persecution he has experienced served a greater purpose. "God has blessed me with 73 Burmese people who are no longer lost, and there are also two monks who have converted," he says joyfully.

Ten months ago, Khin moved to a new village to share the Gospel with the 380 families living there. He was able to lead 11 people to faith in Christ before the head monk kicked him out of the village. Although Khin ended up homeless, he still plans to visit the village and continue sharing the Gospel. As Khin searches for new housing with VOM's help, he asks believers in other parts of the world to pray for the Burmese people. "I will continue to serve Jesus," he concludes. "I know in the future that I will also face many difficulties and suffering, but I've committed my life to Jesus as promised. Please pray that the Burmese people will also come to know Jesus." 🌍

In keeping with Canadian Press Style, and English usage of grammar and punctuation, some of the translated quotations have been corrected accordingly.



**INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF PRAYER**
FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

COURAGE TO
rise above
JOSHUA 1:9

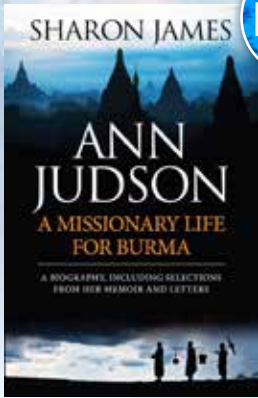
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2023

FREE RESOURCES AT: WWW.IDOP.CA

Some church/prayer groups have opted for an alternative day during the month of November to specifically pray on behalf of our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ. So, if you're not able to pray on November 5th, choosing to pray whenever it's more convenient for you will still be effective and very much appreciated!

IDOP

VOMC RESOURCES



NEW!

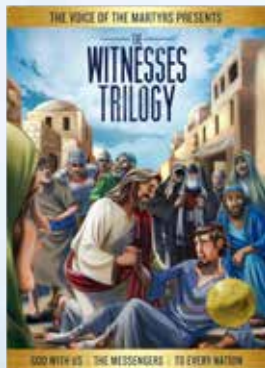
Ann Judson: A Missionary Life for Burma

\$15

In October 1810, a 20-year-old girl in the quiet New England town of Bradford wrote the following words in her journal:

“If nothing in Providence appears to prevent, I must spend my days in a far off and idolatrous land. I am a creature of God, and He has an undoubted right to do with me, as seems good in His sight...He has my heart in His hands, and when I am called to face danger, to pass through scenes of terror and distress, he can inspire me with fortitude, and enable me to trust in Him. Jesus is faithful; His promises are precious. Were it not for these considerations, I should sink down with despair.”

Ann Hasseltine had received a proposal of marriage from Adoniram Judson, who was shortly to leave for Asia as one of America’s first overseas missionaries. And so commenced one of the great dramas of church history: a saga of love, courage, suffering and perseverance. In this inspiring biography, Sharon James brings Ann and Adoniram Judson’s piety and hard work for the Lord to our attention – not to venerate them, but to challenge us to deeper commitment and service to Christ. Paperback, 288 pages



The Witnesses Trilogy

DVD Set

\$25 per set

These three animated feature-length films will take young viewers on a journey through the ages – beginning with the birth of Christ to the birth of the early church.

The retelling of our Lord Jesus’ life, as well as His sacrificial death and glorious resurrection, sheds light on God’s plan of salvation in a way that’s especially meaningful to children.

Thankfully, the Good News doesn’t conclude there, but continues on as Jesus’ followers take the Gospel message to Jerusalem, Judea, and to the ends of the earth.... *The Witnesses Trilogy* is a timeless tool that can be shared with family and friends. It’s also a helpful resource for school and church libraries.



NEW!

Artisan Gift Cards

Special Trio Collection

\$10 per set

This triptych containing artisan gift cards is beautifully packaged in a clear plastic tri-fold casing and specially tied with ribbon.

Each card features a 5” x 6 7/8” print of an original painting, the story behind the artwork, a Scripture verse, blank space for a personalized note, and an envelope.

It’s an ideal way to bless a friend or loved one with a personal note of encouragement – while also helping to raise awareness and support for our international persecuted family!

NEW!

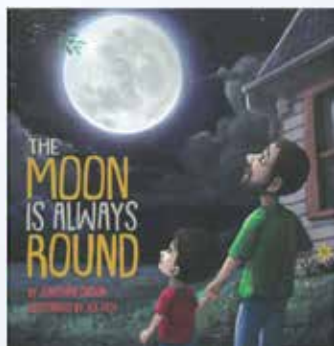
The One Year “Pray for the Persecuted” Bible

\$18 each

“Pray for us!” This is often the first request shared by our Christian brothers and sisters around the world who are persecuted for their faith. *The One Year “Pray for the Persecuted” Bible* includes unique daily

“prayer prompts,” covering a wide range of needs that are facing persecuted Christians today. This special edition of *The One Year Bible* is also designed to help you read through the entire Bible in one unforgettable year, as you prayerfully lift up your petitions to God’s ‘throne of grace’ on behalf of our suffering brothers and sisters in Christ.

The additional full-colour pages feature inspiring stories of Christians who boldly witness for Christ amid great risk and adversity, a fold-out map of restricted and hostile regions, a unique Scripture reading plan – along with those daily “prayer prompts” – to help you intercede more specifically on behalf of persecuted believers around the globe. You’ll be further equipped to apply the principles of God’s unchanging Word for more effectual prayer in a world that is increasingly hostile to many of Christ’s followers. (Available in either the New Living Translation or the Christian Standard Bible version.)



The Moon is Always Round

\$15

In this beautifully illustrated storybook, seminary professor and author Jonathan Gibson uses the vivid imagery of the moon to explain to children how God’s goodness is always present, even when it might appear to be obscured by upsetting or difficult circumstances.

Through the conversations that a young boy has with his father, following the loss of his baby sister, *The Moon is Always Round* teaches children a vitally important lesson. Just as the moon is always round despite its different phases, the steadfast love of God remains constant throughout the various phases of life.

Written for children of all ages, this heartfelt story serves as a comforting reminder that God’s goodness is present in the most challenging of times, even if we can’t always see it. A section at the back of the book offers additional help so parents and caregivers can further explain this important Biblical truth to children.

Hardcover, 32 pages

Voices of the Martyrs A Graphic Novel Anthology

\$20

This illustrated novel for youth, *Voices of the Martyrs: A Graphic Novel Anthology*, covers the earlier years of church history (AD 34 - AD 203). Although we may never know on this side of eternity exactly how many followers have given their lives for remaining committed to Jesus Christ, this volume contains the encouraging and faith-building stories of the best-known historical martyrs within the span of the first two centuries.

The uniquely designed, full-colour artwork of this specially created resource for children and teens captures the inspiring stories of Christians who took a bold stand for Christ in the most desperate situations. *Voices of the Martyrs* will remind young readers that God is just as actively at work today as He was in and through the lives of the faithful servants featured throughout the pages of this captivating educational novel. Hardcover, 496 pages



For more helpful resources, visit:
www.vomcanada.com/store

Christmas Blessing 2023

“...my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus.”

~ Philippians 4:19 NIVUK



Photos: Colombia Para Cristo Society

Every year, VOM Canada has been blessed to work alongside ministry partners around the world while facilitating the mission's *Christmas Blessing* project, which seeks to extend God's love and provision to persecuted children and their families during the Christmas season. For this year's project, VOMC is delighted to be partnering with Colombia Para Cristo Society in providing needed practical and spiritual support to the children of persecuted Christian communities in Colombia.

Not many families residing in persecuted regions of this South American country are able to celebrate a "normal" Christmas with their loved ones, due to a tremendous lack of resources. In addition to the financial hardships experienced by these families, our ministry partners from Para Cristo Society report that "Colombia has a very strong history of child abuse, including child recruitment to hostile groups and persecution towards families who choose to exercise their Christian faith despite opposition from many factions – including the cartel, mafia and insurgent groups."

Through this project, God has given us here in Canada the opportunity to encourage Christian families residing in remote and hostile areas of Colombia by distributing practical necessities such as food and clothing; bicycles for transportation; Bibles and other Christian materials; along with toys and school supplies to further bless the children. The Lord has graciously put it on the hearts of VOMC's ministry team to sponsor this project which will directly benefit more than 500 children and indirectly impact over 1,000 families in Colombia.

In response to VOMC's sponsorship commitment, our ministry partners from Para Cristo Society state, "The Gospel is the only solution for Colombia, and we believe this investment in [the lives of these] children is something they will always remember, as well as an opportunity to create significant changes in these dangerous regions."

We are very much looking forward to witnessing God's wonderful plans for these communities as they unfold, and hearing the powerful testimonies of those involved in the distribution of this year's *Christmas Blessing* gift packages. Stay tuned for an update on the progress of this project in an upcoming issue!

If you would like to help support your Christian family in Colombia, please visit:

**www.vomcanada.com/ChristmasBlessing
or call 1-888-298-6423**



Background: Dmytro Smaglov