

NMI Central

NAZARENE MISSIONS INTERNATIONAL

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Asia-Pacific Region



Myanmar

The work of the Church of the Nazarene in Myanmar began officially in 1984. Previously known as Burma, its name during British rule, Myanmar gained its independence from the British Empire in 1948 but has struggled with numerous military governments since World War II. Its name was changed to Myanmar in 1989, a move away from the English names of countries and places in much of South Asia, as has been done in India (example: Calcutta to Kolkata). It is difficult to determine who governs the northern border, which was agreed between the British and the Chinese. That apart, Myanmar has dealt with many social and religious disputes and conflicts. While Myanmar has been known as a strong Buddhist nation, its rule of law is secular and there is freedom of religion. The Church of the Nazarene has found its place within the religious landscape and through a movement of missional discipling and district development, the work has grown. Many lay persons and bi-vocational church planters have been trained through extension classes of Chapman International College (formerly known as Southeast Asia Nazarene Bible College). Education plays a significant role in the development of a strong Nazarene presence in Myanmar, as you will read in the story below.



5,387 Members



54 Fully Organized Churches; 21 Not Yet Organized Churches



63 District Licensed and 42 Ordained Ministers on 4 Districts

PRAYER



- Pray for peace amid the ongoing political and economic crises in the country. The military has declared the country under martial law since 2021. Fighting continues in some areas, which has led to many people fleeing their homes, often resulting in the fracture of families.
- Pray for the continued development of the church planting and disciple-making movement among Nazarenes. With the resource of JESUS Film Harvest Partners (JFHP), districts have been equipping Lydia EDC (Evangelism, Discipleship, and Church planting) teams in the nation. Join the churches in Myanmar who are praying for a breakthrough of God in the hearts of the wider population.

PRAISE



- We thank God that throughout the pandemic, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries (NCM) has provided much-needed resources for food, shelter, and education of children in partnership with our local churches. Currently there are more than 400 children who are offered basic education through church-based tutorial programs.
- We thank God for transformational training through Chapman International College (CIC) and the extension programs throughout the nation. Currently there are 27 extension classes offered to 277 students. Many of these students are lay leaders and youth in the churches.



A year ago, the Southeast Asia Field dreamed of a new ministry focused on empowering Myanmar children living in the factory areas outside Bangkok, Thailand. Myanmar children in this community often live on the margins of society, struggling to attend Thai school and living in unsafe housing conditions. With many of their caregivers working in factories for 10-15 hours a day, these children face the threat of detention centers due to a lack of supervision.

New Creation Center started with only six children. Over the past year, more than 50 children have been part of the program. Seeds of faith and hope are planted in the hearts of the children with the potential to create a lasting impact in their lives. Here are a few short stories from students that help to convey the purposes of the New Creation Center. Ethan* (12 years old) — When Ethan came to the center, he'd never been to school in his life. The teachers figured he was six years old. The volunteers at the center were amazed when his mom told them he was 12. He was facing lifelong medical and severe learning challenges, but he is an overcomer! When he first started classes, he didn't know numbers 1-10 but can now add and subtract on his fingers (and toes!). After a year in the program, his greatest strength in school is telling Bible stories.

June* (11 years old) – June came to the center about 2 months after it started. She’s a natural-born leader. She proved to be a quick learner, even though she’d never experienced formal education. After five months, June’s family decided to enroll her in the local Thai school. This choice was more accessible for June because she learned the basics of Thai, English, and math while at New Creation. The team celebrates with her as she continues her learning journey and knows that enrolling in a Thai school is a great way to create a better future in her life! The teachers often see her in the neighborhood and pray that the biblical foundation laid at New Creation will remain dear to her heart.

Tia* (12 years old) – Tia came to the center about 9 months ago. Her mother was a teacher in Myanmar. The staff could tell she had spent time in formal education, and the transition to school was easy for her. After some time, her mother found a new factory job, hours away from Bangkok. Now Tia stays temporarily at our center and only sees her family every few months. The goal is always to keep families together, but in the most difficult situations the center is able to shelter and love those who need it most. Pray that the Lord will continue to hold Tia close to His heart while she struggles with the trauma of separation and that this season in her life will produce lasting change that will endure.

All 29 current students are from non-Christian families. Pray for the staff and team of New Creation Center as they remain sensitive to opportunities to share Christ’s love and salvation with these students and their families. Pray also for the future development of the ministry. While there are many challenges, the Lord sustains and provides for every need. His faithfulness throughout this past year has been wonderful to experience.

**Names are changed for protection.*

This story first appeared on the Asia-Pacific website in February 2023.

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