

July - September 2002

FAREWELL ROSE MU

By David Skeat

To those who knew her well, Rose Mu was an exceptional woman who was able to stand in the face of adversity, and who had the ability not to be overcome by circumstances. Rose, who had faced more adversity in her life than most, once said, *"It does not matter what you think, or even what happens in life ... God is still God and He is good."* Rose passionately believed this and lived her life accordingly.

Rose was born into a wealthy Burmese family on March 1st 1946. Her family had position and wealth. As a young woman she was well educated and strikingly beautiful. Rose went to a good school and trained as a teacher, her passion was teaching Preschool.

At the age of twenty five, Rose married a young doctor and they lived in what amounted to be a mansion with servants in one of the nicer suburbs of Rangoon.

Unlike most of the population of Burma who profess Buddhism, Rose and her husband were Christians. Though they were both Burman by birth they became very concerned about the plight of the Karen people who were being persecuted by the Burmese government. As Christians they felt that God was directing them to help the Karen people, so they began to make trips to the Thai - Burmese border where Rose's husband would run clinics and train people to be paramedics whilst Rose helped to set up a Preschool in the refugee camp at Sho-Klo.

These trips to the border soon became known to the Burmese authorities and warrants for the arrest of Rose and her husband were issued, and they were charged with treason and aiding and abetting the *enemy*. Now the rich young couple had to flee their lovely home in Rangoon and make their way to the refugee camp this time not to help, but to live. They ran through the forests to the border with their newly born daughter June Rose, and arrived at the border in the early 1980's.

As refugees Rose and her husband were not as well resourced as they had been in the past, but they did not mind, they were obeying God's will for their lives and that was all that mattered. Rose continued with her work in the preschool whilst her husband happily ran his medical clinic and paramedic training program. Soon another baby was born to them, Fabian (named after the rock star of the 1950's).

After some years in the camps Rose had still not heard from her family in Rangoon. Her family were unaware of the birth of Fabian so, Rose felt that she should make a trip back to Rangoon to tell her family that they were all safe. This she did, leaving her husband and children behind, thinking that she would be back within a couple of weeks.

Rose's family were glad to see her and hear about all they were doing. She spent valuable time with them before returning once again to the camps. On her way through the forest she was arrested at an army check-point and spent the next nine months in a Burmese jail being tortured. Rose did not speak of the unspeakable evils of that time of her life. She was only too glad to be released and to be once again on her way to be with the family she loved.

However, there was another tragedy on the horizon waiting for Rose. In the months that she had been in jail many stories of what the Burmese army were doing to her had filtered back to the camps and fearing for the safety of his wife her husband broke down, began to drink heavily and went into a deep depression. Some of the paramedics who he had been training saw that he was going down hill and wanting to help, they gave him an injection of anti depressants, the result being that he had an adverse reaction to the injection, went into anaphylactic shock and died.



Rose And No Mu Ka Paw

(continued....)



Rose Mu Continued



Rose with two of the orphans she loved so dearly.

Rose arrived back in the refugee camp a few days later to find her children being cared for by another woman and her husband buried. Rose's whole life was upside down, but she was sure of one thing, that God had called her to run a Preschool and to care for the refugee children, and this is exactly what she did.

When I first met Rose six years ago she was running a Preschool. Ever the visionary, ever the entrepreneur, she always had a plan to make money to provide better care for her children. Rose became famous for her love of children, and no matter how tight things were, she always had room for one more.

Many stories can be told about Rose and her love of children. One that readily comes to mind is the story of No Mu Ka Paw (pictured with Rose on the front cover) who at age five was found by a man living in a pigsty in a village inside Burma. The Burmese army had recently raided No Mu Ka Paw's village and all that was left of about 100 families was No Mu Ka Paw and the pigs that she shared the sty with. When she was found No Mu Ka Paw was worm ridden, malnourished and so traumatized that she could not speak. The man who found her picked her up and carried her two days through the forest to bring her to a woman he had heard about called Rose Mu who would love and care for a child such as this. The man presented Rose with his "little bundle" with the words "Take care of her Rose, she has had a rough life". And that is what Rose did, she loved this little girl, and she cared for her and clucked over her like the proverbial mother hen. Today if you were to meet No Mu Ka Paw you would meet a child that now speaks, is healthy, and loves to draw happy pictures. The healing brought to the life of No Mu Ka Paw was from God, but the agency He chose to bring it was a loving lady named Rose Mu. To this day no one has been able to locate No Mu Ka Paw's family, but Rose's patient love has brought hope and warmth back into the life of this very sad little girl.



Rose, Fabian and June Rose 1999

Another story that I have also told many times involves a little boy named Da Te Mu who at four years of age was forced to watch the Burmese soldiers execute his family before they let him go somewhere in the forest. This highly traumatized little boy also found himself in Rose's care. I first met Da Te Mu a few days after his arrival in the Mae-la camp. Not knowing his story, I asked him what he wanted to do when he grew up. His answer shocked me; he told me that he wanted to learn how to use a gun so that he could kill the soldiers that shot his father and grandfather. Six months later when I again visited Rose I noticed that young Da Te Mu was dancing and happily participating in a program being run in the preschool by June Rose. When I asked Rose as to whether Da Te Mu was still setting his heart on revenging his family, she just laughed and said "Oh no, he's found Jesus, he doesn't want to do that anymore."

This was Rose Mu. There was no mountain too high, no road too long, and no problem too hard for her and Jesus. Even after the finality of her funeral Rose's words still ring out *"It does not matter what you think, or even what happens in life ... God is still God and He is good."*

Rose died on April 28th this year from the effects of a massive stroke she suffered two days earlier. At that time there were 67 children like Da Te Mu and No Mu Ka Paw in her care. These children are now in the care of another kind lady named Pehlu. Rose was buried next to her husband across the river inside Burma. In life she never forgot her *one true love*. She once told me, *"I still love him dearly and sometimes see his face in my dreams."*



Fabian and June Rose at Rose's Gravesite in Burma

Rose Mu's time here on earth is over, but the fruit of her work will go on for generations. The life and hope that pulsed through Rose is permanently etched into the hearts and minds of all her knew her. In life she pointed people to Jesus as the only source for strength and comfort, in death she is resting in His arms.



Changes At The Mae -La Camp

With the death of Rose Mu major changes have had to be made to the Preschool / Orphanage Ministry that she had been leading for so long.

Rose's daughter, June Rose will continue her mother's work and will lead the Preschool Ministry in Rose's section of the camp. June Rose is a very creative lady who served with her mother over many years, and we have every confidence in her ability to run the Preschool. Like her mother she has a deep love of children.



Pehlu

However, June Rose has said that she does not feel that she can also run the orphanage as well, so Rose's close friend Pehlu will take over running Rose's Orphanage, as well as continuing to run her own Preschool.



June Rose

Rose's orphans have now been relocated to Pehlu's side of the camp and the children have settled in well. Steve Gumaer phoned me the other day to keep me up to date on what is happening there, and his report was very encouraging.

Please pray for the children of Rose's Orphanage who through these tragic circumstances are making another very major adjustment in their young lives. ARMS donors have so far given over \$2,200 to help with the orphanage's relocation expenses.

Pehlu has been a friend of ARMS for many years. She currently runs a Preschool on the other side of the camp which is also partially funded by ARMS.

Pehlu and her husband Sandy are both lovely people who love children. Pehlu is a teacher by profession and she and her assistant Carinna have led a very creative Preschool for many years. ARMS will continue to fund the work of Rose's Orphanage and we are confident that Pehlu will lead the work well.



Pehlu, Carinna & Staff

The Australian Mercy Fund - A Future Hope For The Poor & Needy



Two years ago ARMS embarked on a new venture that was for us, uncharted waters. The Australian Mercy Fund was born out of the realisation that many projects serving the poor and needy have inadequate funding available to them. Lack of funding often means reduced services which in many cases puts poor families at risk.

The idea behind the Australian Mercy Fund is simple; seek donations that will be perpetually invested in safe ethical funds and savings programs and give the profits from those investments to projects amongst the poor that are in need of increased funding.

Over the past two years ARMS has been painstakingly setting up the infrastructure to make the Australian Mercy Fund a reality. Today the Australian Mercy Fund has nearly \$10,000 under investment and is beginning to make the returns needed in order to help struggling projects amongst the poor.

The generous support of YWAM bases in Australia, and ARMS donors have made this dream a reality. We look forward to seeing the fund grow as many more people donate to it.

The Australian Mercy Fund is operated directly by the Board of ARMS who have produced a full operational outline which is available from the ARMS National Office upon request, or can be downloaded from the ARMS web site www.arms.org.au/amf.html.

Donations to this fund can be sent to the ARMS National Office.



The Importance Of Choices.

By David Skeat

Affluence increases the choices you can make; and freedom of choice is something that we treasure greatly. Just a trip to the local supermarket testifies to our affluence. Aisle after aisle offers us multiple choices on everyday products. Bread for example; how many different types of bread can you count in your supermarket? Our affluent society has made it possible for us to choose, and the availability of money in our community has made it possible for specialist or niche markets to exist whereby people can buy or collect the rarer items of life. Take wine for example, a bottle of red could cost between \$10-\$20; but a bottle of 1951 Grange could cost \$60,000 or more. Affluence means choice.

Choice is important to us also with regards to our work place. We like to have sufficient control over our lives to the point that if we are unhappy we can quit one job and start another. Multiple choices in education ensures us these choices. At one time the average Australian had one career and may have worked for one employer for their entire working life, however today it is not unusual for people to have up to 4 careers during their working life and be employed by up to 20 separate employers during that time.

It goes without saying that the choices of poverty are far less than the choices of affluence. In an affluent society we complain if we have to wait 2 hours in a hospital, in a poor community there may not be a hospital at all, and if there is a wait of half a day it is just a fact of life. I remember one hospital I visited in the Philippines. It was shocking. The doctors came once a day to look at the patient, and the nurses administered any medication. In this hospital the onus was on the family to provide the food and the other nursing care for their loved one. If you had no family, your standard of care was pitiful.



Bangkok River Slum

In this hospital the wards were dirty, unwashed and smelly. People who were discharged often came home worse off for the experience. In an affluent society the existence of such a hospital would be a public scandal, in a poverty-stricken community it may be the only choice the people have at medical care.

With fewer choices before them poorer families often make decisions for reasons that westerners do not fully understand. Like the families that sell their daughters into prostitution so that they can educate their sons, or even put food on the table. This is a choice that bites deep into the western psyche. It motivates us to rise up in outrage; but the truth is that most of the pedophiles who rape and sexually abuse such children in third world settings are affluent western professional men who, because of their

With fewer choices before them, poorer families often make decisions for reasons that westerners do not fully understand.

affluence, now make moral choices that greatly affect the lives of others. I once read an article in the *Bangkok Post* written by a pedophile who argued that the fee for service that he paid for the child was a way of helping the whole family and really pedophiles were misunderstood philanthropists. I cannot tell you how sick this article made me feel.

Our choices matter; they imply decisions and whether a person is of affluent origins or not, the decisions they make could have drastic consequences in the lives of others. We need to be wise in the choices that we make, and we also need to help others to do the same. This is called *empowering* and it can only happen if we help poorer communities on the earth to have access to education, health care, and finances. We in the *Western World* in our affluence have the power to make significant change in the lives of others. If poor communities are to survive, we must increase their choices, and their ability to make those choices wisely. We must get involved.

Environment

In recent years much concern has been raised about environmental factors that affect all the citizens of our *global village*. Emissions into the ozone, pollution in our

waterways, and litter on our streets are all issues that we are passionate about because they directly affect the place in which we live; but what about the places where other people live? What about the pollution in their waterways, the emissions into their skies, and the litter on their streets? Does our concern for these issues extend to other parts of the globe, or are we solely concerned about our immediate environment?

A few years ago when the Asian economy collapsed I was in Bangkok visiting slums in which our organization works. Now a slum is not a nice place to live and there are rich slums and poor slums. In fact if you live in a poor slum and you get a job and can afford to move to a better slum, you are the envy of those left behind in the poorer slum. For some, the way out of poverty is a slow transition from slum to slum until they have enough money to rent a house in a suburb somewhere.

This Bangkok slum was very poor and there were many people in it who had lost their jobs because of the



The Railway Slum

economic down turn; but they were not the worst ones affected. The ones that were most severely affected by the economic down turn lived out side this slum on the railway tracks in shanties made from cardboard boxes and bits of wood. These shanties were built literally a meter and a half from the actual railway track. And in these box like structures families of six or more people were living. Their income was derived from sorting the rubbish that fell from the trains along the railway tracks, and selling it to a recycler. The lucky ones managed to earn enough to buy a bowl of rice to feed their families. The next day they would go out and try to do exactly the same thing again. The people in these shanties did not clean up the railway track from feelings of deep concern for the

(Continued...)



environment; they did it to survive. They had no other choice but to collect garbage, like the people who live on the garbage dumps of the world who sort through garbage and recycle glass, metal, and plastic so that they can buy rice to feed their families. The world's garbage dump dwellers have high rates of TB, and other communicable diseases. These are people without hope, but they are fervent about recycling!

Poverty and the environment are linked. During the Vietnam War, significant damage was done to the environment of South East Asia through the use of chemicals. These chemicals combined with poor farming practices restrict the effectiveness of agriculture in parts of Asia today. In places such as Laos, some communities are not able to get the returns from the land that they need in order to feed their families. Lack of agricultural production means less access to outside markets and fewer trade opportunities. Then there are the millions of acres of land that are unable to be used because of the presence of land mines and other unexploded ordinances.



Smokey Mountain Garbage Dump

Our passion for local tree planting and community clean up days must go beyond our shores. If we are to live in a just and equitable world then we must clean up the mess we made in other people's backyards and let them get on with the job of providing for their own families, and prospering in the place in which they live. The results of our environmental choices should not restrict the choices of others.

Prosperity

In Australia get rich quick schemes abound. There is always a new scam coming around that guarantees maximum profit with minimum risk usually over a short time frame. Every time these scams come along many people lose their money, and the perpetrators are usually well gone.

The reason these schemes are successful at parting people with their money is that most of us want to find *our place in the sun*. We see it as our right to prosper. The recent demise of large corporations inside

Australia and overseas would tend to suggest that the companies in question were partially weakened by executives who saw their right to prosper as being more important than the rights of the small investors and policy holders who owned the company.

The desire to prosper is not wrong; it is part of the driving force of who we are as human beings. However, where the desire to prosper over rules the rights of others it turns into avarice and greed; and these show no mercy, have no conscience, and treat others with contempt. That is why the Apostle Paul told the early church that its leaders should be;

... free from the love of money. 1 Timothy 3:3.

These are people without hope, but they are fervent about recycling!

Because

... the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang. 1 Timothy 6: 10.

When we have a situation whereby the love, accumulation and management of personal wealth drives a society then we must expect other things to get sacrificed along the way. When this happens the moral integrity of the fabric of society becomes soiled and corrupt. What is happening in the corporate world today is evidence that this process has begun to occur and we must address the situation on two fronts.

Firstly those who are responsible for corporate crime must be penalized appropriately. Justice is blind and those who have position and wealth should be as accountable to the law as much as a poorer person. If we are to have faith in the legal processes then courts must hand out just sentences to the perpetrators of corporate crime *without fear or favor*.

Secondly we must lift our gaze to those communities outside of our own who have greater needs than us. We need to rediscover the virtues of generosity, patience, and charity and redefine the term *good corporate citizen* to take in the whole of the broader community rather than its current narrow application which pertains only to a few multi-nationals. In our communities we must give greater emphasis not to the accumulation of personal wealth for further self indulgence but rather to the accumulation of wealth so that we can share with those who have less. If we do this we can improve the range of choices available to poorer communities. If we can mentor them in their making of wise and unselfish choices then we will have done well.

WATER FOR WEBEREK

Imagine you live in a small village in impoverished East Timor, and imagine one day that as you are going about your lawful business a government truck pulls up outside your community water pump and takes away the pump and the generator that runs it - without explanation. Imagine having to dig wells to relace your community water supply and when they dry up having to walk 3 hours in order to find water that you can carry home.



That is exactly what happened in a place named Weberek. In 1998 the local Indonesian Government officials took away the water system that kept a community of 100 families alive; thus increasing the poverty and hardship in this small village.

ARMS is working to restore Weberek's water supply - and also to establish a project there that will help the people in the areas of Primary Health Care, agriculture, education, and other aspects of community development.

Our first job will be to restore the water supply which will cost thousands of dollars. We are sending an assessment team to the site later this year and hope to have the job completed by Christmas. Weberek is in a remote location 8 hours journey by 4WD. Can you help us to help the people of Weberek? Please send your donation to the ARMS National Office.

A video CD about Weberek is also available upon request.



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WANTED

Builders To Go To East Timor

ARMS is seeking building teams to join its building program in East Timor.

Already teams from all over Australia have gone to Dili to build houses for homeless families. Why not organise a team from your Church, or join one that is going over.

Interested? Contact
Keith Greig 0419 724 728
Neville Humphreys 0407 053 345

or write to the ARMS National Office for details.

New Project In Bali

ARMS Darwin Office has extended its child sponsorship program to include street children in Bali.

Many of the child street sellers come from families who are too poor to be able to send their children to school.

Through the ARMS Darwin sponsorship initiative children can go to school through the generosity of sponsors who pay \$20 per month (\$240 per year) which covers the cost of school fees, books uniforms etc. Through ARMS Child Sponsorship you can help a child to have a better chance at life.

Contact: - Jen Keatch
ARMS
P.O. Box 290 Darwin NT 0801

LYLE DONIGER RELEASED

Regular readers of this newsletter will know that ARMS has been caring for two prisoners in a Bangkok jail for a number of years.

Recently one of these prisoners, Lyle Doniger, was unexpectedly released from Bang Kwang Central Prison and allowed to return home to Australia. Lyle's case was especially tragic and we are pleased about his release. Our other prisoner Fred is in a worse position than Lyle. Please remember him in your prayers.

Focus On Mercy

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A Ministry Of Youth With A Mission Australia

PACIFIC LINK TOUR DATES ANNOUNCED

Marine Reach, YWAM's new international mercy based ship ministry has announced its 2003 Australian tour dates for its flag ship the MV Pacific Link. These dates are as follows;

Cairns - January 16, Townsville - January 22, Bowen - January 30, Mackay - February 6, Gladstone - February 13, Brisbane - February 21, Southport - February 26, Newcastle - March 6.

More information is available from the marine reach web site;
www.marinereach.com

Response Form

I would like to become a supporter of ARMS and will regularly pray for its ministry and /or give a monthly gift of \$ per month. I enclose a gift of \$ towards:

National Office Support

Rose's Orphans

Australian Mercy Fund

Weberek Water Project.

RescueNet

Hekan Housing

Name.....

Address.....

Post Code

Contact Number

Please debit my credit card (circle one) Visa Mastercard Bankcard

Expiry date/..... Signature

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