

Honoring Our Past and Shaping Our Future

Bringing the Bumese Diaspora Voices into the Broader Asian American Community

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Burma Christian Diaspora Conference

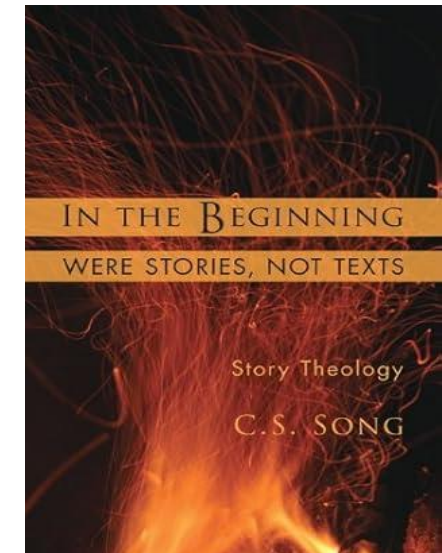
Falam Baptist Church of Indiana

August 8, 2026

Motivations for Research: Story-Knowing to Story-Telling

“Doing Christian theology through stories has become a major trend in Christian theology today. This is the way it should be,” ~ C.S Song

- We want to **understand** how the Burmese American Christians imagine their identities
- We want to **unlock** their hidden stories
- We want to **explore** how an ‘intercultural identity should be reimagined in the multiracial context of the US



Three Periods, One Mission

- Western missionaries brought the gospel (not God) to Burma
- Missionary-trained local grassroots Christians sustained the faith after the departure of Western missionaries
- Grassroots-academic Christians continue to witness to the faith under the military regime

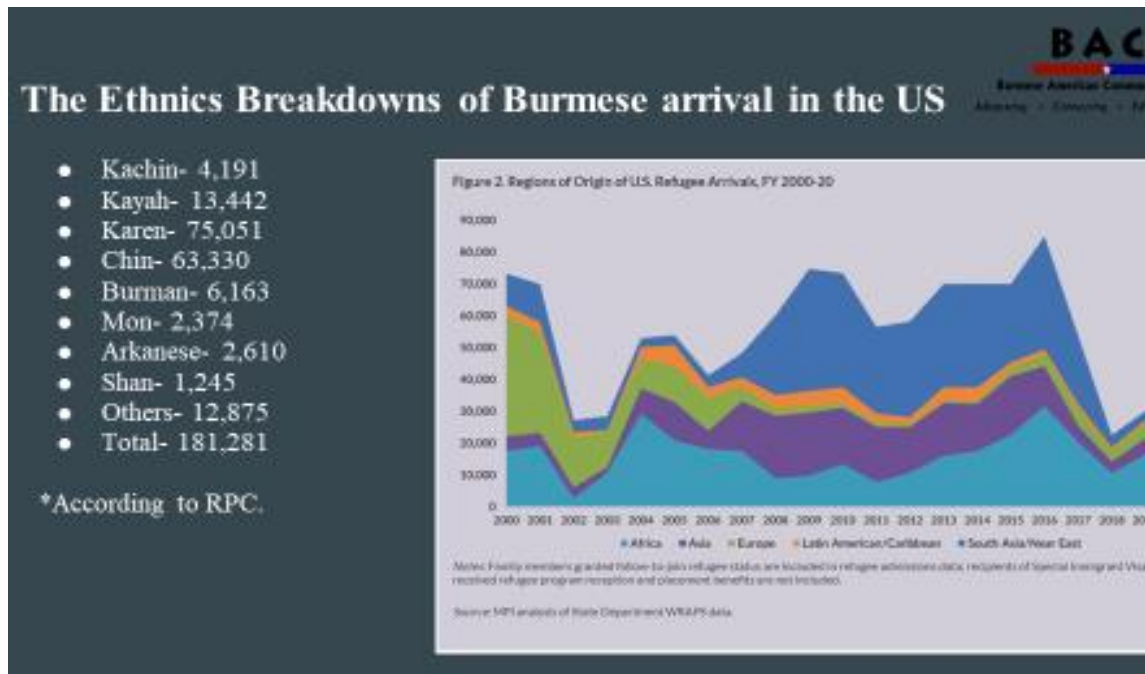


Presbyterian Church in a hill village of Khin Phong

Three Waves of Burmese Migration

Honoring Our Past: Rethinking Shame and Honor Culture

- (1) First Wave—After the First coup in 1962
- (2) Second Wave—After the Uprising in 1988
- (3) Third Wave—2006 to Present



Celebrating our Diversity Joyfully



- **Scattered and Gathered: BAC Churches across the U.S.**
- How do they imagine their ethnic and ecclesial identities?
- How does ethnicity shape their ecclesial identity?
- Upon arriving in the US, they initially formed the interethnic Christian Communities
- After a few years, they split into intra-ethnic churches

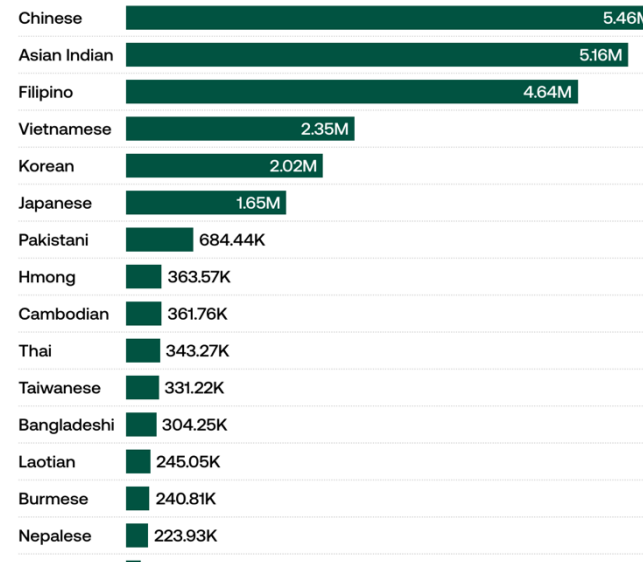


Exclusion & Embrace

A Theological Exploration of Identity,
Otherness, and Reconciliation

Chinese Americans are the most common Asian American ethnic group.

Number of people by Asian ethnicity, 2023



Shaping Our Future Faithfully

Addressing Our Hardest Challenges Honestly

- Conflict
- Division

Division Not over Doctrine, but Over Tribe

- Rethinking Jesus's last prayer for unity (John 17:21)
- Diversity as a gift, not a barrier
- Celebrating Diversity Without Division

Integration or Isolation? A Minority within Minorities

- Bringing Burmese Voices into Asian American Community
- Preserving heritage while building bridges, not walls
- Beyond "us" and "them" – Oneness in Christ (Galatians 3:28)

Toward a Multicultural Community of Neighbors

- From exclusion to embrace (Luke 10:25-37)
- Reaching out and receiving In
- Shared identity and shared future



Key Discussion Questions

1. **Identity:** How can Burmese American Christian community honor its diversity while cultivating unity in Christ?
2. **Integration:** How can Burmese American Christians preserve their ancestral roots while engaging American culture?
3. **Voices:** What barriers limit Burmese voices in the broader Asian American community, and how can they create greater space for Burmese leadership, partnership, and shared belonging?
4. **Perspectives:** What unique perspectives can Burmese bring to the Asian American community?

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Thank you! Blessings!