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## KAREN CHRISTIAN LEADERS' NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Number 8. June 2009 Duane Binkley: [dmbink@pobox.com](mailto:dmbink@pobox.com), Aye Aye Thaw: [ayeyathaw@hotmail.com](mailto:ayeyathaw@hotmail.com), Neil Sowards: [neildianasowards@juno.com](mailto:neildianasowards@juno.com)

### **Notes from Duane Binkley:**

Most of you will know that the area around Ler Ber Her and the 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade has been under attack. The last report I saw said that the headquarters of the 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade had fallen. The result has been 4,000 or more additional refugees come into Thailand. For a time, it seemed the Thai authorities would push the Karen back into Burma. But the last report I saw said that space would be allowed for them to live on the Thai side of the border. We need to remember these people in our prayers.

The Soros Fellowships for New Americans give support for 30 people per year for up to two years per person for graduate study in any subject anywhere in the US. The fellowship provides \$20,000 maintenance and half tuition where ever the recipient attends classes. Those applying must have a Green Card, be a naturalized citizen or the child of two naturalized parents. The deadline to apply is November 1, 2009 and recipients are announced in February. Complete information can be found at: [www.pdsoros.org/overview](http://www.pdsoros.org/overview).

According to a June 17 article at IndyStar.com, Waterman's Farm Market in Indianapolis is making land available for the Karen community to use to grow vegetable crops. When ready, the crops can then be sold at the Farm market. To raise awareness of the Karen's situation, the Waterman's were also hosting the Refugee Day Festival on June 20<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, I want to mention the in June 14<sup>th</sup>, the Karen Baptist Church of Western Chicago celebrated their second anniversary. Congratulations to them and may God bless them in the year ahead.

### **American Baptist Churches Name a Liaison to People Originally from Burma:**

After a search process, National Ministries of the American Baptist Churches has named Rev. Rothangliani Chhange to work as liaison between American Baptist Church congregations and the Karen, Chin and other congregations formed from people coming from Burma. Rev. Rothangliani is an ordained American Baptist pastor and began her work on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Chhange will address needs of the growing influx of Burmese refugees by building successful relationships and fostering meaningful partnerships among this population and American Baptist churches and regions. She will remain abreast of arrivals, conduct needs assessments, identify English as a Second Language and other social service resources, and assist local church ministries serving this population. Rev. Rothangliani has nearly a decade of experience working with refugees from Southeast Asia as well as broad experience working with the denomination and churches. We look forward to working together.

**Housing Information:** From Rev. Sandra DeMott Hausnauer in Rochester, NY comes a resource related to housing. It can be found at:  
<http://www.refugeehouse.org/publications.htm>

Of particular interest will be a Housing Orientation booklet written in the Karen language that explains many things about living in America. Click this link to go straight to the Karen language booklet: [http://www.refugeehouse.org/PDFFiles/Karen\\_Welcome.pdf](http://www.refugeehouse.org/PDFFiles/Karen_Welcome.pdf).

**Karen Christian Leaders' Manual.** A number of persons have been working on a manual for Karen Christian Leaders. It is an attempt to put a lot of useful information in one location. We are offering what has been written to Karen Leaders by e-mail to those who would like to see it. Please understand it is a work in progress. However Karen Leaders will find some of what is finished useful and can suggest to the committee other topics they think might be useful. E-mail [neildianasowards@juno.com](mailto:neildianasowards@juno.com) for an e-mail copy. Sorry no hard copies are available. It is thirty pages long with 80 pages of addendum. Below is an excerpt from the Karen Leaders Manual:

## **10. Ten Facts You Should Know About American Baptists**

The 1.5-million members and 5,800 congregations of American Baptist Churches, USA share with more than 43 million Baptists around the world a common tradition begun in the early 17th century. That tradition has emphasized the Lordship and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, believers' baptism, the competency of all believers to be in direct relationship with God and to interpret Scripture, the importance of the local church, the assurance of freedom in worship and opinion, and the need to be Christ's witnesses within society.

*1. American Baptists believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, and that the Bible is the divinely inspired word of God that serves as the final written authority for living out the Christian faith.*

*2. For American Baptists the local church is the fundamental unit of mission in denominational life.*

*3. American Baptists partake of two ordinances: believers' baptism and The Lord's Supper.*

*4. American Baptists believe that the committed individual Christian can and should approach God directly, and that individual gifts of ministry should be shared.*

*5. American Baptists take seriously the call to evangelism and missionary work.*

*6. American Baptists support religious freedom and respect the expressions of faith of others.*

*7. American Baptists acknowledge that God's family extends beyond our local churches, and that God calls us to cooperative ministries.*

*8. American Baptists have been called to be Christ's witnesses for justice and wholeness within a broken society.*

*9. American Baptist Churches, USA celebrate the racial, cultural and theological diversity witnessed within its membership.*

*10. American Baptists heed the biblical call to renewal and the need for a vital witness in a new millennium.*

**Feedback.** If this newsletter is interesting and helpful to you, please let us know. Also send us any information to share with other Karen groups. Tell us what you would like to see in the next issues. Give us e-mails of leaders who might like to receive it--our list is very incomplete. This e-mailing is being sent to 288 leaders of Karens.

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