

## KAREN CHRISTIAN LEADERS' NEWSLETTER

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**Note from Duane:** I am sorry if it seems that I have been quiet and not visiting many of you lately. On September 21 I started turning yellow and felt like I had hepatitis. A few days later I went into the hospital and stayed there for 9 days. The doctors discovered I had gall stones blocking the bile duct. But, the real problem was that there was a growth on the pancreas that caused the flow in the bile duct to be restricted.

In recent weeks, I have been going to the Cleveland Clinic which has a highly rated department that specializes in issues related to the pancreas. They were able to open up the bile duct by inserting a temporary stent. That has helped to relieve many of the earlier jaundice symptoms. But, there is still a growth in the pancreas that is causing a constriction in the bile duct that worries the doctors. While all tests for cancer have been negative, they still feel that cancer is a possibility. So, I am now scheduled for surgery on Monday, November 16th to remove a portion of the pancreas, other affected tissues and the gall bladder. It is a 6 – 8 hour procedure and will require a 7 – 10 day hospital stay. Full recovery will take 2 – 3 months. Right now, I am feeling fine, but after the surgery, I will be out of commission for some time. We appreciate your continued prayers for myself, our family and the doctors/nurses treating me. We thank you for your prayers.

**Thanksgiving and Sweet December:** Please let us know what your Karen church will do for Thanksgiving and Sweet December. We would like to include this information in the next newsletter. Send you plans to [neildianasowards@juno.com](mailto:neildianasowards@juno.com) or [dmbink@pobox.com](mailto:dmbink@pobox.com).

**Swine Flu (H1N1) Notes:** Though it is early in the season, many people all across the US are being affected by the regular flu and swine flu. A recent report I read said that flu activity is already widespread in 41 states. In Ohio where I live many schools have already closed as so many students were sick with the flu. Our daughters report that at their school too, many are sick. Even professional sports teams across the country are having problems as the athletes are getting sick with the flu.

There are two kinds of flu vaccines. One vaccine is for the regular flu, not swine flu. There are many kinds of flu viruses that can affect people each year. So each year, they pick the main kinds of viruses they think will affect people and make a vaccine. So the regular flu vaccine will help protect you from the three kinds of flu they have picked for this year. However, if you come in contact with a virus not included in the vaccine, you might still get the flu. But, at least you are protected from the most common kinds of flu.

Protection from H1N1 or Swine Flu is not included in the regular flu vaccine. If you want to be vaccinated for H1N1/Swine Flu, then you need a separate shot. This vaccine is just now becoming available so you will have to look locally to see when and where you might be able to get it.

For more information (in English) on the swine flu and vaccinations go to [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/).

Here are some tips from this website on “What You Can Do To Stay Healthy”.

- **Get Vaccinated.** Vaccination is the best protection we have against the flu.
- Influenza (the flu) is thought to spread mainly person to person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.
- **Take everyday actions to stay healthy.**
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol based hand sanitizer. **Be careful if hand sanitizer is used, especially with small children. If they drink any of it, or even lick their hands the alcohol could make them sick.**
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Stay at home if you get sick. CDC (Center for Disease Control) recommends that you stay home from school or work and limit contact with other people to keep from infecting them.
- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other measures.
- Stay informed. This website ([www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/)) will be updated regularly as information becomes available.

**Future Karen Pastors?** Some of us who work with the Karen think that there will be Karen congregations in the future who will want Karen pastors who have theological training from here in the US. It takes at least seven years education to be an educated minister, 4 years of college and 3 years of seminary. Now, some of those that came from the refugee camps will soon be graduating from high school. We want to know if there are some high school graduates, or those that will graduate in the next year or two that want to study to become a pastor. We have some contact with colleges and seminaries and might be able to help connect you with them. If interested, please send a letter stating your interest and goals to Neil Sowards ([neildianasowards@juno.com](mailto:neildianasowards@juno.com)) or Duane Binkley ([dmbink@pobox.com](mailto:dmbink@pobox.com)).

**Pastor Tha Hgay** of Phoenix, AZ has traveled to San Diego, Denver, Salt Lake City, Boise, Spokane, and plans to go to Portland next month. He is helping develop Karen congregations.

**Karen Bible Study.** Testimony by a young Karen woman about the e-mail Bible study. “It was in early 2002 that I participated in a Bible study with Pastor Ruth Peterson. The

Bible character we studied was Nehemiah. Nehemiah fascinated me with his organizational and leadership skills. This Bible study about Nehemiah instilled the desire in my heart to read the entire Bible.” An e-mail Bible study might be just the thing for some of the Karen young people in your congregation. Why not suggest to them they join Ruth Peterson at: [peterson.j.g@comcast.net](mailto:peterson.j.g@comcast.net)?

**Money Tracking Sheets.** The Arizona Karen Baptist Church of Phoenix, AZ has developed some money tracking sheet for the use of their church. They sent copies to the Karen Christian Fellowship of Fort Wayne who found it helpful. If interested in having the sheets e-mailed to you, please contact [neildianasowards@juno.com](mailto:neildianasowards@juno.com)

**Friends of Burma, Inc** has issued its Fall newsletter about their work in Burma with the Christians there. Contact John or Ruth Peterson at [peterson.j.g@comcast.net](mailto:peterson.j.g@comcast.net), for an electronic copy or Neil Sowards for a hard copy.

**Report on Asian Caucus.** We had a wonderful retreat at Lebanon Camp ABCNJ the weekend of October 9-10. There were 17 area pastors, lay people and family members in attendance. The messages, discussions, testimonies and general fellowship were beyond expectation. We met some new Pastors and new people. I want to thank you all for your prayers and support. I also want to also thank all the guest speakers who joined us; Rev. Arsenio G. Llamas, Jr, President Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches. ABCNJ Executive Minister/Senior Pastor Dr. Lee Spitzer, Area Minister, etc. Rev. Dr. Elmo Familiarian, our Former President of Asian Caucus, Dr. Herb Tsuchiya Asian American Baptist Church Fund Raising Consultant, Rev. Mia Chang, NextGen Church and Rev. Florence Li, of National Ministries Coordinator.

We have already set up the first weekend of October 2010 for next year retreat. But we could really use you suggestions as to where to hold it next year and who might be attending. Please feel free to contact me via e-mail with your suggestions. We discussed about how we can make one representative from each state to make communication easier and spread further. I am asking for volunteers. Some states already have representatives but we need more. I will be in contact with state representatives.

Thank our Asian American Baptist Caucus friends for your prayers, support and encouragement.

Let us continue Working Together to Make a Difference. God bless you all.

Yours in Christ, Rev. Hojin Yu, East Coast Asian American Baptist Caucus Coordinator

**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.

**Past Issues** of this newsletter are available on [karenconnection.org](http://karenconnection.org)