

Dear loving friends and supporters,

Warmest greetings to you on this chilly April morning here in Philadelphia! I am thinking about you, and praying that you are well. I'm writing this email to let you know about an upcoming change in my ministry assignment with American Baptist International Ministries. (Read this when you have a few minutes or so...it's a little longer than I expected!)

As you know, I moved to Thailand in 1999 to serve at the New Life Center Foundation. (God called me to be a missionary when I was four years old, so this appointment was the *fruition and fulfillment* of that call.) Living and working in Thailand has been an incredible experience and a deep blessing...and the New Life Center has grown and changed and stretched in all good ways over the past two decades. At the present time, an ethnic tribal woman - Tiemchan Kamon (or "Bee", as is her nickname!) is the Program Director of this ministry. Bee is an amazingly gifted leader; she is supported by a strong team of tribal staff and also my IM colleagues, Jeni Pedzinski and Kit Ripley. IM's missiology is based in partnership and raising up national leaders; Bee's appointment as the NLCF's program director is a testimony to this missiology, our IM philosophy of developing leaders, and the movement of God's spirit.

For the past four years, I've stayed involved as a missionary at the New Life Center, consulting with staff and working in Thailand for several months each year. I've also worked in the IM home office as a part of the "Responding to the Call" strategic planning team, and completed a graduate degree. (My graduate work was rigorous, but I learned so much and it was very refreshing for me!)

My deepest passions are training leaders, cultivating relationships (and working) with IM partners, and communicating what God is doing around the world. Truly, mission today is "*...from everywhere to everyone*" (this quote is by missiologist Samuel Escobar) and it is so exciting to be a part of it. Given these passions and my experience as a missionary - and after a significant process of interviewing and prayerful discernment - International Ministries has offered me a position as the IM "Area Director" for Africa. In this role, I will be supporting IM missionaries who work in countries in Africa, cultivating relationships with our partners there, and continuing to visit churches to share what God is doing around the world. Moving into this expanded role feels like just the right next step in my journey, and I embrace this new opportunity with joy and gratitude. (I will be going back to Thailand one last time, next month, to wrap up one final project and say goodbye.)

Thank you so much for all the support you've provided to me over the years; together, we are a 'three-fold cord, not quickly broken'. For those of you who are financially supporting me, would you prayerfully consider continuing this support - or a portion of this support? As an area director, I will still be responsible for raising a percentage of my support. Although the geographic area of my ministry will change, I was reflecting just yesterday that most of my role will be very similar to what I did at the New Life Center (!) I'll be developing and supporting missionaries and leaders, collaborating with partners, communicating with churches, and being a liaison...all of which I love to do...! I do recognize that you are faced with many requests, so I deeply appreciate your consideration of this.

You can reach me at karen.smith@internationalministries.org and/or 610-766-1628. Please do not hesitate to call or write if you have any questions about this new assignment. I look forward to sharing more with you as I begin this new ministry, and keeping in touch. Please pray with me regarding:

- my trip to Thailand next month, to lead one last conference and to say goodbye to my community there
- a smooth transition and acclimation to my new ministry role
- God's grace through the whole transition

How can I pray for you? Please let me know.

In Christ's great love,

Karen