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Newly Appointed Missionary Serving Immigrants from Myanmar in the U.S.



CATHERINE NOLD

Marlene Po of Laurel, Maryland, has been appointed to serve as an International Ministries (IM) associate missionary in partnership with Central Baptist Theological Seminary as director of its FOUNDATIONS Judson Communities (FJC) Program.

FJC provides training for pastors and leaders of churches from recently resettled communities of immigrants from Myanmar (formerly Burma) to the U.S. Focusing on ethnic groups that include Karen (Kar-en), Chin, Kachin, Karenni and others that have suffered persecution in Myanmar, FJC enables Christian leaders to earn a Certificate of Ministry. This basic theological training will help leaders better serve the unique needs of their immigrant churches all over the U.S. Po has been serving as director of FJC since 2016 and will continue in that role as an IM associate missionary.

“We are very excited to welcome Marlene to IM in partnership with Central Seminary,” commented the Rev. Leslie Turley, IM area director for Southeast Asia and Japan. “Marlene is continuing the work begun by former IM missionaries Duane and Marcia Binkley, who started FJC as a way to meet the spiritual needs of the immigrant community from Myanmar. It is also such a blessing to see how God has brought full circle the work that Adoniram Judson began in Myanmar over 200 years ago, as IM is welcoming a missionary who hails from Myanmar to serve with us. This is truly a wonderful example of mission from everywhere to everyone!”

Po earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Yangon University in Myanmar and a Bachelor of Religious Education from Myanmar Institute of Theology. Po immigrated to the U.S. with her two sons in 2008 to join her husband, Saw Ler Htoo, an American Baptist Churches USA pastor, who had been a resident of the U.S. since 2001. Her home church is Calvary Burmese Church, Washington, DC, where her husband is senior pastor. He also serves as executive secretary of Karen Baptist Churches USA and national coordinator for Karen Ministries of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies.

Po, now a U.S. citizen, notes that her experience as an immigrant drove her desire to serve others in the same situation. She states, “Through working as an interpreter on the telephone, I have talked with many refugees who migrated from Burma. They encounter many difficulties in this country while they try to adapt to a new chapter in their lives. I want to help them with their needs and teach them about the U.S.” Po is fluent in the Karen and Burmese languages as well as English.

“Central is pleased to have Marlene filling the role of directing this important training for ministry leaders among the diaspora communities from Myanmar who now find themselves in the U.S.,” said the Rev. Dr. Molly T. Marshall, president of Central Seminary. “We look forward to commissioning her for this ministry during worship on October 15 at Calvary Burmese Church in Washington, DC. Central Seminary continues to value the opportunity to partner with IM to equip these Judson Communities brothers and sisters.”

More information about Marlene Po is available on her [profile](#) on the IM website. To send words of encouragement or support, contact Marlene Po at mpo@internationalministries.org.

IM welcomes comments on [Facebook](#).

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