

# Fire destroys Burmese Bible school

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Fire destroyed a Bible school and other buildings at a Baptist-run refugee camp on the Thailand/Myanmar border April 28.

✘ The Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School and College was founded in the Mae Le refugee camp by Saw Simon, recipient of the Baptist World Alliance Human Rights Award in 2000, according to a BWA news release. The blaze also destroyed Simon's home.

According to *Karen News*, camp residents managed to put out the fire in about an hour.

"The Bible school has a long history and has been instrumental in so many ways as a ministry to the refugees along the Thailand/Myanmar border," Stan Murray, area director for Southeast Asia and Japan for International Ministries of American Baptist Churches USA, said. "The school trained young people who then serve in ministry both in the refugee camps and in the countries where many of the refugees are settling, including in the U.S."

Duane and Marcia Binkley — Saw Simon, founder and principal, missionaries jointly appointed by International Ministries and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship — traveling in Myanmar, reported that the fire started in Pastor Simon's house and destroyed everything except for the building frame.

“Many of you will remember the place where you sleep, you eat, you worship, you tell the words of God, the place where more than 300 students gather and study, now was destroyed by fire,” Marcia Binkley said. “God will provide what his children need.”

American Baptists are accepting contributions to help rebuild the school, started in the Karen state of the country formerly known as Burma and forced to relocate to Thailand due to Myanmar’s long-running civil war.

International Ministries, the first Baptist international mission agency in America, dates its history to 1814, when it appointed its first missionaries, Adoniram and Anne Hasseltine Judson, to Burma.

— **Bob Allen** is managing editor of *Associated Baptist Press*.

Video of the fire is here: <http://vimeo.com/41199020>