

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to inform you of an exciting undertaking at my church – Maranatha CRC. Of all the solutions to war and persecution that are pursued by nations, governments and peoples prayed for by individuals, refugee sponsorship is one that the Maranatha Congregation has decided to act out.

**Ezekiel 34:27-28** *“They will know that I am the LORD, when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands of those who enslaved them. <sup>28</sup> They will no longer be plundered by the nations, nor will wild animals devour them. They will live in safety, and no one will make them afraid”.*

Around the world, there are many groups of people who have been forced to leave their country, for many different reasons, but most prominently because of war and persecution. They have fled their land and their homes, carrying with them very little or nothing at all. Maranatha CRC by the Federal government and through church organizations, has been granted a sponsorship agreement to be the open door to Canada for Refugee Families.

The Refugee Committee has been reviewing many refugee claimants from parts of Africa, Myanmar (Burma) and Columbia. Common threads to the stories are persecution, deaths/disappearances of family members, flight across countries and borders, rape, torture and murder. There is continued pursuit and threats of further violence. Some are persecuted for their faith, some for protesting injustice, some for family relationships, some for false accusations and some for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, caught between warring factions. Many stories have several of these elements and others, but all refugees live in a non-permanent situation, are under threat, and live in fear.

In September 2007, Maranatha welcomed Thaw Say and her family into Canada from a refugee camp in Thailand, to which they had fled from the Myanmar dictatorship. We rejoice with her that they have arrived safely and that they are learning to benefit for the blessings we have in Canada. **Maranatha also wants to undertake more sponsorships of other families, too!**

In sponsoring a refugee family, the members of Maranatha commit to provide full support to the family for one year. During that year, the church members work in many different ways to welcome the family: access to education, work, healthcare, leisure, English language training, becoming a part of the community and church group. **The church also commits financially to provides food, housing and other expenses for living, until the family is self-supporting (up to a year).** We, the members of Maranatha, are requesting of our friends and acquaintances that they add to the support of refugee sponsorship in Maranatha through learning, encouragement and gifts. **We challenge you** to further increase the financial support of the refugee sponsorship at Maranatha. We will in response eagerly increase our service commitment – all so that more families may be sponsored.

For our part, being mainly Dutch folk, you can be assured that we are stretching each dollar to the max. Your gift of \$100, \$2,000 or any amount that fits in your giving budget and expresses your generosity will help extend sponsorship to more refugees. Did you know that charitable donations now come back in your tax return at 50%? The government basically matches your gift! Yes, we will provide receipts for income tax purposes.

Thank-you very much for your interest in what we are up to at my church. If you have any questions, I look forward to talking more with you about refugee sponsorship – or maybe you would consider joining us in worship for a morning service (10:30am) to see what’s going on?

Sincerely, Your Friend

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