



LEGACY INSTITUTE

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Bangkok, Thailand

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Dear Friends,

Last month Gloria and I visited the border town of Mae Sot to spend the weekend with several families of Karen brethren and also to meet with Lazum Brang of the Kachinland Church of God. Lazum came to meet us along with another COG elder named Lashi Naw. I met Lashi Naw on my previous visits to Kachinland. Elders Brang and Naw were on a tour visiting brethren in central Burma and came to the border to meet Gloria and myself, and also to encourage the Karen refugee brethren.

On behalf of the US brethren, We were able to present Elder Lashi Naw with a mountain bike. He was so excited! He wanted me to thank all of you from the bottom of his heart and tell you that,

*“Now you have given me wings to preach the gospel.”*

Travel in Burma, especially in Kachinland and other border areas, is very difficult. Few people have cars and what few roads do exist are mostly impassible during the monsoon season. A 12-gear mountain bike means they can travel swiftly over the mountain trails whereas before they had to walk. Lazum told me that he can now actually beat the log trucks over the mountain trail from the Lake Indawgyi valley on his bike. They now, indeed, have wings!

Because of generous freewill offerings of brethren in Australia, I was also able to pass along to Pastor Brang funds to purchase timber for the church/bible school building he is trying to erect in his home area. I also added to these funds sent from US brethren. Everything is lined up and they are ready to begin construction now that the monsoon is over. But Satan never sleeps.

One must obtain permission from the local Burmese authorities to construct a new building, especially a church building. At first the authorities were willing to grant permission. But now that Pastor Brang finally has the funds to begin construction, they have discovered “problems” with issuing a building permit. Without a permit, the church building cannot be constructed. Please pray that God’s Will be done in this matter. We don’t always see what is best. Maybe an actual church building would be too “high profile.” Christians often suffer persecution in Burma (sometimes by other established “Christian” groups.) Or maybe it is just Satan putting stumbling blocks in the way of furthering the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We don’t know – but God does! Pray He puts forth His hand to direct Pastor Brang.

In the meantime, Pastor Brang has decided to continue holding bible classes in his home. He continues to distribute bible tracts in Kachin language and has just recently completed translation of the Sabbath booklet into Burmese. This booklet can now be printed and sent out to various ethnic groups who do not speak the Kachin language.

So the Work of God goes on in Asia. There are other small, grain-of-a-mustard-seed projects going on in Asia that receive little fanfare. Alan Kendall in Australia continues sending literature to scattered brethren throughout many areas of Asia. And I am hearing more news about various Sabbath-keeping groups in Asia I have never heard of before. We are hopeful that as soon as time and finances permit, we will be able to make contact with some of these groups.

### **Lost Sheep**

I have mentioned in past letters that we have church brethren who have “slipped through the cracks”. Where are they now? Are they still seeking the Kingdom of God? Some are. Others have fallen by the wayside. Jesus says we are to leave the 99 and go after the one. Gloria and I are trying to track down one of our sisters, and we are very close to success.

Uthaiwan Han is a Thai lady who is deaf. She has been a member of God’s Church for over 20 years. Gloria and I first met Uthaiwan at the Thai Temple in Los Angeles in 1979. Later she was baptized and became a member of the Pasadena congregation. After moving to Texas in 1993, we lost contact with Uthaiwan. We were surprised to learn recently that she had moved back to Thailand. One of her friends in California sent us a copy of a letter she had written which explained in broken English that she had stayed in Thailand too long, had lost her permanent resident status in the US; and was in trouble with members of her Thai family. The letter was 3 years old. The return address was no longer valid.

Well, good news! We are hot on the trail. Through the Grace of God, we have located Uthaiwan! It is a long story that reads like a “PI” novel. But I will save it for our next letter. Uthaiwan is now living in Rayong, about 5 hours by bus south of Bangkok. We have spoken by telephone with her sister and will travel to Rayong this weekend. Please pray that God will give us success in finally tracking down Uthaiwan, one of His lambs lost in Thailand.

### **Update on Jack Aung Min**

Recently a radical group of 12 Karen soldiers calling themselves “God’s Army” attacked a hospital in Thailand, took the patient’s hostage and made demands. The next day Thai commandos stormed the hospital and killed all the terrorists. The standoff was short-lived but the fallout created a lot of trouble for one of our Karen families. The Thai police were embarrassed by the incident and began an immigration sweep of illegal aliens in Thailand, targeting Karen people in particular.

Gloria and I were in Chiangmai at the time and were unable to reach Jack and his family. Their phone had been disconnected. We didn't know what had happened but trusted that God would take care of them. Finally, Jack's wife Elizabeth was able to call us. They were all OK but had stayed shut-up in their small one-room apartment in eastern Bangkok for 4 days in fear of the immigration police. Their phone line had been tapped and an armed plainclothesman had even been stationed next door to their room.

Before his calling to the body of Christ, Jack had been a famous combat officer in the Karen National Liberation Army. He is a well-known figure to the Thai Secret Police and a Christian; therefore a high-profile suspect. He was being watched to see if he was in any way connected to "God's Army." It was a very frightening time for Jack and his family.

Through the grace of God, we were able to arrange a meeting for Jack with a high-ranking intelligence officer who was willing to give Jack protective patronage. Jack and his family are now able to move in and out of their room without fear of arrest. Jack has started computer classes and continues to petition the UNHCR for his family to be allowed to immigrate to the United States.

The worst is now over, but the atmosphere in Thailand has changed. This terrorist act by the so-called "God's Army" has created a lot of resentment on the part of the Thai's toward Christian minority groups in general and the Karen people in particular.

Satan is clever. He knows we are over here. He knows we are actively working to spread the gospel among the Karen people in the hills and border areas of Thailand. He knows that the Karen brethren themselves are getting excited about the possibility that they can help evangelize among their own people. We completed printing the first booklet ever in the Karen language and are working on another. We have started a program of regularly visiting scattered Karen brethren around the country. God's Work in this area is moving forward (even if it is ONLY a grain of mustard seed at present.) So the Adversary is trying to stop this modest beginning before it ever gets off the ground.

Jack is an important part of this fledgling work in Thailand. A church couple in Texas donated a laptop for Jack to typeset booklets in the Karen language. He is diligently studying computer courses so that he can improve his abilities with "PageMaker" and other programs. If Satan could succeed in getting Jack arrested and imprisoned or even deported; it would be a major blow to God's small seed – let alone a terrible ordeal for a wonderful family.

Please help us by praying that Jack and his family will continue to be protected and given a free hand to assist in the Work of God in Thailand. The Karen brethren may be scattered and live halfway around the globe from many of their brethren. But we are ONE spiritual body. The hands cannot do without the feet. The body must care for every part, no matter how insignificant that part may seem.

Also, please continue to remember that Legacy Institute is not connected to any particular Church of God corporate group. Therefore, we receive no "salary" or regular financial support from any church organization. We must rely on donations from brethren of all fellowships to continue our Work among the Karen as well as the other projects we are doing in Asia. Your donations ARE now making a BIG difference. Otherwise, why would Satan be attacking?

The Feast of Tabernacles is getting closer. Soon it will be right around the corner. Please let us know as soon as you can if you plan to attend the Feast in Thailand this year. For those of you who have never been to Asia before, Thailand is the very best introduction one can have to the exotic orient. Thailand can no longer be classified as a “third world country.” It has become an interesting mixture of old and new; strange and familiar. In Bangkok, the capital city, one can walk down the street past vendors selling the latest “Versace” fashions alongside real elephants getting fed raw sugar cane while brand new Mercedes Benz and Jeep Wranglers speed by.

The Church of God has had a long relationship with Thailand and this country’s king and queen. Ambassador College began supporting the king’s educational projects among the opium-producing hilltribes of northern Thailand in 1971. Since that time, hundreds of church members and Ambassador College students have visited Thailand. Many participated in educational projects. Even though Thailand is a Buddhist country, we have always enjoyed the friendship of royalty, officials and even monks at the highest level. That is because we have earned their respect and friendship through personal examples of Christian leadership. We have always said that our responsibility to Thailand is to show them “ what Christianity SHOULD be like.” In this way we have been witnessing to the leadership and people of Thailand for over 30 years.

We have not held an international FOT site in Thailand for several years. I would like to see God’s people continue to be lights in this part of the world. God has provided one important opportunity for us to spread this light through personal example by once again holding the Feast in Thailand. For further information about the Feast of Tabernacles in Thailand, please contact:

FOT Thailand 2000  
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Toll-free: 800-858-6999  
FAX: 626-577-0577  
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Or if you prefer, contact:  
  
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Several of the Karen families, Gloria and myself – we altogether are already excited and so much looking forward to seeing many of you at the Thailand FOT 2000 this year. Please continue your heartfelt prayers for the success of our Asian projects.

In Christian service,



Leon Sexton

**WHAT IS LEGACY INSTITUTE?**

LEGACY INSTITUTE IS NOT A CHURCH. *Nor is it affiliated with any human church organization. Legacy Institute seeks to serve and help mankind in the spirit and example of our Lord Jesus Christ. His instructions were to freely give. This means without discrimination and without prejudice. Your donations to Legacy Institute are tax deductible in the USA.*