



LEGACY INSTITUTE

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Dear Friends,

I am spending a few weeks here in Dallas trying to get caught up on correspondence and all the other things I need to do. Gloria and I have been over in Thailand for over 6 months. We are grateful to God that we can be over there for an extended length of time. It means we can concentrate on our Legacy Institute activities in that part of the world more fully. But at the same time, we have had to let some things slide here in Dallas and they need to get done (like taxes!)

I want to bring you up-to-date on some of the projects Legacy Institute has initiated in Thailand and Burma (Myanmar). When I look back over this list, I am surprised to see what has been accomplished with so few resources! God can win battles with many or just a FEW! I hope you are as encouraged as we are by the things God has done through your prayers and financial support:

BURMA (MYANMAR)

Lazum Brang's Evangelistic Work: Because many of you have so generously donated to the Work of God through Lazum Brang, many new people are being reached in Burma, Kachinland and northern Shan States. I received a letter from him recently saying that he is on an evangelistic tour with his wife to central Burma and the Shan States. His letter mentioned that he would finish up his trip by visiting with Saw Ley Bey, a Karen and long time Church of God minister in the delta area. He also stated that his "mailing list" has grown from approximately 350 persons who are members of the Kachinland Church of God to now, over 1000 persons that he is in correspondence with. This is an increase of almost 300%. As more and more of the people in this part of the world hear the Word through the bible tracts he sends out, more and more are writing Lazum. These additional 650 individuals are not yet baptized. But they are HUNGRY for the TRUTH of God's Word! The harvest truly is plenteous, but laborers are few.

Because the Spirit of God has moved you to support God's evangelistic effort in Burma, Lazum is able to travel more. He is visiting new people as well as encouraging and teaching Church of God members, printing and sending out literature in the Kachin and Burmese languages, and especially writing more letters! He is a prolific writer.

God's Work in Burma is much the same as that in Paul's time. Paul traveled by foot and ship. Lazum travels by foot, bicycle, train and sometimes log truck! Paul wrote letters to churches to stay in contact with the brethren. Lazum, too, writes many, many letters and stays in contact with current members and new people.

This would have been impossible just a little over one year ago. When I visited Lazum for the first time in January 1999, he was struggling to earn enough to feed his family. He cut rice in the fields for 30 cents a day. His small group of Kachinland COG were (and still are) just as poor. They would give their meager tithes and offerings and scrape together enough in order to print a few more booklets, buy a few more stamps; and write a few more letters. If enough could be put together for traveling, Lazum would go on a journey to visit new people, usually on foot! He would (and still does) walk days' journeys to do God's Work.

This all changed during my first visit. I was able to provide enough financial help to feed his family for a year. That freed him up to devote full time to God's Work. I was able to give him additional funds for paper, envelopes, stamps and travel expenses so that he could write and visit more people. I gave him funds to print more Sabbath tracts. And I ordained him so that he could baptize, marry and more fully carry out pastoral duties in the Work God gave him to do. All this came about because YOU were willing to support what GOD is now doing in Burma.

I can take no credit. I was just the messenger boy.

Church/School Building Project: Enough money is now available (through primarily the Independent Church of God in Australia) to construct a building for a Bible School in Na Mawn, Kachinland. This will provide a classroom space for Lazum to train young people in the Truth of the Word so they can help in evangelistic efforts. A building is needed as Lazum's house is too small. At the moment, he still cannot receive permission from the Burmese officials to begin construction. Let's pray God's will be done. Someway must be found to get a center started to train these young people. Lazum cannot do this all alone. Especially in a country that doesn't have the transportation and communications infrastructure we have been given in the West.

Education Project: Some of you have made financial donations to help educate poor Kachin children from Church of God families. The educational system in Burma is very poor. There are few schools and fewer teachers. "Public education" is limited to the first 6 grades. If children want to have further education, they must go to private, usually Christian sponsored schools, and they must pay for room, board and other fees. Few of our brethren have resources to send their children for further education. Also, schools sponsored by the Burmese government require attendance on Saturdays. One Kachin lady used her savings to send her 10-year-old daughter to stay with a non-COG family in Myitkyina (capital of Kachinland) so that she could attend a private school. It turns out this family used her as a slave. They worked her constantly doing household chores and made her fish for food on the Sabbath. Her mother had no money to pay her way out of this situation and get her home. A donation by a COG family in America paid her way out of slavery and provided enough for this little girl's education for one year. There was enough left over to send her 15 year old brother to school for a year.

It is fantastic what can be done in these countries for so little money! We want to expand this project to help more children receive better education, especially because of the Sabbath situation in the public schools. It is up to you.

Emergency Aid Project: The people of Burma are very poor. Last year the price of rice tripled. Many of your brethren had to mix their rice with other foods they could get from the jungle like bananas. Lazum has set aside some of the funds he has received to provide emergency food and clothing for poor families. One US dollar is equal to 350 Kyats in Burmese currency. 350 Kyats is 10 days wages for them. We who live in the affluent West should be thanking our God daily for the blessings we receive because of the obedience of Abraham. We could be living in Burma!

Gloria and I will be traveling to Kachinland to observe the Passover and Unleavened Bread with the Kachinland brethren. Getting there will be long and arduous. But the rewards of being with these poor people with such a purity of FAITH will be more than enough reward to make up for the hardships of the journey. We hope more will be able to meet with us this year. Lazum has written letters all over the North and Central parts of Burma inviting the faithful to join together. Many will not be able to attend because of the expense of travel. Some live in such remote areas that it will be difficult to come. There are few roads and very few vehicles. Most will have to walk all or part of the way. But the pull of God's Spirit is Great. We look forward to seeing many new faces this year.

THAILAND

Publishing Project: We have initiated a rather ambitious project of translating and printing booklets in first the Karen language, and then if finances permit, the Kachin, Burmese and possibly the Thai language. There are hundreds of thousands of Karen and Kachin living in Thailand. Some are Christian. Most are Buddhist or Animist. We have already published one booklet in Karen language about God's annual Holy Days. This was completely done by the Karen Church of God brethren themselves. Legacy Institute only provided the financial means to accomplish the project. This is a wonderful demonstration of what God's people can do if they just put their minds, hearts and hands into doing the Work. The Karen are very proud of this little booklet. We have distributed only about 30 booklets so far. But God does great things by starting with a grain of mustard seed!

Education Project: We have now been able to finance the education of 6 Karen children. Thailand has a much better public school system than Burma. But the Karen are refugees and are not legally permitted to attend public schools. Some have been attending Buddhist temple schools taught by monks. While they do receive education there, one of the problems our church parents face is that the children are taught to pray to the Lord Buddha! Again, Legacy Institute seeks additional funding to expand this program.

Emergency Aid Project: Through the generosity of Western brethren, members of refugee church families have been able to receive medical attention and get needed operations; pay for housing and food, and sometimes even travel to help relatives in need.

There is NO public welfare system in Thailand. Even if there were, the Karen in Thailand are refugees and would not receive help from a government program. They must rely on assistance from some non-government agencies and their brethren around the world.

Last year, a radical Karen terrorist group calling themselves “God’s Army” took over the Burmese Embassy in Thailand and held hostages. A compromise was reached and they were allowed to go back into the jungle along the Burma – Thai border. Recently this same group came back into Thailand and took over a hospital and held the patients hostage. The Thai police and army raided the hospital, attacked the terrorists, and killed them all. This produced a very negative reaction in Thailand toward Karen army members and the Karen refugees in general. One of our families hid out in their small apartment in Bangkok for 4 days. Their phone was taped and a plain-clothes policeman moved in next door to them. It was a very frightening experience!

Gloria and I were able to arrange a meeting with one of the King’s army generals who is head of intelligence for Northern Thailand. We arranged for Saw Jack, the father of this family to meet and talk to him. The general agreed to place Jack and his family under his protection. They now can move about freely and Jack is even able to take computer lessons in order to get a better job once they immigrate to America. We can be thankful to God that we do not have to face such perils. Jack used to be a Karen Army officer. If he and his family were to be arrested, they could potentially be sent back to Burma to face prison or even execution. Legacy funds helped Jack be able to travel to meet this General; helps feed and house his family; and is supporting his education. But most important of all are your prayers.

If it weren’t for the contact with the royal family that Herbert Armstrong made in the early 70’s and continued for 15 years of his life, we would not have been able to receive such favor for this humble refugee Church of God family. It pays to cast your bread upon the waters. It truly DOES come back!

Visiting Program: After Passover, Gloria and I will begin visiting our scattered brethren in Thailand at least once each month. We have church families in the North and along the Burma border in the West. Some live in remote areas. Again, your donations allow us to travel and do this. We could not afford the expense on our own. We can even arrange for Uthaiwan, the deaf Thai member to travel to Bangkok once each month to be with us on the Sabbath. For those of you who have been praying to help us find her; yes, we found her, and spent a weekend visiting with her in Southern Thailand.

Feast of Tabernacles: This year we will be holding the Feast of Tabernacles in Thailand. A small group of church members from the US and Europe will join us and those Karen families that can get permission to travel to the Feast. Legacy Institute is sponsoring this site as an unaffiliated site. We believe it IS possible for brethren from different fellowships of the Churches of God to meet together at the Feast in harmony and peace. For those of you who have not decided where you will attend this year, please consider joining us in Thailand this year. It will be the experience of a lifetime. One of the days of the Feast we will visit the actual site in the mountains of the North where the king started the crop replacement project partially funded by Ambassador Foundation. This project was started by King Bhumibol in 1971 to teach hill tribes to grow fruits and

vegetables instead of opium. It will be quite an eye-opener because this is where our support of the king's projects actually began. Now THOUSANDS of hill tribes' lives have been changed and the king was able to eradicate 99% of opium production in Thailand! You can be a part of this year's Feast in Thailand and see with your own eyes the fruits of your tithes and offerings that went to support the king's project. To get further information about the Thailand Feast of Tabernacles, contact one of the numbers at the end of this newsletter.

Well, that is all for now. I've got to get back to my taxes! I wish I could spend more time telling all of you more details about what God is doing through all of you in this remote corner of the world. It would be so much more fun than filling out tax forms!

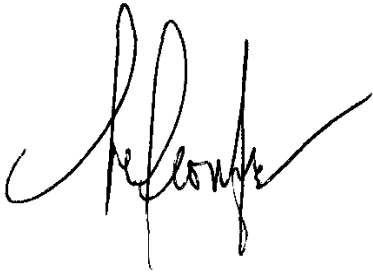
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Until next time, God be with you all. Have a fruitful spiritual feast during Passover and UB!

In Jesus' 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.*

P. S. Please let us know if you need us to send this letter as part of the e-mail and not as an attachment.