



LEGACY INSTITUTE

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Chiangmai, Thailand

July 16, 2000

Dear Friends,

I am writing you from the northern Thai city of Chiangmai. I am on a long weekend visit to the Karen brethren on the Myanmar (Burma) border and the northern Thailand area. Gloria is still in Dallas visiting with our two sons and the grandchildren. Of course, I miss them all!

On Friday evening I fellowshiped and participated in a bible study with three Karen families in one of their houses about 2 miles from the Myanmar border. All are excited when I come because it is the only time they have any kind of bible study or Sabbath worship service. Two of the Karen people who attended the bible study have started observing God's laws and want to be baptized.

Then yesterday, on the Sabbath, we had a bible study together in my hotel room in Chiangmai with 13 Karen who live in the northern provinces of Chiangmai and Mae Sariang. We discussed what we will be doing in the Kingdom of God in our "Father's House" (*see John 14*). We discussed the emphasis Jesus places on obedience and the role of the Holy Spirit. It is clear to me that my wife Gloria and I have a role to play, a calling from God, to serve the needs (both spiritual as well as physical) of those God has called, is calling and will call in this part of the world.

A big problem our Karen brothers and sisters face is financial. They are refugees. While some are able to find limited employment with non-government agencies operating along the border, others have no chance to earn a living. When I worked for Ambassador Foundation, we bought land and set up a small farming and animal husbandry program to help them become self-sufficient. This was about 1984. But then the Karen Army split into two factions who started fighting each other. As a result of this split, it became dangerous for our Karen brethren to remain on the farm and they moved into villages. Through the years they continued to be supported by first, the Ambassador Foundation, and then later, the parent church organization. Up until now most still received limited financial support for food and housing. But circumstances are rapidly changing. Over the past year their stipend for housing and food has been significantly reduced. Some have been told, "Since you are refugees, you can either go back to Burma or live in a border refugee camp." Going back to Burma is not a solution. They would be imprisoned or killed because of their past connection with the Karen Liberation Army. Going back to the refugee camp means subsistence living, but no hope for their future lives and no hope for the future lives of their children.

Besides their financial support getting reduced or even cut off, they face another problem -- a *spiritual* one. Church sponsored Sabbath services are no longer being held in Thailand. There are no church sponsored Annual Holy Day services. The doctrinal teachings that brought them into the church in the first place are rapidly disappearing. Now our brethren here face a very difficult decision. Do they

stand up for the truth they truly believe and thereby risk losing their meager stipend completely? Or do they rely on God's Grace and Mercy? It is a great and difficult test of faith they are going through right now. Some have already chosen and now have no income.

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What does this mean to you and me? It means this. Some of these scattered brothers and sisters may decide to join one COG fellowship or another. That is up to them. If they do, perhaps that particular church organization will assist them financially. In the meantime, Legacy Institute will assist as resources allow. Legacy Institute is NOT a "church." We are instead, a non-profit, charitable foundation. Our reason for helping them is not because they have left or not left, joined or not joined any particular group. Their organizational affiliation or lack of it should not and does not matter to us. It is, pure and simple, that they are brethren in trouble and need help.

While some of Legacy's assistance is for food and shelter, our policy is to help the adults and children receive an education so that they can become self-sufficient in the future. We will not just give them fish. *We will help them learn to catch fish.*

Because of this situation which our Karen brethren now face, Legacy Institute will initially support fully or in part 6 refugee families until God opens the door for them to become independent and self-supporting or free from their refugee status. God has previously and miraculously done this with 2 other Karen refugee families who are now living in America. So please remember and consider them. They are in the middle of some very difficult and traumatic times right now.

PRAYER UPDATES

Jack and Family: They are now living safely in Chiang Mai. The Children are in school and Jack is taking classes in computers and English. So far he has not been accepted as a "person of concern" refugee and is not eligible for resettlement in the US. Jack is presently helping Lazum Brang and us prepare booklets in the Karen and Burmese languages.

Ne Ne Po: Juliana's youngest son is doing well. He is now quite active; has put on weight and has no more "wheezing" coming from his lungs.

Mehm Po Saw: Please remember Mehm Po Saw in your prayers. He has quite a bit of scarring in his lungs from tuberculosis. During the rainy season (now) he has much difficulty breathing and is very weak.

General Hla Thoo: Please remember to pray for General Hla Thoo. He is the father of 6 daughters, 4 of which are COG members. He is in the hospital vomiting blood. They still do not know what the problem is.

Lazum Brang: Pastor of our brethren in Kachinland is currently in Rangoon trying to get a Myanmar passport. Since he is officially registered with the government as a minister of the gospel, he is having much difficulty. Travel by Christian ministers is severely restricted by the Myanmar government. The officials will also try to extort much more money for the passport. He is also visiting David Yegan, Pastor of COG7 in Rangoon and Saw Ley Bey, Pastor of LCG in the delta area.

Uthaiwan Han: We are currently working on renewing Uthaiwan's Thailand passport. Her old one expired. There are many regulations, old and new, that we have to deal with and what seems to be

unending red tape. But this is an important step in our quest to get her back to her daughter and granddaughter in California. She is very unhappy and extremely frustrated. She wants to get back as soon as possible. But we continue to explain to her that it is a long process. Pray that God will speed

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up the process and that all will go smoothly at the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the US Embassy.

LEGACY INSTITUTE CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please remember that it has become necessary to change the Legacy Institute mailing address. Please send your letters and donations to:

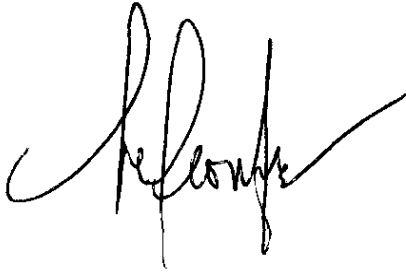
Legacy Institute, PO Box 7, Dundee, Ohio 44624 USA

For those of you who receive this letter by email, please remember to notify us if you change your email address. We usually get about 10-20 coming back to us each month. So, please keep us updated.

Well, that's all for now. Please remember us always in your prayers. Without God we can do nothing. Your prayers can and do make a big difference on how much we can achieve with small resources. We had one lady ask us to cancel her LEGACY newsletter because she had no money to donate. *Please DO NOT think this way!* All your prayers are **far** more important than money. We thank all of you for praying for us. PLEASE don't stop! We also pray daily for all of our brethren around the world, wherever they are and whatever their difficult trials might be. We ALL need each other's prayers and help as God leads us forward, together, in fulfillment of His great master plan.

Until next time.

In the Lord's 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.

For any questions concerning donations and other gifts to Legacy Institute, please contact Legacy Treasurer, Anita Showers. Telephone: (330) 852-2709, Fax: (330) 852-4766, Email: mshowers@wilkshire.net

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