



LEGACY INSTITUTE

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Bangkok, Thailand

August 31, 2000

Dear Friends and fellow-workers,

I have good news and I have bad news. First the good news. The Thai government is considering a new law giving citizenship to children of refugees born in Thailand since 1976. This affects children of Mon, Shan, Haw and Karen who fled Burma because of the civil war, including the children of Church of God members. The parents will not be granted citizenship, but will have legal status as foreign nationals permitted to reside in Thailand. This could be a very important blessing for our brethren because it means the children can freely go to school, work, get passports, etc. Their parents will no longer have to worry about looking over their shoulders all the time and no longer have to fear repatriation to Burma. This will be the first breath of real freedom (in this physical world) for some of our COG brethren for over 20 years. The catch is that all the documentation will still need to be worked out and our COG families need to prove that their children were all born in Thailand. But with patience and the blessings of Almighty God, we should be able to see this status granted by the end of next year. Please fervently pray that God will smooth things out for our Karen and Mon families to receive Thai citizenship for their children.

Now for the bad news. Aung San Suu Kyi is in her sixth day of a standoff with Burma's ruling junta. Suu Kyi won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her pro-democracy campaign in Burma. Her party overwhelmingly won parliamentary elections, but the military refused to step down. Suu Kyi led a popular uprising in 1988. Hundreds, some say thousands, were killed in the uprising and the movement was ruthlessly quashed. Suu Kyi won the popular vote but was placed under house arrest where she remains a symbol of freedom to many Burmese. Six days ago she decided to break out of her confines and travel outside of Rangoon (Yangon.) She was stopped in the suburb of Dala by police. She and a small group of her followers are camped out in makeshift tents alongside the road in the monsoon rains. They vow to continue the standoff. What does this mean to us?

We should have sympathy for someone who is trying to effect change in the non-violent style of Gandhi. Madame Suu Kyi has suffered greatly over the past 12 years (including the Burma government not permitting her dying husband to see her before his eminent death). This political unrest could also affect our brethren inside Burma who may have to travel during the Feast of Tabernacles season. Last year, the Burmese shut down the border and Gloria and I could not get visas to cross into Burma for the Feast. Lazum Brang, Pastor of the Kachinland Church of God was stuck in Thailand because of the closed border crossings and barely made it back to Kachinland in time to take care of the Brethren gathered there for the Fall Festival.

For some of our brethren around the world, keeping the Feast of Tabernacles is far more than deciding between the Holiday Inn or the Radisson. For some living in Africa, Southeast Asia and other parts of the world; it can mean deciding if it is safe for their families to even try to keep the Feast together with

other brethren. Our world is getting more dangerous all the time. We who have the privilege of enjoying freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of travel and a host of other freedoms take for granted what we have been given. But it was not given to us without a price.

Gloria and I recently saw a movie entitled *The Patriot* starring Mel Gibson. Though the battle scenes were violent and graphic, the setting of the American War of Independence was based on actual events and, to some extent, actual people. The story depicted the involvement of a South Carolina Militiaman and his family in the war that forged the United States of America. What was particularly sobering for me was that one of my ancestors, a man named John Sexton, actually was a revolutionary soldier who fought in the battle of Cowpens as depicted in one of the final battle scenes. Men and women like my Great-great-great-great-grandfather shed their blood and sacrificed their livelihoods to fight for the freedoms their children – you and me – enjoy. Freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech! Most of the world has never experienced these freedoms. Do we really appreciate the freedoms God gave us and for which our forefathers died? I wonder....

God has given us special freedom to preach the Gospel freely without restraint. He has given us the financial resources to support scattering the seeds of His Kingdom. But how long will this last? If we believe prophecy, America and other western countries will not always be in the position among the nations that we have now. Already, the freedoms we enjoy are under relentless political attack. This will lead to legislated abrogation of those freedoms. Neither will we always be in a financial position to support the preaching of the Good News of the Kingdom of God. How much time do we have left to do the job we have been given to do? We don't know. All we know for sure is that we have a job to do and time is running out. We CANNOT and MUST NOT take this freedom and opportunity for granted. We must do all we can to complete the job given to us before Satan succeeds at stopping us completely.

A recent brief article in the Bangkok Post (buried on page 5) talked about a new book by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the powerful Vatican official who oversees Roman Catholic doctrine. In the book, Cardinal Ratzinger, a top aide to Pope John Paul II, claims primacy for the Roman Catholic faith. A Berlin magazine, *Focus*, quotes Cardinal Ratzinger, talking about relations with Protestant churches, as saying that:

“the goal of the Catholic Church is to unite Christianity in a single faith with Catholics taking the lead.”

Some might think this a wonderful goal of Christian unity and cooperation. But, if successful, what will this do to our freedom of worship? And what will this do to our ability to preach the True Gospel?

Thailand FOT

Plans for the Feast of Tabernacles in Thailand are coming along. We have about 28 Karen from 6 families wanting to attend. We will have 25 additional participants from the U.S. flying over to join us. Gloria and I are traveling to the north to arrange permission with the Thai authorities for our Karen to travel to Chiangmai to keep the Feast. Please pray that all will go smoothly. Also, please remember that while the U.S. participants can take care of their own expenses to travel to the Feast, the Karen members require financial assistance to attend. If any of you have more than you need to attend the Feast, please remember our Karen brethren in their need. This is the one chance they have to fellowship with other COG members – and experiencing that they are also a part of the larger family of God. Also, if any of you have additional hymnals (old or new) we need about 10 for our Karen (most can sing in English.)

Bible Fund

One of the things Gloria and I have come across here in Asia is the shocking continual shortage of bibles in the various ethnic languages. How can the people study their bibles if they don't have one!?

So, we have started a *BIBLE FUND* to purchase bibles in various languages for distribution. When we can, we will try to get translations of the Authorized Version (KJV). We are now looking for bibles printed in the Burmese, Kachin, Karen, and Lisu languages. Also, it has come to our attention that there is a shortage of bibles among COG groups in Brazil and Angola. So we also plan to purchase and distribute bibles in the Portuguese language as well. Anyone wishing to donate to purchase bibles in these languages, please designate your donation: *Legacy Institute – Bible Fund*. We have already found 20 Burmese language bibles for \$3.50 each. So far, we have not found copies in the other languages. They are either out of stock or they only have the New Testament available. We continue to look for a good source.

In closing, I want to wish all of you the very best during this Fall Festival season. We at Legacy Institute pray for you all that the Spirit of God will be stirred up this Feast for all of us to push forward in the Work we have been given to do. There are many areas of the developing world that have not been reached with the *REAL* Gospel message. They may have been given a message ABOUT Jesus, but they have not been given the true message HE brought. That is our job. We need to get on with it.

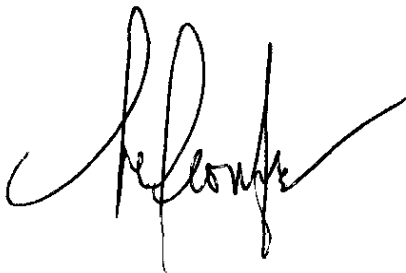
LEGACY INSTITUTE CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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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.

In service to our Lord and Savior,



Leon Sexton

WHAT IS LEGACY INSTITUTE?

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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

additional postscript

As this letter is being sent off, the confrontation between Suu Kyi and the Burmese Army has ended. Their roadside camp was raided and all were arrested. But the story is not over. Madame Suu Kyi

will continue to stage non-violent protests and the Burma government will continue to react with force. Our people could be affected by any future confrontations. Please pray for their peace and safety during the Festival season.