



LEGACY INSTITUTE

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Mae Sot, Thailand

May 7, 2001

Dear Friends and Fellow-servants,

I am writing from the border town of Mae Sot, Thailand. Mae Sot is situated directly on the Moei River which forms part of the Western border between Thailand and Burma. Mae Sot is a smuggler's paradise where teak, jade, gems and many other items are smuggled across the border into Thailand. I call Mae Sot a "wild west" town because it is populated by traders, smugglers, drug-dealers, soldiers of war-lord armies and a few Church of God members who belong to the Karen ethnic minority.

All of our members here were at one time a part of the Karen National Union or the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA.) The KNLA has been at war with the Burmese government for over 40 years. Davidson Ley Bey, son of the late COG pastor Saw Ley Bey, holds "house church" Sabbath services here for 3 families of Karen church members. All the adults are refugees from Burma, but are slowly working to establish themselves permanently in Thailand so that their children will have a future. There is no future for them in Burma where minorities are routinely conscripted as forced labor or as porters to carry arms and ammunition for military units. Sometimes they are even used as human minesweepers. Higher education and employment opportunities are not an option for them in Burma.

Gloria and I are here in Mae Sot because of the memorial service of our friend General Hla Thoo of the KNLA. He was the father of 7 daughters and 1 son. Four of his daughters and their husbands are COG members. General Hla Thoo died of heart failure at the age of 78. We tried to get to Mae Sot to attend his funeral service, but our plane could not land because of the weather and we were forced to divert to another town some distance away. We ended up having to backtrack to Chiangmai and fly to Mae Sot two days later when the weather improved. I was disappointed about this because it meant we had to miss the actual funeral service for the general. But God had other ideas.

As soon as we arrived I was unexpectedly invited by the General's widow to address a gathering of Karen people at a memorial service scheduled for the next day. We expected only local friends and family members. You can imagine my surprise when I walked in to find present General Bo Mya, Commander of the Karen Army and head of the coalition of ethnic forces against the Rangoon government, along with many other Karen leaders. I had no idea they would be present. Therefore, what I had to say in my speech would also be heard by literally the top leadership of the Karen people! I was scheduled to speak sandwiched between the generals and the Baptist ministers. Unaware that I was going to address the Karen leadership, I had already chosen as my topic a subject Mr. Armstrong used when addressing world leaders – *Give versus Get*. I had chosen this because General Hla Thoo had always been an honorable leader. I applied these 2 basic philosophies of life to leadership and how they impact the lives of those led. Then I talked about how a Godly leader must be humble, just

and not greedy for personal gain. I quoted 3 or 4 scriptures from the words of King David and Solomon in Proverbs to back this up. It was short, to the point and was translated into the Karen language by an experienced translator.

After the service, Gloria and I both came to the same conclusion. Had we arrived in Mae Sot when we were supposed to, we would have departed before the memorial service. Instead, the bad weather ensured our attendance at the memorial service where I ended up delivering a message to the Karen government leadership. Did God orchestrate this for His purpose? We believe so.

Give versus Get is more apropos now than ever before. I just read an article in the Bangkok Post talking about why there are so many gold shops in Bangkok's Chinatown. The article explained that people want to show off their wealth by accumulating and wearing gold. In Asia status is very important. People judge your status by what car you drive; what watch you wear; what handbag you carry; and what pen you use. Bangkok has more Mercedes Benz, per capita, than any other city in Asia. Yet, you can cross the border into Burma and find people starving and dieing every day because of war and self-seeking government policies. Juliana is one of our Karen members. She assists in a refugee health clinic. She told me she had over 400 malaria patients, ALL PREGNANT WOMEN! That's in only one border clinic. She has so many because these people are driven into the jungle by Burmese soldiers and have to sleep in makeshift shelters in the monsoon rains. They soon contract malaria.

You don't have to go to Burma to see poverty and death. The slums of Bangkok have enough to make even the most jaded sick at heart. AIDS and drug use are rampant. Death is the usual way out.

We live in a world controlled by lust and greed. Those in positions of power and authority spend much of their time figuring out ways to stay in power. Their goal is to obtain even more wealth and power and use it to feed their bloated egos. There is no end to their covetousness. They are the rulers in a system that is NOT GOD'S!! This is Satan's world. Satan has designed its ruling mechanism and system of operation. All roads in this world's system of greed lead to the death and destruction of mankind. This world is truly Babylon. We are all to come out of this world's system and not be partakers of her sins.

In recent years I have seen a disturbing trend in the Churches of God. Some of us have turned away from the pursuit of the Kingdom of God to the pursuit of the kingdom of wealth and worldly success. I am not saying that wealth or success per se is wrong. But I am saying that the *PURSUIT* of wealth is wrong! It is wrong because there is no end to it. It reminds me of the scripture (Luke 12:15-20) that talks about the rich man whose barns were too small to hold all his goods. Instead of sharing with the less fortunate, he decided to build even BIGGER barns to hold it all! God took his life that same night. What good did all that wealth do him in the end? Imagine the satisfaction of such a man on his deathbed IF, after working to successfully provide for his family and the future of his children, he had dispensed the remaining wealth to the poor and underprivileged after giving generous offerings to God?

Brethren, we should NEVER get caught up in the worldly pursuit of status and wealth. It leads to jealousy, greed and covetousness. We must avoid coveting at all cost (James 4:1-5). Our King is not of this world. His ways are not of this world. And neither should our ways be of this world.

Chiang Mai, Thailand

May 27, 2001

Gloria and I are here in the northern capital of Thailand observing the Day of Pentecost with the Karen members who live here. We had 10 adults and 6 children present. Jack Aungmin showed me a booklet he just finished translating into Karen entitled "*The Fall of Babylon.*" This booklet was developed from a message I gave about the prophecies of Daniel, Matthew 24 and Revelation and the fall of Satan's system. Jack, David Mya Maung and other Karen brethren are translating more material concerning the false doctrines of Christmas, Easter Sunday and unclean meats.

Our translation efforts are already bearing fruit. We just received letters from 2 Karen hill tribe refugee families who read the Holy Day booklet in the Karen language. One family has a traditional Christian background. The other family was *animist*. Here is the English translation of a letter written in the Karen language from the father of one of the families:

*"May 26, 2001*

*Dear Kyaw Jack & Nya Pet,*

*May God bless you and pour great blessing abundantly to you and your children. Kyaw Jack and Nya Pet thank you very much you gave me the booklet (Karen language Holy Day booklet) to read. I had read this booklet and made me helpful to under stand more, give strength for me. I am thinking in my mind that if we will accept Saturday 7 day is Sabbath day we also really will have to observe all his Holy days that He command. If we do not observe it we can't understand. We must observe these all very basically. So I am asking to you please send more of the booklet you have for me and I will study and know more the truth.*

*Now I am really accept and recognize that Saturday is a Sabbath Day. So please send me the booklet about Church doctrine and we will read more and will understand more and can consider more. Because you gave me the booklet to read it I understand more about God's Holy Days and Feast. It is very helpful for me and also other people are very interested about God's Holy Days too.*

*Now I decide my self that I will repent and observe and follow Church of God doctrine rule and law. So we will understand more about Church doctrine. I hope that you will please provide for us.*

*Thank you for your kindness.*

*Yours,*

*Kyaw Wah"*

They only learned about God's Truth through one small booklet. God's process of calling is truly miraculous. We have no fancy church buildings in Thailand. We have only a handful of members. They are all poor in material things. We do not even have the traditional church organization we are all so used to! But it doesn't matter to God. He is using us as humble instruments of His will and fruit is being born. God's Ways are truly wonderful.

Now let me read you a passage from a letter I just received from Lazum Brang, our Kachin evangelist in Burma, talking about efforts on the China border:

*"May 16, 2001*

*The young people coming from China border all are very eager for God's words. They all have already arrived back their homes safely on May 5<sup>th</sup>. But Miss Roi Seng Ja alone preceeded to jade mine area (Western Kachinland) for propagation the bible truths among her relative. Miss Lu Nan is only staying with us together at my home, and every night she continually studies the bible and the true faiths of the Church of God.*

*Please do not be disappooint for coming to see the Kachin brethren. In fact, we must confess that we all received the true doctrinal beliefs and faiths through you and Gloria. Our life times were absolutely changed by your teachings; and we now can share the true message of God among our own people.*

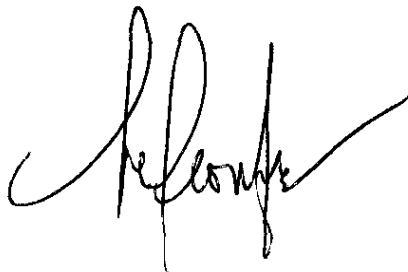
*Yesterday evening I also received a letter from China border. One of our church members wrote me that they have found a ready made church compound with building there. But it is very expensive - about Lap 20,00,000 (\$USD 4000) and it is a very big amount. The one I found is more better than others. The background story is: A Karen old teacher – Pay Gyi was the first Church of God member on that area during the time pastor Herbert W. Armstrong was living. He had a great aim for the gospel work there among the Kachin people. And he built a very big house, and he has already sacrificed it for the service of God. But he passed away before he has done more work there. But he has a niece – lady teacher there and remain. For this building it was become some confliction between lady teacher and the remnant relatives. Because of great confliction among them, lady teacher sold it for 8,00.000 Kyats purchased by Chinese trader. Last year I went there and I discussed with the Chinese trader. And I have agreement with them that if I can able to refund the former payment they will let it to me again. But, maybe 10,00,000 Kyats now (approximately \$2000 US dollars).*

*Your next arrival, I will call you up to Bhamaw, China border, then you can determine easily. But, it must not be our willing, must be the willing of our Almighty God. I thank you so much for your kindness, diligence, help, generosity and support. May God bless you and Gloria in your ministries very abundantly.*

*Your fellow-servant in the services of Jesus Christ,  
Pastor & Mrs. Lazum Brang  
KACHINLAND“*

The Holy Spirit is becoming very active in this part of the world. I am amazed at how many people are seeking the truth of God's word. Some of the seeds that were planted seem to have laid dormant for over a decade. Suddenly they are sprouting forth. It is now up to us who have been trained for years in the truth of God's Word, AND given the resources and blessings from Almighty God, to make sure these new sprouts are watered and nurtured. We have been made the stewards of God's harvest. Let's make sure we don't disappoint Him.

In service to the King of Kings,



Leon Sexton

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