



LEGACY INSTITUTE

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*Chiang Mai, Thailand*

May 31, 2002

Dear Fellow-workers in God's fields,

The ***Legacy Institute Leadership Training Center*** officially opened for classes in Chiang Mai, Thailand on Monday, May 27. Exactly 1 year ago, in May 2001, we made the decision at a Legacy Institute board meeting at our former home in Dallas to open a training center in northern Thailand to train young men and women for the Work of God in Asia. The need for converted, trained workers to help evangelize in South and Southeast Asia is paramount. Jesus said, "*My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work. Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? Behold. I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are ripe already to harvest.*" **John 4:34-35**

These words keep ringing loud and clear in the heads of those of us who are committed to finishing the Work of God. But we can't do it alone. The Holy Spirit is VERY active in Asia, and more and more people every day are coming to the knowledge of the Truth. Who will feed them? Who will pastor them? Gloria and I are only 2 people.

Jesus also said, "*The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray the Lord of the harvest, that He will send laborers into His harvest.*" **Matthew 9:37-38**

One year ago, we didn't have the funds to start a school. We did not know WHERE the money would come from! We had no idea where to locate or even **how** to start the school. We had no teachers! And we had no idea what facilities, if any, might be available. All we DID KNOW was that a center to train young people for God's Work in Asia was necessary. If God wanted it to happen, He was going to have to supply the means **TO MAKE IT HAPPEN** and show us where and when He wanted it to begin.

*We made the decision to move ahead into the unknown entirely trusting God.* The birth of the Legacy Institute Leadership Training Center is an act of FAITH – pure and simple!

Now, only one year later, I can only comment that it has been miraculous!! There is no other possible explanation for what has been achieved. We now have adequate classroom facilities, 6 teachers, and 12 Karen and Kachin tribal students beginning classes! Two Karen Church of God families have even moved from the border to help us. I am not ashamed to tell you there have been times I have thought we bit off a lot more than we could chew! But the credit goes to God. He wanted the school -- so He got the school! And in *only one year's time!*

It has not been easy! This last year, especially since the Feast of Tabernacles, has just been a blur of activity. The pressure has been intense. And Satan has been very active trying to stop us! The scriptures tell us that, *"we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."*  
**Eph 6:12**

It has been, and continues to be, a constant battle. But the results are well worth the headaches and sacrifice it takes to get the job done.

We are now teaching Bible, Health and Hygiene, Spoken and Written English, Basic Computer, Music, Voice, Sports and Vocational Organic Agriculture. Our teachers are all volunteers who pay their own way over to teach for one year. They are (besides Gloria, our youngest son Bronson, and myself); Heidi Hanisko from Ohio; Marjorie Riggs from Hawaii; Bonnie Turner from Texas; and (for the summer months) Sally Hamilton and Matthew Bates, both from California.

We have 9 Karen and 3 Kachin students from different religious backgrounds. Three are children of COG members. 8 more come from traditional Christian families. We even have one girl who is Buddhist! All are required to take the Bible classes and attend Sabbath services. However, we will not cram God's truth down their throats. Our job is to TEACH the Truth. God will do the CALLING. Our prayers are that God will chose from among them and send them into His Spiritual Harvest. God's job is to choose them. Our job is to train them.

On Sunday, May 26, we held a brief opening ceremony for the school. Our students, teachers and Thailand Church of God members attended. I gave a brief speech, each teacher gave a heartfelt icebreaker, and the students beautifully sang songs in Karen, Kachin and Burmese. Especially inspiring for me was hearing the US national anthem by Bonnie and Heidi.

Below is a transcript of my speech:

## Opening Ceremony

**Legacy Institute Leadership Training Center**  
**May 26, 2002**

*“Legacy Institute Leadership Training Center in Chiang Mai, Thailand is the fruit of a long-time dream. My wife and I have shared this dream for many years now.*

*It is a dream forged in blood, sweat, and tears.... and sacrifice. It is a dream fashioned from TRUTH and VISION. It is a wonderful dream.*

*...But, it is not my dream. I am not the father of this dream. Another man dreamed the same dream. His name was Herbert W. Armstrong. He founded Ambassador College where the motto was, “Recapture True Values.” It was a school where young men and women were taught to become leaders for a new world – a world where Righteousness and Peace would reign supreme. It was a school where students were taught HOW TO LIVE, not just how to earn a living. It was a school that brought truth, education, music and joy to many thousands, and it was the school where I met my wife.*

*Mr. Armstrong wanted to plant a seed of this dream in Thailand. He wanted to plant that seed in 1971 when he met King Bhumibol for the first time —the same year Thai language was first offered at Ambassador, and the same year I arrived as a freshman student.*

*The dream was to bring the Ambassador way of leadership training to the hill tribe peoples of northern Thailand. He wanted to send young Ambassador students to teach through word and through example. He respected King Bhumibol and wanted to help him. But 1971 was not the year that the dream was to bear fruit.*

*In 1980, 12 Ambassador students were sent to northern Thailand to teach refugees from Laos. The goal was to prepare the refugees for new lives in a new land. This Ambassador project fulfilled only a small part of the dream. It ended two and a half years later – but the dream was not to die there. There was still more to come.*

*Herbert Armstrong died in 1986, the dream yet to be realized. Now 16 years later, we are standing on the threshold of fulfilling that dream. We are opening a school in northern Thailand to teach the leaders of tomorrow.*

*But the dream is not mine. And the dream was not Herbert Armstrong’s. The Father of this dream sits on a throne in heaven and directs the paths of men. It is He, in His supreme wisdom, who authored this dream.*

*You, me, and others yet to come, will share in the fulfillment of this dream, given decades ago to an old man with white hair and a lion’s voice.*

*Today we officially open the Legacy Institute Leadership Training Center. The ceremony will be short and simple. Nevertheless, I am humbled by it.*

*And I am inspired by the vision that brought about this day.*

*So I thank Our Heavenly Father for giving the vision and allowing us to share in it. And I honor the memory of Herbert W. Armstrong who brought the vision to Thailand over 30 years ago.*

*May God bless this school and all who pass through its doors. And May God grant us all the inspiration, dedication and the empowerment by His Holy Spirit to pass the vision on to those He chooses to send us to be trained to be leaders in the new and wonderful world of tomorrow.”*

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Once again, THANK YOU all for your love, support and prayers to the Almighty for the success of the Legacy Institute Leadership Training Center.

### **Visit to Thailand by Lazum Brang**

I always enjoy getting together with our dear friend and God's evangelist, Lazum Brang. His boundless energy and zeal for God are contagious! So when I got a letter saying that he would be coming to Mae Sot on the border of Thailand and Burma (Myanmar), Gloria and I both were happy to have an opportunity to visit with him once again. For 3 years, we have spent Passover and Unleavened Bread with the brethren in Kachinland. But this year, we decided to go to India where there is much work to be done and missed being with our Kachin brothers and sisters. Gloria and I traveled to Mae Sot just before Pentecost to meet Pastor Brang and the Karen COG members living there.

This time it took Lazum Brang 11 days to get to the border from his home area because of the monsoon season. Burma's roads are in very poor repair during the dry season, let alone the monsoon! This time he had to travel by boat part of the way because the roads were impassible.

We discussed recent political developments inside Burma and developments in the Work of God. Lazum Brang has expanded his evangelistic activities into the Karen area of central Burma. Brang's wife is Karen. He and his family now spend part of the year living near his wife's family so that he can preach the True Gospel to the surrounding villages. Fruit is being born. Recently, a Baptist minister and his entire family made the decision to accept the truth of the

Sabbath and Holy Days. This man is a graduate of a 4-year seminary and is quite active in his area. He was, of course, disfellowshipped by his former denomination. He is now preaching the Truth to his own people and I believe we will see much more fruit coming from the Karen tribal areas of eastern Burma.

Pastor Brang also reported that the COG7th Day fellowship in Rangoon (approx. 12 people) has accepted the annual Holy Days and will be keeping the Feast of Tabernacles this year – all except their pastor David Ye Gyan, who is not convinced. Since Pastor Brang started teaching the doctrine of first and festival tithing to the brethren in Burma and Kachinland; so many more will now be able to attend the Feast that he is considering holding it in Rangoon (Yangon) this year. Transportation to Rangoon from the various distant regions of Burma is much easier than traveling to Kachinland.

Previous to the Christian Leadership Training Program we held in Mae Sot, Thailand last year, Pastor Brang did not teach the tithing principle. He had seen far too much abuse by ministers in his former association. But after a presentation I made discussing the biblical foundation for tithing, he confessed that he had been wrong in not teaching this doctrine. As a result, he is now teaching tithing to his people, and many more will be able to keep the Feast *and* more funds will now be available to expand the Work of Preaching the Gospel in Burma, Kachinland and the border regions of China. God has ultimate wisdom. He knows intimately the inner workings of our hearts. He knows that if He did not teach the principle of tithing in the Holy Bible, few would ever save enough to get to the Feast of Tabernacles. God knows our human nature.

### **Bible Training School in Kachinland**

Lazum Brang has been trying to construct a Bible training school in his own home village of Na Mawn in Kachinland. But, Satan and his worldly minions have done their best to thwart this project. Western brethren already donated enough to purchase land and construction materials. But it has been difficult to gather the needed material. There is no sawmill close by, so the wood had to be hand-hewn from teak trees. This has been very time consuming. Cement is very hard to get and had to be sent from Mandalay. There was a train derailment on the Mandalay-Myitkyina line and the train plunged into a river. The cement dealer claimed the shipment was lost. After lengthy investigations by the train officials, it was discovered that the dealer in Mandalay had never sent the cement in the first place. He tried to cheat Pastor Brang who had paid for the cement in advance. Almost a year has been lost because of the investigation and confusion surrounding the train wreck. But the crooked dealer was eventually forced to give back the money.

The Burmese government suppresses the teaching of religions other than Buddhism and usually does not permit the building of Christian schools. So, when envious church leaders in Pastor Brang's village heard that he was going to construct a Bible school, they took this information to the government authorities. The local authorities issued a ban forbidding the building of any Church of God Bible school in Na Mawn village. But our story doesn't end there.

When a wealthy local Chinese man heard about this, he provided land *outside the town* for the building of the school.

Construction of the “English language school” (*instead of “Bible” school*) will begin after this year’s monsoon season. Meanwhile, Pastor Brang still teaches the Bible to young people in his bamboo house.

God’s Will is not thwarted. If He wants a Bible school in Kachinland to teach His Truth and to train young people to evangelize in this part of the world, He will see that, sooner or later, the school becomes a reality.

We are all engaged in a spiritual war. We who are chosen of God are sent on missions to do His Divine Will. We are the instruments of accomplishing His purpose on earth. We are the warriors of God. Satan and his demons will do all they can to stop us and destroy our will and ability to fight. He will attack us by using our personal weaknesses against us. He will attack our health. He will go after our family members. He will try to divide us against ourselves. He never sleeps. He never tires. He is ruthless. He is cunning. And he is relentless.

God calls him “ENEMY”. Satan is the enemy of truth and light. And he is OUR enemy. Wherever God chooses to spread the precious light of His Glorious Truth to a sick and dying world, Satan immediately begins his campaign to uproot the seeds of light.

This last year all of us involved in the mission God has given Legacy Institute, experienced Satan’s wrath and his attempts to stop the Work we are doing. We get wore down. We become weary. It is a constant battle. Please step up your prayers on our behalf. We are on the front lines in God’s war against the spiritual darkness of this present evil world – Satan’s world. We need you all to stand with us!

I will have more good news about the progress of the Leadership Training Center in the next letter.

### **Feast of Tabernacles in Thailand and India**

Preparations are underway for the Festival sites in northern Thailand and southern India. But Satan is angry.

Just after Pentecost, Lazum Brang returned over the border into Burma. The next day, fighting erupted between Thai soldiers and the Wa State Army (a client drug army affiliated with the Burmese military). Burma closed the border and the entire Thai army is on alert. For some time now, the Burmese have been moving their soldiers into position along the border in order to protect the heroin and amphetamine production of their clients, the United Wa State Army. The Thais have stepped up their operations against drug caravans coming into Thailand

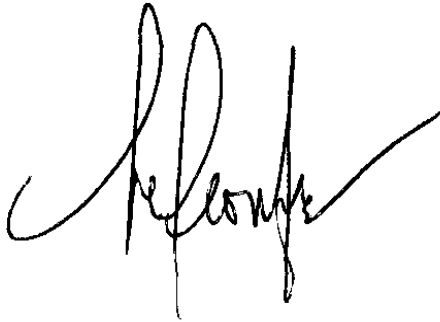
and are making a significant dent in the income of the Burmese junta. Tensions are now very high on the border. While this will probably not affect our Feast site in Chiang Mai, it certainly *will restrict* the ability of our brethren along the border to travel to the Feast. Please pray that God will intervene to stop Satan and create a situation for our Karen brethren living on the border to be able to attend the Feast.

India is another matter. It appears that the Pakistan and India tension could erupt into full-scale warfare. Legacy is helping to sponsor a Feast site in Madras this year and Gloria and I plan to attend there. Please pray that God will grant us peace so that we can continue to spread the True Gospel in southern India and continue the Work started by in the Apostle Thomas nearly 2000 years ago.

I must close for now. Please remember us all in your prayers. Satan knows he has only a short time left. The fields of South and Southeast Asia are ripe for the harvest. Satan knows he must try to stop us here at the beginning and snuff out the light God has sent to Asia. We need your constant and incessant prayers on the behalf of us all here at Legacy Institute so we can remain strong in the battles ahead.

The brethren in Asia send you their love.

To the Glory of Jesus Christ,



Leon Sexton

**WHAT IS LEGACY INSTITUTE?**

LEGACY INSTITUTE *is a private, non-profit, charitable foundation and is not 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.*