



LEGACY INSTITUTE

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in The Lord,

Gloria and I landed in Los Angeles, California just a few days ago for our annual Legacy Institute board meeting. There is so much work to do in Asia and it has been difficult to break away, but this meeting is very important. We need to stop, evaluate, regroup, and plan for Legacy activities for the coming year. This trip will also give Gloria and me a few days off to rest, visit family and see our grandchildren, which we have not seen in 6 months.

A lot has transpired since our meeting last year at this time and the board meeting agenda is piled high with important things to be discussed. The most important item is our newly opened Bible school, the *Legacy Institute Leadership Training Center* in Chiangmai, Thailand. The Center is very important for the Work of God in Asia. Nothing like it has ever been attempted by a Church of God group in Asia before. The school grew from a seed planted in my mind a year and a half ago in India. I was visiting Madras, India for the first time and meeting Mr. Michael Hubert to discuss his Church of God activities in southern India. Mr. Hubert is a long-time COG member who started a foundation called Shabnam (*Early Rain*) Foundation to educate the poor and destitute, former prostitutes and street children of Madras. He and his wife, Terencia, also are trying to serve the scattered and spiritually battered members of God's Church throughout the Tamil Nadu state of southern India.

Michael used funds donated from western brethren to build a meeting room on top of his house. Here he holds classes for street children and the room doubles as a place for Sabbath services and Bible studies. Michael Hubert and another young COG member named Wesley Lucas also hold Bible studies at 3 "house churches" in the Madras area and travel to evangelize and counsel prospective members throughout southern India.

There are approximately 20 people attending Bible Study groups in Madras. Gloria and I visited southern India for the Spring Holy Days and held services and Bible Studies. During our visit we met with approximately 20 more new individuals interested in the Truth of the scriptures. The Holy Spirit is now very active in southern India and we see the potential for a rich harvest. Legacy

Institute supports several good works and evangelistic projects of Mr. Hubert. Gloria and I plan to attend the Feast of Tabernacles in Madras this year.

During my visit with Mr. Hubert in February, 2001, we discussed the Work of God and how we could better accomplish, not only the preaching of the Gospel throughout southern India, but also the nurturing of those called by God. He said something to me that made a very deep impression. He said, *“There is so much work to do. I want to do it. But I am not trained. Please, Mr. Sexton, please help train us.”* I told him I would try to come to India more often, but with all the activities in Thailand and Burma, I would have little time. It was glaringly apparent that this would not be enough.

As I left Madras to return to Thailand, the wheels were turning in my head. The Ambassador Foundation had laid the foundation for this work decades before. Now, there is much work to be done in Asia. The Spirit of God is stirring the hearts and minds of people in Thailand, Burma, India, China and other distant areas around the world to seek the Truth. The need for trained people to preach the Gospel message and eventually nurture those God chooses is URGENT. Experienced people trained in the True Word of God are very few. Gloria and I are only 2 people. Lazum Brang in Burma is only one man. Sending trained men and women from our western countries to mount a sustained effort is logistically difficult and cost prohibitive. God’s Church has tried this in the past with limited results. Too often, it is difficult to find those in a position to pull up stakes and move to Asia. Living in a developing nation can be tough for those of us used to a “western” lifestyle. Even if we found trained people willing to go, long-term visas in these countries can be hard to obtain and the costs of sustaining their presence is high. We have traditionally tried to bridge the gap by having Asia administered from Australia. Anyone who looks at a map can see the problems of ministering to the Church in Asia from Sidney or Melbourne.

You cannot preach the Gospel and serve the brethren in Asia effectively long distance. You have *TO BE THERE*. Jesus commanded the Apostles to *“go forth into all the world.”* He didn’t say, *“live at home and visit once in awhile.”* So the answer was clear. ***We must train local young men and women from Asia to carry the Good News to their own people and then minister to those God calls.***

But how could we do this? When we had Ambassador College, the answer was to send young people from Asia to the US to study for 4 years and then send them back. We no longer have Ambassador College. There was only one answer to this dilemma – *found a Bible school in Asia for the training of Asian men and women for the Work of God.*

The seed God planted sprouted forth into a plan. Legacy Institute would start a school in Thailand, begin training young people from Thailand and Burma for the Work of God, and then eventually bring students from India, China and other parts of Asia to study there. But why Thailand? Why not start the school in one of the other Asian countries?

If you look at a map of Asia, you will see one of the answers. Thailand is situated almost in the center of most of the countries of Asia. It is almost equidistant from India to the West, China to the North and the Philippines to the East.

As well, Thailand has good relations with most, if not all of the Asian countries, making it much easier to obtain permission for students from these countries to study in Thailand. Another, VERY IMPORTANT consideration is religious freedom. Thailand is one of the few countries on earth that enjoys real religious freedom. Even though it is a Buddhist nation, religious freedom is guaranteed by the King, who is the protector of ALL RELIGIONS in the kingdom. Thailand is 90% Buddhist, but has many citizens who are Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or Christian. All have been permitted for hundreds of years to practice their religions without interference or discrimination. In fact, one of the reasons Thailand has recently had so little unrest in the mainly Muslim provinces of the South is because the King and Queen have worked tirelessly to provide the same opportunities and freedom to practice their customs and religion as any other ethnic group. It is, indeed, the "other land of the free."

If we add to this the fact that Gloria and I are known in Thailand as friends of King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit and enjoy their favor, it is not difficult to make up one's mind. We have seen God's hand in all this from the very beginning.

Now, a year after the decision was made to go ahead with starting a Bible school in Thailand, the Legacy Institute Leadership Training Center is up and running with 4 Kachin students from Burma and 8 Karen students from Thailand. We are also able to provide intensive classroom and field training to Jack Aungmin and David Myamaung, both Karen church members of the Karen Church. They are already giving sermons, Bible studies and translating material into the Karen and Burmese languages, but require additional training.

We have 3 students who come from families in God's Church. Most of the other students come from Baptist or SDA backgrounds and have had very little exposure to the True doctrines of the Bible. It is exciting to see what happens in Bible classes when the Truth is presented to them. Most of what I teach, they have NEVER HEARD BEFORE! You should see the looks of astonishment on their faces when they see the Truth in plain black and white in their Bibles. At first, they are "blown away" by what they hear and read. Then they become challenged and excited to learn more.

There is no way of knowing how many will be called to God's service. That is God's business. All we DO KNOW is that this is God's school, and we are His servants, compelled to present the Truth to those chosen to become students in the very first COG Bible training school ever opened in Asia!

What a wonderful God we serve! What a privilege it is to be pioneering in this endeavor! The volunteer teachers God has sent us to help teach and set an example of Christian leadership are doing a fantastic job in service to the Almighty. There is no limit to what God can and WILL achieve through the power of the Holy Spirit in those willing to sacrifice to do the Work. Every one of the

volunteer teachers have given up the conveniences of their “western” lifestyles and sacrificed time from their employment and/or education to come to northern Thailand to teach. They earn no salary. They must endure the relative hardships of the developing world. But no one complains. They are happy to give it all up for a season to come and serve God in the growing Work in Asia. Gloria and I are grateful for the team God has sent us.

Getting the school up and running has not been easy. I can only imagine the trials and tribulations Herbert and Loma Armstrong had to endure to get Ambassador College off the ground. And, it was a far bigger challenge than we are undertaking. Satan has done his worst to try to stop us! And he doesn't relent! It is only through the power of God that we have been able to achieve what has been done.

A most powerful tool in Satan's hand is discouragement. And he wields it most effectively. If he succeeds in getting us down and overwhelmed by the negatives that come up every single day, he can effectively take our minds off doing the Work that needs to be done. Satan tries to wear us down and take us out!

I often think about the ministry most of us were once part of. I recently drove by what used to be Ambassador College in Pasadena, California. It has become a silent shell with little left of it's former glory. Even the Ambassador Auditorium has lost the sparkle and sheen it once had. Thinking about starting over can be very discouraging. But start again we must.

It reminds me of the time when the Jews returned to Jerusalem from captivity to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. They found only broken down rubble. They too were discouraged by the idea of having to start again. For awhile they were overwhelmed by memories of the former glory and discouraged by the idea of having to rebuild. And the efforts of men such as Sanbalat to sabotage and belittle their efforts only added to their despair. It took men like Nehemiah and Haggai to snap them out of their lethargy and get them moving forward once again.

There is yet a great and powerful Work to be done. But it is going to take monumental effort and a spirit of sacrifice to do it. Jesus said we should not say to ourselves that the harvest of God is for the future. Rather he said, *“Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are **ripe for the harvest.**”* And, *“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray the Lord of the harvest, that **He will send laborers into His harvest.**”* **John 4:35; Matthew 9:37-38.**

Yes, it is easy to get discouraged when we live, day in and day out, in a world that is heading with accelerating speed for certain destruction. It is disheartening to endure the simple act of reading the newspaper or watching news on TV. More and more of God's people have to deal with illness and depression. The world is literally MAKING US SICK! Our lives are not getting any easier and time is running out. Satan and his demonic minions have pulled out all stops to put an

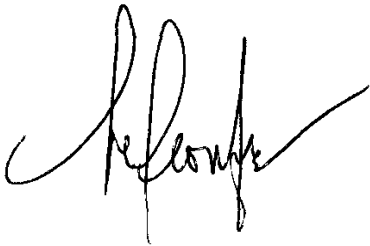
end to God's people as an effective force of hope for the millions of people in this evil world enslaved by a system which gives no hope.

But we have been given a Holy calling. We are those who have been chosen to announce a coming NEW WORLD! We cannot and must not allow ourselves to become discouraged by the tribulations of this life. We have a job to do. It is now time for us to tackle that job with a renewed vigor. The fields of God are riper now than ever before to hear the Good News we have been entrusted with. We cannot wait on others to do it. We cannot sleep. The job was given to us. It is time to lay aside the past and move forward to get this Gospel message to the people in Asia, Africa and the many other parts of the world who are crying out to know the Truth.

There is an old saying that, *"A journey of a thousand miles begins with just one step."* Pray that God gives us all the strength and courage to take that step. Our ultimate destiny is unimaginably wonderful. But first we have a mighty work to perform. Let's all take heart from the words found in the prophesy of the end of the age found in Daniel, *"Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the firmament of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. ...and... the people who know their God shall be strong and do exploits..."* **Daniel 11:32; 12:3.**

I will write again after our board meeting in California. Be strong. God is on His Throne! Pray for us as we pray for you.

In service to Our Lord
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.

P.S. Anyone still considering attending the Legacy Institute sponsored Feast of Tabernacles in Thailand or India, please contact us at the post office or email address at the top of this letter.