



LEGACY INSTITUTE

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Chiang Mai, Thailand

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Dear fellow-workers for Jesus Christ,

As a minister, I find that performing baptisms, marriage ceremonies and the blessing of the little children to be the most rewarding part of my work. Sometimes doing God's Work here in Asia can be quite demanding and stressful. Sometimes it is not easy to avoid discouragement. But just over two weeks ago, I traveled to the village of Mae Sariang, high in the mountains of northern Thailand, and had the privilege of baptizing 4 persons into the Body of Christ. Baptisms put me on a spiritual high and seeing new people repent and turn to a life of obedience to Our Lord and King is always very, very encouraging.

I baptized Saw Thien Kyi (age 36) and his wife Naw Paw Thoo (age 32), Saw Hser Ney (35) and his wife Naw Lin Dah (31). All are Karen tribal people and refugees from Burma. They presently reside with their children in a border refugee camp in Mae Hong Son province of northern Thailand.

What is interesting is that all 4 persons became interested in the doctrines of the True Church of God through reading our very first publication in the Karen language; the booklet on the *Annual Holy Days*. Another interesting fact is that Saw Thien Kyi and Naw Paw Thoo were Buddhists before their conversion! This tells me that the Holy Spirit is now very active along the border, and it also tells me that translation of materials into their own languages is a very effective evangelistic tool. There are still 3 more persons in another refugee camp also waiting to be baptized. We will arrange for their baptisms before Passover this year.

It was rewarding to see the happiness in their faces as the 4 new members of the Family of God left to go back to their simple lives as refugees without a home and without a country. But they return back with hope and confidence in the surety that they are now in possession of the Holy Spirit, the Mighty Power of God. And they go back rejoicing that they are now recipients of the precious promise of eternal life.

I am very encouraged by the progress of God's Work here in Thailand. It has come a long way since I first started teaching 2 Karen families in my one room apartment in Bangkok nearly 6 years ago. The first year we started to do God's Work through Legacy Institute, I baptized 2 persons. The second year I baptized 2 more. The third year we baptized 3. Now this year so far we have baptized 4 and, if God wills it, we will baptize

at least 3 more by Passover! We have formed 3 “house churches” with 38 adults (including our 10 Legacy students) and 29 children in attendance. We have a taped sermon program that is translated into the Karen language and sent to COG members and prospective members in refugee camps all along the Thailand–Burma border. More and more in this part of the world are coming to repentance.

Yesterday, I received a letter from a young man in Laos who wants to attend the Legacy School. He is a Sabbatarian who leads a small bible study group of 4 families in Vientiane (today Viangchan), Laos. He explained in his letter that he had heard about our school from Kachin evangelist Lazum Brang and wanted to attend to learn more about COG doctrine. Gloria and I are now planning a trip to Laos to interview him and talk with others who might be interested in the Truth of the Bible.

Feast of Tabernacles in Thailand

This year we will have 2 Feast sites in Thailand. The first will be our regular site in Chiangmai. Local Karen members, students at the Legacy School and some of our foreign visitors will attend here. We are also planning a second site in the mountains at *Mae Sariang*, closer to the Burmese border. The *Mae Sariang* site is much more off the beaten path, but is necessary because we need to provide a location closer to the border for members who live in refugee camps. Foreign visitors can also attend at this site. We have found nice accommodations in a small hotel overlooking the river for those foreign visitors who choose to attend this site. The rooms are very clean and each has air conditioning and hot water for showers. The food is reasonably priced. Services will be held in a local restaurant’s banquet room. Also, there are many sites to see, as Mae Hong Son province is one of the more remote and mountainous provinces of Thailand.

The Mae Sariang site will be spartan but not primitive, just the thing for foreign feast-goers who have a taste for adventure. Most important, our newest members will be attending this site; so meeting and getting to know foreign brethren will be exciting and encouraging for them. Services at both sites will be held in English with Karen language translation. The basic costs for either Mae Sariang or Chiangmai will be approximately \$1800 per person. A shared room would trim costs by several hundred dollars.

For foreign guests interested in attending in Thailand this year, the above figure would include hotel rooms, round trip flights (Los Angeles–Bangkok–Chiangmai) and approximately \$25 USD per person per day for food. It would NOT include any site-seeing or side trips.

Anyone interested in coming to join us for the Feast this year at either of our two sites can contact Herbert Vierra at khunfarong@yahoo.com or call him at **626-357-2588**. If you live outside the USA and wish to attend, please write to me at the address on top of this letter.

Recruiting Volunteer Teachers for Legacy Institute

Bonnie Turner and Heidi Hanisko have done an outstanding job as pioneer teachers for the first year at our Legacy School. But both must return to the US to further their studies and get back to their “normal” lives. I have found that, young people who serve on a project in Asia, many times return home dramatically changed and humbled by their experience of sacrifice and service.

Recently Bonnie wrote an email letter which she sent out to her friends to see if any would be interested in coming to serve next year. I was deeply moved by her comments about her experience here. I asked her if I could put it in our Legacy Letter, and she agreed. Bonnie is a straightforward person and pulls no punches. Her letter speaks volumes about the impact the Legacy project has had on her life. Here it is in its entirety.

“For all of you who don’t know, I am and have been working at Legacy Institute for the last eight months. Legacy is a Bible boarding school designed to teach leadership and self-sustaining skills to people who are unable to pay for these educational “privileges” that so many of us take for granted. It is geared toward Christian hill tribe people who wish to study the Bible, English, computers, music, agriculture, health/hygiene, and sports and are willing (in exchange for the opportunity to live here and learn for free) to volunteer their time after the education period. The school is located in the ‘suburb’ area of Chiang Mai Thailand at the foothill of the mountains. It is in a small community that offers almost everything one would find in a western community (i.e. food, clothing, transportation, local school, etc.), without the hectic chaos of the city, yet it still has a ‘chaos’ of its own; at least to my western mind.

The reason I am writing this is to seek out individuals who are willing and wanting to be a part of this school and do something more with their lives than just work a 9-5 job, paying off credit cards, and fulfilling a routine, run-of-the-mill life. I am here because I wanted to do something more with my life. I am taking the opportunity to travel and fully experience cultures and societies completely foreign to the one in which I was raised. I’m here because I was blessed to have been born in a country where I was able to receive a decent education, afford ALL my needs, and plenty of my wants, and I want to share that with others who were\are not so luckily placed on the totem pole of life. “Freely you have received, freely give” comes to mind. My expectations of this school were WAY off from what I met when I started and what I still meet every day. I believe that the Bible is the Word of God and that it is the most important thing you can teach anyone and help them understand especially when they come looking for it. There is a need and desire here and that is the purpose of this school: to provide a place for people in SE Asia to learn the Truth concerning God. We are also trying to help the people who come here to learn to be TRUE leaders in their own societies and cultures. One way of doing that is to educate them in areas that will help them obtain jobs to provide for themselves and their families so that they will no longer be dependant upon charities (thus the English, computer, health/hygiene, and agriculture). Music is incorporated because music is as old as language, it adds beauty and enjoyment to life and it provokes cognitive thought. Sports are a fun way to stay healthy, learn teamwork and get dirty and sweaty for at least an hour in the day, and provide for a refreshing break from the drone of the classroom setting. The school is not only about academics and theology, but how to have a balanced, healthy lifestyle and be educated in a broad spectrum of issues.

I think it's safe to say that there is no other school like it. It's cause is truly a noble one worthy of support by any Christian with a charitable attitude willing to sacrifice themselves to measures beyond believed possible, in order to serve and aid other fellow Christians who wish to improve themselves.

There is a desperate need for teachers (no official qualifications necessary) for the next school year. It is increasingly difficult to find people of the character I just described who are willing to donate a year of their lives for such a cause. Most are unable to leave their present circumstances in exchange for formidable challenges that build character and, in the end, hopefully, make you a better person. I have battled with the idea of maintaining my position here, but I cannot continue a life of charity for in this situation, I too am a charity case; and after teaching here, I also realize the importance of returning to my own education.

For (about) one year you would be asked to work harder than you probably ever have in your life and do things you would have never dreamed. You will sacrifice your time, frivolous pleasures, and humble yourself in ways you thought you already were. You will learn more in one year here than you could in 100 years of ANY classroom education. If you commit to the year, NO exceptions, you WILL NOT be the same person. This is an opportunity to serve and to gain knowledge and experience unattainable anywhere else, in your life or this world.

On a personal level, more so anyway, I would never have come here knowing what I do now (I think), but I wouldn't trade this for anything. I've learned more about myself, and life, and God, and everything between in the last eight months than in the entire previous 21 years of my life. This is not for everyone. If you can't hack life where you are, then keep trying. This isn't a way to change things that you don't like about yourself nor is it likely to bring you satisfaction or fill any void you may have. You will be here to serve other people and they have plenty of their own problems that you will have to deal with. However, if you're tired of redundancy in your present existence and don't like the path on which you're traveling, if you can accept challenge beyond measure and would like to experience the unimaginable or even describable, then write me back and ask for more. If you're looking for fun, you'll find hard work. If it's adventure you want, that's guaranteed, but it won't be the one you expect. Whatever reality you're used to is NON-existent here. It's hard, REALLY hard; but when life is easy (like it is for too many) you lose track of what's important about living (like so many do), and you get weak and soft and end up disappointed and depressed and not liking what you've become.

If you are not committed to the unavoidable commitments in life (family, college, God, etc.) believe the Bible is the true Word of God, that it should be taught to ALL people and want to help set an example of how to live it, then you've been presented with a way to do just that. I believe in what I'm doing here. I believe in this school and I want to see it succeed. I feel that it is pleasing to God and blessed by Him, so I'm asking for others who are willing to pick up where I must leave off. You don't have to fill my shoes, just replace them. If you, or anyone you know, are interested, contact me ASAP. Time does not stand still. Regardless of your interest PLEASE pass this message along. I will be more than happy to answer any questions you have. This is no candy-coated advertisement and I will be more blunt and to the point with any further inquiries.

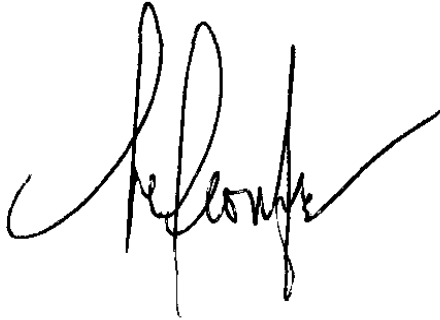
Some good stuff: I love Thailand, Thai food and Thai people. I've been to Australia, New Zealand, Cambodia, Laos and Malaysia. Before I leave I hope to go to Nepal and Burma as well. The Bible has come to life. I've made great friends and have done more than I ever would have believed – good things. I have stories that will last a lifetime, that will bring laughter, anger, tears and fond memories. It's endless really. I love and respect my family now beyond duty, to true compassion and understanding.

Bonnie Turner”

I cannot add to Bonnie's letter. She says it all. We are going to miss Bonnie and Heidi beyond expression! They are real troopers and have sacrificed in many ways to help start something that will change young lives forever. We are deeply indebted and grateful to them both. May God bless them and keep them always no matter where their futures take them.

That is all for this letter. As always, we appreciate the many letters of support and encouragement we receive from all of you. May God be with you.

In Jesus' service,



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.