



## LEGACY INSTITUTE

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Dear Fellow-laborers,

I write this letter to you just a few days after the Feast of Tabernacles because I am very, very excited about all the wonderful events that have happened in just a few short weeks! First of all, let me tell you about the Feast of Trumpets we observed in Madras, India.

### **Recent Visit to India**

We have been so busy at the Legacy School that we haven't had a chance to get back to India since last Feast of Tabernacles. So we decided we should go back for the Feast of Trumpets and visit with the new members in Madras, Gudiyattam and Tiruvannamalai. This spring during the Days of Unleavened Bread, Elder Wade Fransson spent the entire 8 days preaching, teaching and baptizing. When he left to return to the U.S., *19 new persons had been added to the Body of Christ!*

Gloria and I wanted to visit these new members as well as Church of God Deacon Michael Hubert, his wife Terencia, and other members of the Church of God in Tamil Nadu State. There is a small church in Madras that meets every Sabbath. But, outside of Madras there are 2 villages in which the Holy Spirit is very active; Gudiyattam and Tiruvannamalai.

In Gudiyattam, God is calling HIV/AIDS patients and their caregivers. These people are Hindus, but are open to the message of Salvation through Jesus Christ and the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. So far, 14 have been baptized and there are at least 10 more persons who are currently counseling for baptism. In Tiruvannamalai, a farming community, (again Hindus) there are 2 baptized members and later, during the Feast of Tabernacles, Wade informed me he had baptized 2 more from this group!

Gloria and I gathered together in Madras with about 10 people to keep the Feast of Trumpets. Then we traveled 5 hours by car the next day to the AIDS clinic in Gudiyattam to meet with the members and prospective members gathered there. The spiritual growth was astonishing! Remember, we hadn't seen these people for almost a whole year. The fruits of God's Spirit at work were very apparent. When we met with these people last year, they looked as if they were the condemned on death row. Now

they were all smiles and happily looking forward to the Kingdom of God. Whereas before we saw only hopelessness – now we saw the joy of hope in Christ! What a remarkable change!

God's Spirit is a healing Spirit. Those with AIDS in India are considered less than untouchable. They are ostracized from their communities and families. They cannot get jobs and their children are driven from schools! All these people had to look forward to was an agonizing death separated from family and friends. Some had been contemplating suicide. Now they are members of the Family of God and, whether they live or die from the disease, their lives have meaning and purpose.

Seeing the miraculous change in these people enriches our own lives a hundred-fold. Sometimes we get discouraged carrying the message of God's Kingdom to Asia under difficult circumstances. But, seeing the spiritual growth of God's own chosen ones at the AIDS clinic in Gudiyattam is extremely encouraging and rewarding. It is better than any vitamin or elixir made in the market today!

**In Luke chapter 4**, Jesus gave his first sermon. He chose as his text a passage from the book of Isaiah, *“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach glad tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord...” ISA 61:1-2*

The Gospel message is not just limited to the fact that Jesus is coming back to set up His Kingdom on Earth, but the message is also that **He is going to bind up the brokenhearted and set free the captives bound by the evil of Satan's world-ruling system!**

Seeing the joy expressed by the newly baptized members of God's Church in Gudiyattam makes this passage come alive. These people's broken hearts are being bound up and they have been set free from their bondage to a system that ends only in destruction! God speed the day when ALL will have access to the healing waters of life!

The next day we traveled to Tiruvannamalai to visit with the 2 members and 3 prospective members there. We met privately in a hotel room in a nearby town instead of going directly to their small village. In Tamil Nadu, the state government recently passed a law against “forced conversion”. This was a political move on the part of the Chief Minister to gain support of militant Hindus. While we understand that only God can call and therefore, we certainly force no one to accept Jesus Christ, this new law makes evangelism in Tamil Nadu dangerous because the authorities determine the definition of “forced conversion”.

The following day we interviewed 3 young Indians wanting to attend Legacy Institute. The fields of God in India are ripe for the harvest. But, trained workers for God's fields are needed. It is one thing to evangelize and baptize those God is choosing. It is another thing to feed and care for the new flock! Who will feed the newly converted with spiritual food so they can grow in the grace and knowledge of Our Lord? Who will shepherd the new congregations raised up by the preaching of the Gospel?

Jesus said, “Go forth and **preach the Gospel** to all nations. **Baptize** them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Teach** them to observe ALL that I have commanded you.” **Matthew 28.**

It is the job of the evangelist to go forth, preach and baptize. But it is the ongoing responsibility of bishops and elders to continue to teach and pastor the newly converted. An evangelist cannot travel out preaching and baptizing if he has to spend the majority of his time pasturing local congregations. A pastor cannot evangelize if he is busy carrying out his pastoral responsibilities to one or more congregations of church members. This is even more apparent in countries with poor communications, bad roads and limited means of transportation.

It is much the same situation Herbert W. Armstrong ran into in the early years of his evangelism. He would hold a campaign for several weeks, baptize a number of men and women, form a small congregation, and then move on to evangelize in another area. But, while he was traveling about preaching, baptizing and raising up churches, the newly formed start-up congregations he left behind experienced problems because they lacked a pastor. He would then return, spend time preaching and encouraging the brethren in one place, only to find problems arising in one or more of the other newly formed congregations! It became a serious dilemma to try to go out and preach the Gospel in local campaigns and still try to take care of the newly formed, fledgling congregations. He was only one man.

This fundamental predicament led Mr. Armstrong to the idea of starting a college to train ministers. Here is a quote from his autobiography, “Up to this time I had been holding nightly evangelistic campaigns in various towns and cities in Oregon and Washington. Nearly always there had been enough converts to organize a small church group. But there was no minister to pastor the little flock. Not one of them lasted longer than six months. I had to realize that sheep cannot endure without a shepherd.” (*Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, Vol. 2, pages 139,140).

As a result, Ambassador College was founded with 4 students. Through the years, many harvesters were trained as workers in God’s Fields. Today, Ambassador College no longer exists; many of the pastors and wives it produced are nearing retirement age or are ill; and the various church organizations that came out of the old WCG *are hard pressed to find men to pastor existing congregations!*

What a tragedy! Just when it looks like there will be an explosion in the harvest, workers are hard to find! No wonder Jesus said, “***The harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few.***” **Matthew 9:37**

In Asia, we are running into exactly the same problems – new churches being raised up and not enough leaders to take care of them.

So, the main purpose of Legacy Institute Leadership Training Center is to train young people in God’s Word so they can go out and take care of the sheep God is calling. New church congregations are being established in Thailand, India, and Burma. Legacy

Institute helped establish 2 “house churches” in Chiang Mai and Mae Sot, Thailand. There are 3 small newly formed congregations in Tamil Nadu, India. Burma has 3 new congregations added this year to the already established COG churches.

The Churches of God in Asia, Africa and around the world are growing. I only recently received news that the Church of God in Angola added several thousand more to their fellowship. They now number over 7000! We are at a critical juncture in the history of the Church of God. **Revelation 7** prophesies that 144,000 are to be *sealed* out of the 12 tribes of Israel. But the prophecy doesn't stop there. It goes on to describe a ***GREAT MULTITUDE, which no man could number, OF ALL NATIONS, AND KINDREDS, AND PEOPLES AND LANGUAGES!!***

*Are we at the juncture in the history of God's Church where we will see this prophecy fulfilled before our very eyes?*

It is more important now than ever before for God's people to unite in one heart and Spirit to accomplish the task set before us. We at Legacy Institute believe the time has come for one final push to preach the Gospel to the far-flung places of the world before it all comes crashing down around our heads!

Time is short. I feel an increasing sense of urgency! Up until this point, the Work most of us have been involved in over the past half-century has been driven by US greenbacks. But the US Dollar is losing its purchasing power worldwide. Here in Thailand, the value of the dollar has dropped 7.5 % since the first of the year. Because most of our donations come from the US, this greatly affects the Work of God in Asia. And, if you have been watching the *euro*, you have noticed that the European currency has made incredible gains over the US dollar since its inauguration several years ago.

Time and prophecy march on. The US congregations will become increasingly less and less able to fund the preaching of the Gospel all over the world. God has given us the resources to do the job TODAY!! We cannot postpone or minimize our involvement in His Work any longer! We must become *CONSUMED* by the Work He has entrusted to us! Jesus said, ***“I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day. The night is coming when no man can work.”*** John 9:4

### **Feast of Tabernacles**

Legacy Institute helped sponsor Feast of Tabernacles sites in three countries this year; 2 locations in Thailand, 2 in India and 3 in Burma (Myanmar). After Gloria and I returned from our Trumpets trip to India, we started making final preparations for the Feast in Thailand. We have our regular site in Chiangmai at the Empress Hotel. This location is convenient for foreign Feast-goers who want to visit and see the Legacy Institute school and farm. The hotel is a 4 star hotel with modern conveniences westerners are accustomed to.

At Legacy School, Sabbath attendance is required. But participation in the Feast of Tabernacles is up to each student. I was very encouraged to learn that ALL of our

students wanted to attend the Feast. Four of our Legacy volunteer teachers also decided to stay in Thailand for the Feast: *Bobbie Bauer, Jessa Moser, Cody Kitts* and *Daniel Miller*. There are also 2 local Karen families keeping the Feast. Add to this number Uthaiwan Han, a Thai member, plus Gloria and myself, and we have a total of **37** local people who make up the Chiangmai congregation, plus approximately **40** western visitors that would be keeping God's Feast in Chiangmai.

There has been so much growth in the refugee camps along the Burma border that it now became necessary to arrange a border Feast site in addition to the Chiangmai site. There are now 6 Karen refugee families living in these camps that have one or more baptized Church members. All have fled war and ethnic persecution in Burma. God, in His Wisdom, is calling His chosen from among these poor refugees. Added to those members living in the refugee camps are the 3 Karen families who live in the border town of Mae Sot. All together, we have **32** Church of God family members living along the Burma border.

We settled on a Feast site in a small mountain town close to the border called Mae Sariang. Mae Sariang has a couple rustic but modern hotels and guest houses and a good restaurant with an upstairs room where we have held services in the past.

Right after Atonement, I drove to Mae Sariang to make final preparations at the hotel, guest house and restaurant. I received a phone call from a good friend (a retired Thai Special Forces general) explaining that I would have to visit the Deputy Governor of Mae Hong Son province to receive the required permission for the refugee families to leave the camps. So, next day I drove north along the border to Mae Hong Son and found the office of the Deputy Governor. He was waiting for me. He regrettably informed me that permission could not be granted because a camp close-down order had come from Bangkok. No refugees could leave the camp except for emergency medical reasons. I asked him why. He told me it was because of security considerations due to the APEC summit meetings to be held in Bangkok October 20-23.

Now what?!

I asked if we could get *into* the refugee camps. Again, regrettably, he had to say no – and for the same reason. It was with a heavy heart that I left the Deputy Governor's office. Later I learned that my Thai general friend had also run into the same concrete APEC wall.

It is very clear that the world we live in is not God's world! We could not get our refugee members out of the camps to KEEP GOD'S FEAST because world leaders were getting together to talk about how to make more money!! It is no wonder that the book of Revelation talks about the Beast Power in *commercial terms*!

The only thing left to do was to change plans and hold a local Feast in Mae Sot for the 3 Karen families living there. Originally, John Miller, an Elder from Ohio and his wife had offered to help out by holding services at the border. I contacted him and asked if he would be willing to change plans and go to Mae Sot instead. I told him that since it was a short notice change, I would only ask him to agree to hold services the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> day of

the Feast. He agreed to go to Mae Sot. Meanwhile, I returned to Chiangmai for the first Holy Day there.

Well, God does what He wants! The Feast of Tabernacles was held in Mae Sot in the home of a COG Deacon, Davidson Lay Bey (son of Saw Lay Bey). The first day there were 10 persons present. Then, the second day, it jumped to 15! Finally a total of **25 people** were keeping the Feast in Mae Sot! John Miller kept me posted. When the refugees learned that the Feast site at Mae Sariang was cancelled and a small, local site was set up in Mae Sot, they started *sneaking out of the camps at night and hitch-hiking with their families to the Feast!*

This is an incredible testimony to us who have the luxury of FREEDOM in the West. Here were God's people, wanting so badly to keep His Feast, *they were willing to chance arrest* to make it to where God had placed His Name!

Ultimately we had a total of **102 persons** keeping the Feast in Thailand! One of the refugees from Mae La Refugee Camp, Saw Tdum Hla Htoo was baptized in Mae Sot.

Things do not always work out the way we expect. God has his own agenda and His own way of doing things. Ultimately, His Plan marches forward. Satan cannot thwart God. God is a wonderful Father who takes care of His children. We praise His Holy Name.

### **Feast in India**

In India the Feast was held at 2 sites. The first was Madras in a meeting hall Michael Hubert has built on the roof of his house. Over 30 persons attended at this site. The second site was held at the AIDS Center in Gudiyattam where over 20 persons gathered. Wade Fransson, a COG Elder from California and Ryan Foster, a Legacy Institute volunteer teacher, went to India to assist with preaching and Bible studies.

Next year I hope more western COG members will attend the Feast in India and get to know their new Indian brethren. We now have 14 baptized members from the AIDS Center in Gudiyattam. Wade Fransson baptized two new persons at the Feast this year from the farming village near Tiruvannamalai. This brings to 4 the number of baptized members from that area. There are also now 6 baptized members living in Madras.

The Holy Spirit of God is very active in Tamil Nadu. God thrives in adversity! There are only 2 states in all of India that have passed laws against what they call "forced conversion". In practice this means that the government can decide what "forced conversion" means! Even though the Church of God has NEVER practiced forced conversion, we still have to be careful how we conduct our evangelism efforts in Tamil Nadu. Yet God has chosen to call people in Tamil Nadu, not some other Indian state where it would be easier to operate. Please pray that God will grant us all safety as we continue to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit in India.

### **Feast in Burma**

There were 3 sites in Burma that Legacy Institute helped sponsor. The first was in Na Mawn, home village of Evangelist Lazum Brang. The second was in the China border area. And the third was at Pastor Saw Htoo Saw's village in the Shan States. There were 2 more areas where the Feast was kept that we are aware of; Rangoon and Kalaymyo, but both of these sites were able to hold the Feast without financial assistance from Legacy Institute.

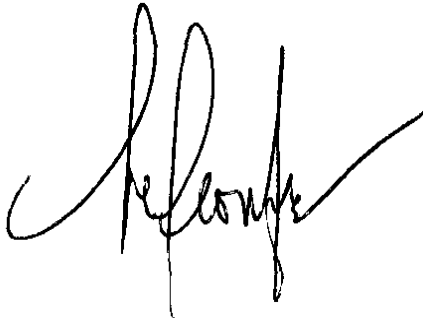
I have not received a report from Lazum Brang about these sites. I will have to wait until next letter to tell you all about the Feast in Burma.

I thank Almighty God for the wonderful miracle of the Feast of Tabernacles. Do we westerners who enjoy the many freedoms we take for granted, REALLY understand how important it is to hold the Feast for these scattered brethren in far off places? For some, it is the only time they can attend a service and fellowship with those of like mind. I want to thank all of you who support Legacy Institute for making it possible to have these Feast sites for the scattered people of God in Asia.

Well, that's all for now. I will write more in my next letter.

God be with all of you and grant you continued peace and safety.

In Service to the King of Kings,



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.