



LEGACY INSTITUTE

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28 October 2005

Chiang Mai, Thailand

Greetings Fellow-laborers,

The Great Fall Festival of Tabernacles held in Thailand was a wonderful spiritual experience! 110 persons gathered together observing 8 days of worship and fellowship at 2 different sites.



ANN VIERRA WITH KAREN TRIBAL CHILDREN AT FEAST IN MAE SALIT

The main site was held at the Empress Hotel in the northern city of Chiang Mai. Here feast-goers from the US, Canada and Australia joined local brethren and *Legacy Institute Leadership Training Center* students and teachers – 67 in all.

Chiang Mai is a 700 plus year-old city with a lot of color. The old city moat and some of the walls still remain. One could experience the colorful mixture of ancient and modern every day of the Feast. The Empress hotel is a very modern, 4 star, western style hotel and convention

center with all the amenities you would expect in, say, Dallas or Denver. The General Manager is, for over 20 years, a good friend of ours and takes very good care of our Feast-goers. We conduct services in meeting rooms covered in teak with gold-leaf decorations. One of the highlights this year took place on the Last Great Day. All the Legacy students dressed up in their colorful native costumes to do special music. Feast-goers even tried on some of the Karen, Lahu and Kachin traditional clothing.

The second Feast site was much more primitive by our western standards. It was held at a small village called Mae Salit situated right on the border with Myanmar (Burma). 44 were gathered at this site. The majority were refugee members and their families. These members live in 2 major refugee camps along the border. They are not permitted to travel to Chiang Mai, but must remain along the border area.

Since they cannot come to the Feast held in Chiang Mai, we must take the Feast to them!

Even their travel along the border can be a test of faith. The majority of those who came to the Feast live in the Mae Ramoh Luang Refugee Camp high in the mountains of Mae Hong Son Province. They were told many times by detractors that they would never receive permission to leave the camp and go to the Feast. But in spite of the dire predictions of failure, they put their trust in God. They said that they were going to go and keep the Feast anyway and believed God would help them.

Getting there was not easy. First, they had to obtain permission from the camp officials to go. This was the first hurdle. God moved the camp director to give them permission. Then they had to travel 5 hours by boat on the Moei River which separates Thailand and Myanmar. This river is controlled by several military factions who have an on/off war with each other. They were stopped at every checkpoint along the river and questioned. These checkpoints are manned by Thai army soldiers or Karen National Liberation Army soldiers or Burmese soldiers or the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army soldiers. All of these various soldiers carry automatic weapons and collect "taxes" from river travelers.

At any point they could have been refused passage by any of these different groups!

They told us that it was a journey of prayer. Each time they neared another river checkpoint, they prayed fervently that God would intervene so that they would not be turned back.

Finally they reached Tha Song Yang just south of where the Feast was to be held and transferred over to road transportation. They still had one more road checkpoint manned by Thai Border Patrol Police to cross. They were allowed to pass.

Each time they were stopped, they told the soldiers that they were going to worship God. Each time they were then allowed to pass.

What a wonderful God we have who cherishes the FAITH of His saints! And what a wonderful lesson in faith these simple tribe people have shown to all of us! Those of us who

work among them praise God for the faithful Church of God members and their families He is raising up in these border refugee camps.

Herb Vierra, an ordained elder in God's Church and Secretary of Legacy Institute, traveled with his wife Ann, along with John and Caroline Anderson to speak in the border site at Mae Salit for the first part of the Feast. Three of our Legacy volunteer teachers (Ryan Foster, Jason Boise and Lawan Tongsatitpoo) were already there. I had sent them in advance to set up the Feast site. Ryan and Jason also served by song leading, giving sermons and Bible studies during the Feast, and looking after the physical needs of the brethren. Lawan also helped take care of the brethren and translated services into the Karen language.

When Mr. Vierra called me with a report, I was really taken aback! Attendance this year at the border site almost doubled from last year! There is a lot of growth taking place in these border camps with spouses and other relatives and friends now interested in the truth of the Bible! We found out that some Karen refugee relatives and neighbors noticed the difference in the members of God's Church in Thailand since they were baptized and wanted to know more about the Church of God.

We have printed several pieces of literature in their native languages of Burmese and Karen which members distribute in the camps if people ask.

The members and prospective members of God's Church who are refugees from warfare in Burma face many hardships. They are displaced persons who have lost everything and possess no citizenship. Most were driven from their land and forced to flee across the border into Thailand. In the camps, they live in Spartan conditions on food and shelter provided by the Thai government, international aid organizations and the United Nations. They are Karen tribal people who have no rights at all in Thailand. They are at the mercy of the vagaries of international politics. At any time, the camps could be closed and the refugees forced back across the border into Burma.

Their only hope is in God.

The Feast of Tabernacles not only teaches them God's Truth, it also provides an anchor to the Church of God. Either Gloria and I or one or more of our volunteer teachers visit them from time to time; and we send tapes to them in their languages, but they have no regular Sabbath services. Because of classes and school administrative duties, I cannot get to the border as regularly as I would like to. Therefore, joining together with brethren from the West to keep the Feast of Tabernacles is one way they learn that they are part of a larger family who share a common faith and destiny.

Gloria and I, along with Jim and Becky Shrode of Dallas, Texas and Daniel and Lauren Miller of Sugarcreek, Ohio, were able to give "meat in due season" by giving sermons, sermonettes and fellowshiping with our border brethren on the Seventh Day and the Last Great Day of the Feast. It was a heart-warming experience.

One of the things that made this year's border Feast special was new songbooks. For many years, the Church of God in Sakangi village in the Delta region of Burma used translations of the old hymns written and arranged by Dwight Armstrong. Pastor Saw Lay Bey translated many of these songs into the Karen language. Saw Lay Bey died several years ago and we have been trying to obtain copies of these translations to use in Thailand and other parts of Burma.

Earlier this year, one of our volunteer teachers, Ryan Foster, traveled to the Delta and successfully collected copies of these songs. Then Davidson Lay Bey, son of Saw Lay Bey and a Deacon in God's Church, added some translations and then compiled and computer typeset a complete songbook in the Karen language and script.

We made copies of this and sent them along for use at the Feast. You should have seen the members and their children! The new songbook was a big hit! They all were singing these old COG hymns at the top of their lungs and in their own language; their Karen voices completely drowning out our English language ones! What a wonderful thing to experience!

You know, we take so much for granted. Take for instance, a common Church of God songbook. We don't even think about it. But do you know how much difference it makes to have a common hymnal in your own language that everyone can use, including children? It becomes a huge factor in unifying the people of God. We were singing the SAME hymns – to the SAME melody – *but in different languages!*

What a wonderful work Dwight Armstrong did so many years ago. And what a wonderful labor of love that Pastor Saw Lay Bey and his son, Davidson Lay Bey, have performed by translating these hymns into the Karen language for use by the people of God in Asia.

Feast in India

Legacy Institute also helps sponsor the Feast in India each year. Here is an edited report from Michael Hubert, a Deacon in God's Church, who supervises several Feast of Tabernacles' sites in India:

From: Michael Hubert
Madras, India
October 27, 2005

“Greetings,

“Well, the Feast is over. First of all, I should thank you for your kind heart of prayers, good wishes and help which made us to have the Feast to the best we could. You would have seen two reports earlier to the Feast about how I was going to raise support for the Feast this year. There were good hearts which helped us to make this year's Feast lively and wonderful. They wanted to remain as discreet donors, thanks. You would have seen another report stating what happened on the Day of Atonement.

“Yes, I was able to obtain the minimum help for the brothers and sisters. (When I mention brothers and sisters let it be clear that not all of them are baptized. Most are prospective and people interested in the truth). First thing I requested you all is for prayers. God heard the prayer and gave me strength to hold this festival so well with minimum resources.

“The theme for the Feast was “*Dwelling In Unity*”. I was the only person to conduct the services and give sermons. As a special program we had bible reading sessions where I encouraged the people to ask questions. This Feast I made as much as interactive as possible it. We may lack good food, but we were filled with lovely fellowship and spiritual food.

“Well, I mention spiritual food. I must admit I was only teaching the knowledge I have. I am not a pastor or preacher, but whatever knowledge I have -- I taught. What I covered in the messages during the Feast was on:

1. Why we have sufferings in this world.
2. Why sometimes it (*the world*) attacks us though we may be faithful and loyal to God.
3. What is the meaning of World Tomorrow and how it could be relevant in today's context.
4. Why should we come away from the world during this period to learn more about the Truth during Feast time.
5. What happens to our relatives who die without knowing the truth and how that is relevant to the Last Great Day.

“In many cases I have to run around conducting two services with some Bible studies for children too. I love to do that. It was like being a football (*soccer*) player.

“The brethren in Madras, Tsunami area, Mepur, Ayyalcherry, Vellore, Tiruvannmalai and Kanchipuram send their regards. We had in attendance a total more than 275 including children.

“The Feast ended without any mishaps, but immediately after the Feast it started to rain. It began a little heavy, then more heavy and finally with a big hurricane (*typhoon*). In one day it rained 32 centimeters (*12 ½ inches*) of rain. Even I was not spared. My house too, was flooded with water both from rain and sewage mixed. My house still smells. The story never ends there, the whole state was affected and our brethren who live in smaller housing condition like huts and make shift houses are broken and need to be repaired. I wanted to rest after the feast but I am going to run to this place to see what best I can do to provide some relief.

“Well, Satan is not happy about the success of the Feast, so it dampens us to great extent. We will never give up. Please pray for us in India. The scope for evangelization is so vast but resources are too poor. Please pray, please.

“Thanks once again for all the kindness you continue to do. It’s wonderful.

“Thanks. Love,
“M.R. Hubert”

Prayer Request

A good friend of Legacy is in the hospital. His name is General Anu Sumitra. He is now retired, but once was commander of Special Forces and Chief of Thai Army Intelligence in the north. He had some kidney problems and went into the hospital. They gave him the wrong medicine and damaged his liver functions. Bad went to worse and he ended up being transferred to another hospital for special care.

Gen. Anu is a very good friend and helps “look after us.” He lives only a few miles from Legacy School and is always ready to step in if we need help. The first time Gloria and I visited him, he was in very bad shape. He could not talk nor eat and his breathing was very labored. He looked like a cadaver. I asked if he wanted me to anoint him and pray for him. He said yes. So I anointed him and prayed that God would heal him and get him back to his home.

Several days later, we visited again and his wife told us that the doctors were astonished at the turn around in his condition! They had no answer for the improvement – but we did! God is wonderful and extends His grace to all – no matter what faith or creed – IF they honor and trust in Him! Please pray for General Anu’s full recovery. He is an important protector of Legacy here in Thailand and we need him.

US Speaking Tour

(CORRECTION: In my last letter to you – I said that Gloria and I would be in Portland area on November 13th. This is the wrong date. It should be NOVEMBER 20TH.)

Gloria and I are on a speaking tour in the USA from mid-November until mid-December. We will be talking about the ministry God has given us to do in Asia and the *Legacy Institute Leadership Training Center* in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

We will travel first to the Pacific Northwest:

- **Portland, Vancouver, Washington area.** **1 PM** Fort Vancouver Regional Library
 Sunday, November 20, 2005 1007 E Mill Plain Blvd., Vancouver, WA

INTERSTATE 5 – going NORTH from Portland: Mill Plain Blvd.; Exit 1C – toward Port of Vancouver; Turn Right onto E. Mill Plain Blvd.; Turn right on Fort Vancouver Way; Library on East corner. OR –

INTERSTATE 205 – going NORTH from Portland: Mill Plain exit towards HOSPITAL; Head West on Mill Plain for approx. 4.5 miles; Turn left on Fort Vancouver Way; Library on East corner.

Contact Information: Fort Vancouver Regional Library at 360-695-1561.
Brenda Rule at 360-944-5930 or Email brenneslechateau@yahoo.com or

● **Ohio, Kentucky area.**
Sabbath, November 26, 2005

2:30 PM Church of God, Cincinnati

This Church of God fellowship meets at the *Northern Hills Fellowship Unitarian Church* located at 460 Fleming Road in Cincinnati. Fleming Road passes through a residential area connecting two major roads – Winton Road and Springfield Pike (Hwy 4).

Contact information: Jim O'Brien at (513) 755-0040 home/office or (513) 235-0507 cell or Email jobrien@fuse.net or the Web at www.cogcincinnati.com for church info.

● **Dallas, Texas area**
Sabbath, December 3, 2005

1 PM Sabbath Services; **3 PM** Legacy Presentation
Church of God Big Sandy, TX.

The church building is 1/10 mile West of Big Sandy city limits on North side of Highway 80. Big Sandy is located on Rt. 80 between Hawkins and Gladewater.

Contact information: Dave Havir at 903-636-5227; 903-636-4600; DPHavir@aol.com

● **Waco, Texas area**
Sabbath, December 10, 2005

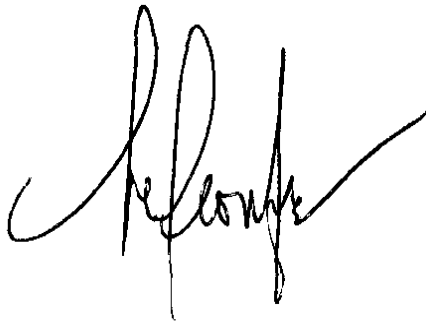
12 PM Legacy Presentation; **2:30** Sabbath Services
Central Texas Church of God

“Texas Redmen Foundation Inc.” hall. 4521 Speight Ave., Waco, TX (south side of Waco, just west of Interstate 35). From I-35 take the New Road exit and turn West. Go about 1½ miles and turn right on Speight Ave. Redmen's Hall is on the left. Lunch from 1:00-2:30.

Contact information: Ben Mauldin at 254-721-8330

We look forward to visiting with many of you!

In Service to Our Lord and King Jesus the Christ,



T. 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.