



LEGACY INSTITUTE

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Myitkyina, Kachinland

Dear Fellow-laborers,

I am in Myitkyina, the Capital of Kachinland. Kachinland is in the far north of Burma and borders India, Tibet and China. This is where 2 rivers called Mali Hka and N'Mai Hka come together to form the mighty Irrawaddy, the famous "Elephant River" that runs down the center of Burma and empties into the Andaman Sea south of Rangoon.

A few hours ago, in my hotel room at the YMCA, I held a meeting with evangelist Lazum Brang, 2004 Legacy graduate Seng Htun, 2006 Legacy graduate Seng Aung and incoming Chin student Lalbeka. During the meeting, we discussed plans for the start-up of what we will call, the *Legacy Institute Branch School in Kachinland*. We plan for this school to be built in Na Mawn, near Lake Indawgyi, the home area of Lazum Brang.

For several years now we have discussed the need for a school in Kachinland founded on the same principles as the Legacy Institute in Chiang Mai. We even bought a plot of land in Na Mawn potentially for a church compound where this school would be located. But until now, we have lacked the manpower and resources to get this dream off the ground. Now we are praying that it is God's Will to provide us with the seeds to get this new school started.

Lazum Brang is only one man. He cannot evangelize throughout the length and breadth of Burma (Myanmar) and Kachinland; *AND* raise up and oversee new congregations; *AND* administer a school! Any one of the three is a full time job! Trying to take care of *ALL* three is impossible!

Now that Seng Aung has graduated this year, he can provide the needed help to administer and teach at this new Legacy school in Kachinland. Seng Aung was one of our top students. His English has become very good. He was our translator into the Burmese language in Sabbath services and has helped to translate several booklets and articles I have written into Burmese. He is married to 2004 Legacy graduate Seng Hpa and they have 2 children (Surachai – almost 2 years old now and a new daughter – Hannah Seng Moon Aung – only 2 weeks old). Seng Aung was a mathematics teacher before he came to study at Legacy Institute in Chiang Mai.

Seng Aung will teach English, computer, music and organic gardening. These are all things he learned as a student at Legacy. He will also head up construction of bamboo classrooms and dormitories – another skill he learned at Legacy Institute. Lazum Brang will teach intensive Bible classes when he is not traveling.

The land for the school is already there and waiting! It is a plot of about 2 acres, near Lazum Brang's house. Lazum Brang has tried for over 3 years to build a school building/worship hall on this plot of land with no success. He ordered hand hewn wooden beams for this purpose, but has not had the time

to start building since his calling takes him away from home so often. Now, our plan is for Seng Aung to oversee the construction of buildings.

2004 grad, Seng Htun, will oversee the purchase and set up of the school's computer. In order to do this he must go to Rangoon (Yangon) to find a used computer, printer and copy machine. He will then hook all this up to a gasoline generator along with an in-line voltage regulator, etc. The school will have to rely on a generator since there are no electric lines to the school land plot. Since his graduation 2 years ago, Seng Htun has been studying computer hardware and software applications in Rangoon and will be graduating in October with a Bachelor's degree from a distance learning program at Myitkyina University. He has also been assisting Pastor David Ye Gyan by teaching Sabbath School for COG children in Rangoon.

It is gratifying to see our young Legacy graduates moving forward and continuing to better themselves. Legacy Institute in Chiang Mai is a character building institution. We take young people who have no opportunity and teach them to make their own opportunities.

We teach them to dream! And then we teach them the principles they can apply in their lives so that they can pursue those dreams!

At Legacy they learn the meaning of setting goals and working hard to reach them. They learn that it takes perseverance to overcome the obstacles strewn across their paths; and they learn that nothing is ever achieved by wishful thinking. It takes blood, sweat and tears ... and lots of prayers!

Legacy students learn not to sit around and wait for opportunity to knock – they learn to move forward and vigorously knock on *opportunity's* door! And they learn to trust God to open that door for them!

Burma is a very depressing place. Good jobs are scarce. Pay is very low and there is rampant inflation. Last year I could buy a Burmese language Bible for \$2. Now I must pay \$4. Tea shops in Rangoon and Mandalay are full and bursting at the seams with young men sitting around all day doing nothing. They have no jobs and don't know what to do about finding any. Many leave Burma and enter Thailand and Malaysia illegally to try to find work. They are exploited by unscrupulous factory owners and construction companies who treat them as little more than slaves. But the meager money they earn outside of Burma is far more than they could ever make INSIDE Burma!

Seng Aung and the new Legacy students who will attend the new school in Kachinland will have a lot of work cut out for them. They must build dorms and classrooms out of bamboo with thatch roofs. They must dig latrines and build a water tank to store water for cooking, bathing and washing clothes. They must plant a vegetable garden to feed the students and teachers. Seng Aung must also organize classes and work assignments. It is a formidable job! Seng Aung spent 3 years studying at Legacy in Chiang Mai. Now he will be challenged to put all of that training to use in building this new school.

We plan to start our first year with 7 students from the Delta region; China border; central Burma; Chin Hills and the Shan States. Students will come mainly from COG families. They will study Bible, English, Computer, Music and Organic Gardening for one year. They will also help with the construction of bamboo classrooms, dorms and the planting, care and harvesting of vegetables. Later, we plan to get chickens and goats. Fishing is the easy part. Lake Indawgyi is a large inland lake full of fish. Our Legacy students can cast nets and catch sufficient freshwater fish for their diet.

Once they complete one year of training in Kachinland, some will then be selected to attend another 2 years at Legacy Institute in Chiang Mai.

We are now praying for God to show us His Will. It will not be easy. We ourselves will have to exercise all the 7 Laws of Success we teach our students. And it will take not only human resources, but financial resources as well. We roughly estimate the costs to get the school off the ground to be about \$3000. This includes the generator, computer, construction materials and initial startup supplies. As well, the monthly budget for running the school (including food) we estimate to be \$300 per month. I know this doesn't sound like much, but a dollar goes a long way in Burma!

When we decided to start Legacy Institute's school in Chiang Mai, we didn't have the funds. All we knew was that it was God's Will. We fully and completely trust God to provide the funding for this new and important school. Please pray that God's will be done and that He will glorify Himself in this new project! The Work God has given us to do in Southeast Asia has always been, *and continues to be*, a work of faith!

LEGACY INSTITUTE IN CHIANG MAI

We are gearing up for the new school year at Legacy Institute Leadership Training Center in Chiang Mai. We are feverishly working to clean and repair offices, classrooms and dorms for returning students and the new incoming freshman class. It looks like we will have 7-9 new students for the 2006-2007 academic year. They will be coming from the Kachin, Lahu and Karen tribes. Two of our new students are being sent by Lazum Brang to study at Legacy Chiang Mai. We have acquired their passports already. Now we must begin the process of obtaining permission from the Thailand Ministry of Foreign Affairs to issue them a non-immigrant visa so that they can come to Thailand. This is a long and arduous process and we must first get letters from the local District Office, Chiang Mai Governor's Office and the Ministry of Culture *before* we can petition the Foreign Affairs Ministry! Please pray that God blesses our efforts and we are successful in getting them to Thailand.

We have one returning volunteer teacher and 3 new ones arriving from the USA. James Hostetter from California has volunteered for a 3rd year of service. James helped us "hold down the fort" during Legacy's summer session. Then we have Stacey Seelig from Ohio and Brian and Stephanie Smith (also from Ohio) arriving early June. Brian and Stephanie will be coming with their 2 young sons and plan to stay longer than one year. Brian is sacrificing a very responsible job with Microsoft to volunteer in Thailand. We are very grateful for the Smith's desire to serve God in Asia.

To complete the end-time Work of God will require sacrifice. All of us called by God to do the Work of His Church MUST sacrifice in order to get the job done! There is so much to do! Jesus said that the fields are ALREADY ripe for the harvest (*John 4*)! He also told us to go to ALL the nations (*Mark 16*)! Who are the harvesters? Who are those called, chosen and commissioned to make sure that the fields of this world are reaped? The Church of God, of course! You and me!

Some continue to believe that the time of reaping will take place only after the return of Jesus. This is not true! Jesus said something entirely different:

JOHN 4:34-38

*“Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. **Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!** And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: ‘one sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.” NKJV (Emphasis mine throughout)*

Is *our* food to do the Will of the Father and to finish His Work? It should be. This Great Commission should *dominate* and *govern* our daily lives and *lead* our hearts!

I have found Jesus’ words about “*one sows – another reaps*” in the above scripture especially profound in the backwater regions of Asia. Literature written by Herbert W. Armstrong in the 60’s and 70’s is *STILL* being read in the mountains of Burma and India; and the seeds planted by that ministry are now bearing fruit some 40 years later!

I met a Karen woman from the border area of China/Kachinland who showed me an old Herbert Armstrong booklet she was keeping and re-reading over and over. Lazum Brang told me about a Chin man in the mountains of western Burma who had translated articles from *Plain Truth* magazines of the 70’s and 80’s and distributed these all around the Chin Hills.

Seeds planted years ago are now springing up to eternal life! Jesus said:

*“The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how. For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. **But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.**” Mark 4:26-29 NKJV*

Some think that the Work is OVER because there is not a great deal of activity in the US today compared with the 1960’s, 70’s and 80’s. That is not what the Bible teaches us. While I do not think that God is “abandoning” the Work in our Western nations, I DO believe He is shifting His concentration to Asia, Africa, South America and Eastern Europe.

The Legacy organization could be likened to the very small dust of the balance when compared to some of the other greater Church of God ministries. Our work in Thailand, Burma and India is only a very *small* ministry with a very *small* budget. Yet it is bearing fruit disproportionate to its size! Just the other day, Herbert Vierra and I were discussing the number of baptisms resulting from Legacy’s efforts in Asia. I was astonished to realize that the total numbered over 50 in the course of the last 6 years! We can only point to God as the answer why this is so. He wills it – we are only the instruments of that Will.

Exciting things are ahead for those willing to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul and other apostles had to heed the leadership of God’s Spirit in making decisions WHERE to go on their missionary journeys:

Acts 13:4-5 “So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews.” NKJV

Acts 16:6-7 “Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they **were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia**. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.” NKJV

God leads. We are all supposed to follow.

Sometimes I think some of us are stuck in some kind of weird time warp where we constantly try to repeat the things of the past, or try to *recapture* or *reconstruct* the past; or believe we must always do things the same way we have always done them. I believe this is an exercise in futility. Are we kicking against the goads? God changes the places He works *and* changes His methods and tactics to achieve His Will:

Heb 1:1 “Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ...”
NRSV

Some of God’s prophets were kings – some were farmers. God even chose to speak through a donkey one time! God’s messages were sent in many different ways. Sometimes angels carried messages to those of us on Earth here below. A giant fish spit Jonah out on the seashore to take a message to Nineveh! A finger appeared out of nowhere and prophesied the destruction of Babylon! Sometimes the message went to Israel – sometimes it went to the Gentiles! God chose the time. He chose the place. And He chose the method of delivery.

He still does!

Today the job of spreading His Message belongs to the Church of God. That commission was not given to ONLY the Apostles. It was NOT given to ONLY the ordained clergy who followed through the centuries. It was NOT given to ONLY one man who lived in the 20th Century. *It IS GIVEN to every man, woman and child called to the end-time harvest fields of Almighty God!*

Let us all pray that God will send His Holy Spirit to stir up all of us who have been given so much for so long! Pray that God stirs us all up to RECONFIRM our commitment to the commission given the Church nearly 2000 years ago – *to carry this Gospel of the Kingdom to all the far corners of this Earth* – and then The End will come! May God speed the Day!

Your friend and servant of Our Lord Jesus Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leon Sexton', written in a cursive style.

Leon Sexton