



LEGACY INSTITUTE

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15 September 2006

Baan Mai, Thailand

Greetings to my fellow-laborers in God's Fields,

The Feast is just around the corner!

I am presently in a small village called *Baan Mai* located directly at the border between Thailand and Myanmar (Burma). I spent the day looking around the area and discussing Feast arrangements with the owner of the Wassan Guest House where we will be holding the Feast of Tabernacles. We have a total of 8 Karen families numbering (with children) about 40 persons who are members of the Church of God in Thailand. These refugee Church of God members stay in 2 different border refugee camps. Tomorrow I will go to the Mae La refugee camp nearby and have Sabbath services with our refugee Church of God brethren there. The Work of God in Asia requires me to wear many hats! Not only must I direct and teach at the Legacy Institute school in Chiang Mai; travel to Burma and India to work with Church of God evangelists; but it also falls to me to pastor the Church in both Chiang Mai and at the border. It keeps me busy!

We decided several years ago to hold a Festival site directly at the border so that our refugee brethren could attend. They are not permitted to travel to Chiang Mai for the Feast, so we are taking the Feast to them!

It is very important to gather and fellowship with other brethren from the Churches of God to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. During the time of the Second Temple, God's people came from all over the world to observe the Feast in Jerusalem. There were people from all over Asia, Africa, Parthia, Gaul, Spain and even the British Isles that returned whenever they could to join their fellow God-worshippers in the Holy Land.

They had different customs, different languages and came from many different walks of life, but they all shared a common desire to join with their brethren in song and praise of *The Almighty Who Sits Between the Cherubim*.

Do we really understand how important it is to faithfully observe the Annual Holy Days? I came across different Churches of God in Asia. Some keep the Annual Feasts and some do not. Those who do not – have little knowledge of God's Plan of Salvation for Mankind. Some do not understand the Second Resurrection. This tells us how important it is to keep the Annual Sabbaths.

Every time we keep an Annual Holy Day, we rehearse one step in God's plan. Step by step we learn the milestone events that unfold in that plan. And that plan is for ALL mankind, not just we who are called into the Body of Christ in this age.

Every time we observe the Feast with our brethren, we get to "look through the glass darkly" and catch a glimpse of the Wonderful World Tomorrow – a time of REAL peace and prosperity. It is especially important for our Church of God brethren in poor countries to also be given a chance to have that same experience.

Today I visited a Thai Police station right on the Moei River that forms the border between Thailand and Burma. I looked about 50 yards across the river to the Burmese side. There were a few shacks and a couple boats tied up. Everything looked peaceful. But it was a lie!

Just across the border from where I am tonight, the Burmese army is waging a policy of ethnic cleansing. They want the hill tribes, such as the Karen and Kerenni, the Shan and the other ethnic minorities driven out of the area. They want the land and the rich natural resources for themselves. So they burn villages; drive the hill tribes into the jungle; rape and kill those they catch; and steal or destroy any food supplies they find.

It is no wonder that there are over 200,000 refugees in border camps in Thailand and over 12,000 Indigenous Displaced Persons (IDPs) staying in jungle hideouts in the mountains just across the border in Burma.

Those hiding in the jungle usually escape with only the clothes on their backs and a few cooking utensils. They must survive off what they can gather from the jungle and what rice they can scavenge. It is no wonder many of their children die of disease and exposure. The only chance they have is to flee across the border into Thailand. But this is very dangerous as the Burmese soldiers and their allied mercenaries are waiting to ambush them at the river crossings.

Do these people need the Kingdom of God? You bet they do!

Our brethren in the refugee camps are among those who have escaped. They no longer have a homeland they can return to. The Thai government is kind enough to provide a place of refuge. But it is only temporary. They do not want the refugees to settle in Thailand. Our Karen brethren understand what it means to escape from slavery or certain death to become sojourners in a land not their own. They look forward to a new home, as should we all.

I live in an apartment in Chiang Mai. But that is not my home. I used to live in Texas. I have lived in California. I lived in Ohio. Gloria, the boys and I even lived a short time in Katmandu! None of these places are really my home. My home is the Kingdom of God.

Things did not stay the same for our Karen brethren. They were persecuted and had to flee their homes. Things will not always stay the same for each and every one of us either. The storm clouds continue to gather. It would not be wise to think that we can live the same way we live right now -- right up until the Second Coming.

Jesus gives us some very serious warnings:

Matt 24:37-40

“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” NKJV

John 15:20

“Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” NKJV

Nobody likes to think about what Jesus said is coming. But we should. It would be foolish to hide our heads in the sand and pretend that somehow Jesus had it all wrong; that everything will be all right; that we can still have our cake and eat it too!

The Feast of Tabernacles should mean just as much to us as it does to our Karen brethren; or those brethren who will be keeping the Feast in Burma, India or Africa. They all experience hardship and poverty. For them the Feast is not just about the same luxuries we Westerners already enjoy – *only more of them!*

For them, the Feast is all about PEACE and SAFETY. It is about a time when they will have a real HOMELAND and not fear for themselves and their children. It is all about God’s government – not some repressive, military dictatorship that considers them little more than slaves. It is interesting to talk to our Karen brothers and sisters who have been able to immigrate to America. They tell me that the thing they like the most about their new lives is that they no longer have to live in fear.

The Bible talks about a future time when God will gather His people together from the nations where they have been driven.

Jeremiah 23:3-8

"But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

"I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the LORD.

*"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD,
"That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;
A King shall reign and prosper,
And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.*

*"In His days Judah will be saved,
And Israel will dwell safely;
Now this is His name by which He will be called:*

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

"Therefore, behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that they shall no longer say, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,'

"but, 'As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own land." NKJV

These prophecies of the future are sobering. Let's see what God has in store for the poor and downtrodden of the earth after He gathers His people and sets up His Kingdom:

Ps 72:1-19

A Psalm of Solomon

"Give the king Your judgments, O God, And Your righteousness to the king's Son. He will judge Your people with righteousness, And Your poor with justice. The mountains will bring peace to the people, And the little hills, by righteousness. He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, And will break in pieces the oppressor.

"They shall fear You As long as the sun and moon endure, Throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, Like showers that water the earth. In His days the righteous shall flourish, And abundance of peace, Until the moon is no more.

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, And His enemies will lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles Will bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba Will offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; All nations shall serve Him.

"For He will deliver the needy when he cries, The poor also, and him who has no helper. He will spare the poor and needy, And will save the souls of the needy. He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; And precious shall be their blood in His sight. And He shall live; And the gold of Sheba will be given to Him; Prayer also will be made for Him continually, And daily He shall be praised.

"There will be an abundance of grain in the earth, On the top of the mountains; Its fruit shall wave like Lebanon; And those of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in Him; All nations shall call Him blessed.

"Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things! And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen." NKJV

When the Karen, Kachin, Chin, Shan and brethren from other tribal groups gather in Burma or on the Thai side of the border to keep the Feast of Tabernacles – THIS is what they are thinking about. THIS is what they are yearning for when they think about the trials and tribulations they face – and their friends and relatives face – everyday.

After the return of Jesus Christ, we will all get to live the Feast of Tabernacles every single day! But for many of our brethren living in various remote parts of the earth, the only taste of that precious time will be when they gather for the Feast just a few short weeks away.

Some of us have made the Feast a time of indulgence only. I am asking all of you not to fall into that trap. Don't forget the spiritual meaning of these 8 days coming up. Make sure you do something good for someone less fortunate. And always remember your brethren in the Church of God from many tribes and tongues, who are gathering together in far off places with strange sounding names.

May God bless you all and protect you as you travel to keep His Holy Feast.

Legacy Summer Service Project

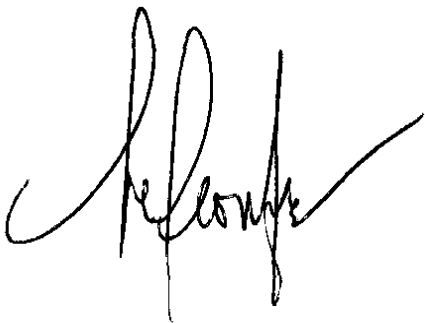
Legacy is starting a new project for young adults. We don't have an official name for it yet, but we are presently calling it the **Legacy Summer Service Project**. The project will last 8 weeks -- from mid-June through mid-August 2007. The idea is to offer a service/cultural tour project for young adults ages 20-30. The first two days we will tour Bangkok, then travel to Chiang Mai for orientation at the Legacy Institute school. After that, participants will teach English, computer and other skills to poor hill tribes at one or more hill tribe villages that are under the patronage of Queen Sirikit. This part of the program lasts 5 weeks and participants will actually live and work at the project village located in the mountains. After the 5 weeks of teaching, participants will then tour northern Thailand, Laos and Cambodia for 2 weeks.

This is an incredible opportunity for young adults to serve those less fortunate and also travel to exotic places and learn about foreign cultures. The cost will be approximately \$2500-\$3000 for each participant. This includes travel from Los Angeles to Bangkok; all other travel, food and accommodations inclusively. Participants must be in good health and have basic computer or some other skill they can use or teach others.

Anyone interested should contact Stacey Seelig at slseelig@yahoo.com as soon as possible. We are looking to select only about 10 participants, so get your name in fast. This is an exciting opportunity for those young adults who would like to serve, but are not in a position to devote an entire year to teaching at Legacy Institute in Chiang Mai. Remember; contact Stacey Seelig at slseelig@yahoo.com

Until my next letter,

Your fellow-laborer in Jesus Christ,



T. Leon Sexton

LEGACY INSTITUTE is a private, non-profit, charitable foundation, which 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. Donations and other communication can be sent to: Legacy Institute, PO Box 7, Dundee, Ohio 44624, USA or email: Anita_Showers@legacyinstitute.org