



LEGACY INSTITUTE

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Chiang Mai, Thailand

Dear Fellow-workers in God's fields,

We tried something different this year for Thanksgiving. Instead of having a Thanksgiving meal at the school for our volunteer teachers and the students, we decided to forego our own feasting and use the money to give a Thanksgiving treat to a local boy's orphanage. We treated 179 boys to ice cream and cookies.



Student, Balian, conversing with orphans



"Acharn" (Teacher) James enjoying a few words with orphans



Acharn Gloria and student Naley serving ice cream to Orphans

Thanksgiving holiday is full of meaning for Americans because it is rooted in our American heritage, history and religious values.

It is difficult to transmit the feelings we Americans have for Thanksgiving to others who have no references for its meaning. But we did our best. My wife gave a speech about Pilgrims and Indians and the reason for Thanksgiving Day -- which I was drafted into translating into Thai -- *how do you say "Pilgrim" in Thai?!*

I am not sure the boys grasped the meaning of the day, but they sure grasped the meaning of “ice cream”! Anyway, we thought it was a good way to represent an important American holiday here in Thailand and also teach our Legacy students a lesson in giving to others less fortunate. We even quoted King Bhumibol of Thailand who said, “*When we have enough for ourselves, it is our duty to help others who do not have.*”

Around the entire world people are becoming increasingly selfish and greedy. Accumulation of wealth and physical possessions is number one for many. Many never stop to think about the way they get it. Our ethical and moral standards are quickly eroding on a global scale. It is becoming less and less of a problem if others are trampled, used and abused to get what is wanted. Leaders can be the biggest culprits. And others follow their lead.

Some have asked me about the recent coup in Thailand. Why did it happen? Were we ever in danger? Will our work in Thailand be affected? Legacy does not get involved in politics here in Thailand; but I will try to give some answers the best way that I can from my own perspective.

First of all, none of us were ever in any danger. It was a bloodless coup. No one was killed. It was staged by the Thai armed forces against blatant and unashamed abuses by the former Prime Minister Taksin Shinawatra. From the first day that PM Taksin came to power, the country began a toboggan slide into gross and pandemic corruption, cronyism and despotism. I know. I live here.

Before PM Taksin came to power, he was one of the richest men in Thailand. He made his millions in the telecom business by getting in at the right place and at the right time. He owned the largest cell phone service in Thailand and several satellites over this part of the world. He used his wealth and his shrewd business mind to maneuver into the political arena. He started a new party called, “Thai Rak Thai” which means, “Thai loves Thai”. He then recruited (some would say *bought*) Parliament Ministers (MPs) from other parties who defected to his own. He built the largest party of MPs ever in the history of Thai politics and took power in Thailand’s British-style parliament by an overwhelming majority. This automatically made him Prime Minister.

Once in power, he used his business acumen to change the model of Thai government from one of public service to that of a corporate, profit-oriented model. Under his corporate leadership style, government became a business. He labeled the provincial governors as “CEO Governors” and ambassadors as “CEO Ambassadors” and they answered to him alone. Relatives and friends were placed in positions of power throughout government, national police and armed forces.

Now understand, what I am saying here is my own opinion, based on observation. I am not a political scientist. I am a student of Biblical ethics and morality and comment on that basis.

PM Taksin used his position as Prime Minister to full advantage to accumulate personal wealth in international business deals. In America, we would call this conflict of interest. But in Thailand, many Prime Ministers have used this office for personal gain. PM Taksin was able to gain control of Parliament, the National Police force, the Supreme Court and key elements of the army.

But this self-serving style of leadership got out of hand. The straw that broke the camel's back was a deal he made with a Singapore company to sell them his controlling interest in ShinCorp which included the satellites, cell phone operations and Air Asia, a Thai-owned airline. So what's the big deal? Multi-billion dollar deals are made all the time!

The problem was that certain laws were passed in Thailand *just before* the deal was signed that made the sale tax free. That was just too much for the intellectuals and educated citizens to take. Organized protests began to take place in Bangkok every week demanding Taksin step down. This went on for months and in the short weeks leading up to the coup, there was talk of civil war as the rivalry between pro-Taksin supporters and anti-Taksin protesters heated up.

All the reasons why this coup took place could fill a book. My personal understanding of why the Thai army stepped in is that it became necessary to prevent bloodshed on a national scale.

Taksin was deposed and replaced by a retired former Army chief and Privy Counselor. There have been a few minor incidents of violence in protest to the government changeover, but as far as I can see, it is "business as usual" in Thailand.

Former Prime Minister Taksin is currently in exile in England, Singapore, China and other countries. He is now facing charges at home of gross corruption and human rights violations for the extra-judicial killings of over 2500 people in his "war" against alleged drug traffickers. His wife and other relatives and cronies are also under investigation for corruption, tax evasion and using their public offices for self-gain.

The present Interim Prime Minister, Surayut Chulanond, is not a politician. Rather he was a career officer in the army and after retirement, the king asked him to become a Privy Counselor. His goal is to clean up the mess left behind by the Taksin government. But it is an uphill battle. Once immoral and unethical practices become entrenched in society, they are difficult to eradicate.

Leadership is a great responsibility. It can be used for great good – or – great evil. Hans Finzel, in his book entitled *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make* tells us:

"Leadership is dangerous. World history can best be written by studying the lives of great and terrible leaders and what they accomplished through others. We who are in leadership can on the one hand move men, women, and mountains for tremendous good. At the same time, we hold in our hands the power to do irreparable damage to our followers by the mistakes we make.

"The greater our sphere of influence, the more our impact on the world around us. And the more people we lead, the greater the potential damage caused through our poor decisions and actions. This is one of the sobering realities we must face when we take up the mantle of leadership."¹

¹ *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make*, P. 12 Victor Books/SP Publications.

What happens when leaders are self-serving? The people they supposedly serve become only instruments or commodities to be used at the whim of the leader. People attach themselves to such leaders because they can gain for themselves. They in turn use others for personal gain. The society begins to break down into one of gross greed and selfishness.

I have often wondered about the wording used to describe the fall of the Archangel Lucifer in Isaiah and Ezekiel. The Bible talks about his beauty, wisdom, pride in power and in the King James Version, his “merchandizing”. We understand about the beauty and wisdom part. Both of these gifts have the potential of making us arrogant and prideful. But what does “merchandizing” mean? The New King James Version translates this word as “trading”:

Ezek 28:14-16

*"You were the anointed cherub who covers;
I established you;
You were on the holy mountain of God;
You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.
You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created,
Till iniquity was found in you.
**"By the abundance of your trading
You became filled with violence within,
And you sinned;**
Therefore I cast you as a profane thing
Out of the mountain of God;
And I destroyed you, O covering cherub,
From the midst of the fiery stones." NKJV*

Note: *emphasis mine throughout.*

Lucifer was engaged in merchandizing or trading. The Hebrew word used here is “*rekullah*” which can be translated into English as *traffic, trade*.

In order to learn more about what this is talking about, we can look at Ezekiel again. Ezekiel 28:11-19 is a proclamation by God against the **KING** of Tyre –symbolic of Lucifer (Satan). However, Ezekiel 28:1-10 is a prophetic proclamation by God against the **PRINCE** of Tyre – the human world leader *controlled* by Satan.

Ezek 28:2-5

*"Because your heart is lifted up,
And you say, 'I am a god,
I sit in the seat of gods,
In the midst of the seas,'
Yet you are a man, and not a god,
Though you set your heart as the heart of a god
(Behold, you are wiser than Daniel!
There is no secret that can be hidden from you!
**With your wisdom and your understanding
You have gained riches for yourself,***

*And gathered gold and silver into your treasuries;
By your great wisdom in trade you have increased your riches,
And your heart is lifted up because of your riches),” NKJV*

At the End of the Age, a powerful ruler will emerge that takes over the leadership of the world through guile with the help of Satan. In some prophecies he is called *The Beast* and in others, the *King of the North*.

We can find a parallel end-time prophecy about this person in Daniel.

Dan 11:40-45

*"At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through. He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon. He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. **He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt;** also the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels. But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.” NKJV*

In the Revelation Jesus gave to John, it also shows the mind of the one who is called prophetically “The Beast.”

Rev 13:5-8

*“And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. **And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.** All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” NKJV*

The prophecies concerning the *religious leader who is in league* with this future world ruler also talk about *trading*.

Rev 13:11-17

“Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in

*the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. **He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.** NKJV*

It is clear this future leader will “make merchandise” of the people he rules over.

Power is money and money is power. This is the way of the world. People who seek power use their guile to accumulate wealth and power. Some use their wealth to buy their way into power. Once in power, people use their positions to accumulate more wealth, power and control over others. Their greed is never satiated. There is NEVER a limit to their desire to accumulate more and more.

What happens once they reach the point where they now have so much power and money that it places them in a category of wealth and power far above others?

They get what I call the “*Messiah Complex*”. Their intelligence, arrogance and pride lead them to believe that they know what is best for the teeming masses of humanity. They start to take on prerogatives that belong to God. They manipulate world politics to affect their own ideas of what they think is best for all. Alexander did this. Napoleon did this. And Hitler did this. They begin to think they are “gods”. The Roman Emperors even had temples and idols of themselves erected so that the people could worship them. This worship usually begins as a *personality cult* that leads to deification.

Tyrants seek to control 5 important things in any society: economics, information, government, weapons of defense (*army, police, and personal weapons*) and finally religion.

It should not be strange to us that the fall of Lucifer is connected to “merchandizing”. Perhaps the medium of exchange in the spirit world is not dollars or marks. Perhaps instead, it is the hearts and minds of other angels and humans. Maybe it is trades made; power and authority given; deals cut and “quid pro quo”; therefore, merchandizing.

The Bible talks about those who join themselves to the great trading empire called “Babylon” controlled by the future leader called “The Beast.” In Revelation 18, they lament God’s destruction of this future world ruling empire. The Bible gives a list of the things they will trade in. It includes in that list – merchandizing in the “souls of men.”

Rev 18:9-14

"The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'

*"And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, **and bodies and souls of men.**" NKJV*

Leadership is dangerous. Sometimes leaders can forget why they were put there in the first place. There is an old saying that goes: *"Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely."* We have recently experienced some of that in Thailand.

Over 20 years ago, I had the opportunity to sit in on a meeting between Dr. Herbert Armstrong and King Bhumibol of Thailand. In the meeting they discussed the philosophies of *Giving and Getting*. Dr. Armstrong told the king that there were only 2 main philosophies of life – GIVE and GET. The king agreed, but said the terms should be GIVE and GREED. He said that we all need to GET enough to sustain our lives and the lives of our families. He said that the problem arises when we have enough, but continue to accumulate more and more for ourselves. This is GREED.

King Bhumibol then gave one of his best quotes:

"When we have enough for ourselves, it is our duty to help others who do not have."

The world is getting increasingly materialistic. Materialism invades and infects all aspects of our society. It doesn't matter whether that society is American or Thai. It is all around us. All of us are bombarded daily by messages saying that we do not have enough. We MUST get more and more! We DESERVE more and more! We OWE IT to ourselves to get more and more! We will NOT BE ACCEPTED unless we wear the latest fashions and drive the newest model of car. It is a never ending message that permeates ALL media and how we judge success and acceptance in our societies.

It is all a LIE fostered upon us by the Father of Lies!

We each need to re-evaluate our goals in life and our responsibilities to others less fortunate. We each need to ask God to help us get in line with His Way of GIVE and not Satan's way of GREED.

DECEMBER TRAVEL IN BURMA AND AMERICA

I will leave December 5th, to go to Rangoon (Yangon), the capital of Burma (Myanmar). By God's grace we have been able to get permission from the Thai government to issue Visas to 3 young people that have been waiting for 6 months to come to Legacy Institute in Thailand. Please pray that there are no hitches in the process of getting their passports stamped at the Thai Embassy in Yangon.

Mid-December I will be traveling in the USA. First, I will be at the *Winter Family Tournament 2006* in Lexington Kentucky from **(December 22nd through December 25th)**. Then I will be in

the Big Sandy, Texas area (**December 29th and 30th**). I have asked Stacey Seelig to come along and make a presentation on her experience as a volunteer teacher at Legacy Institute Leadership Training Center in Thailand.

The day and time for the Legacy presentation at Lexington has not yet been finalized. Please contact Jim Obrien at: jobrien@fuse.net for that information. In Big Sandy we will be making a presentation after Sabbath services at the Big Sandy Church of God in Big Sandy, Texas. Services start at 1: PM and the Legacy presentation will start at 3:15 PM. Please contact Dave Havir at DPHavir@aol.com.

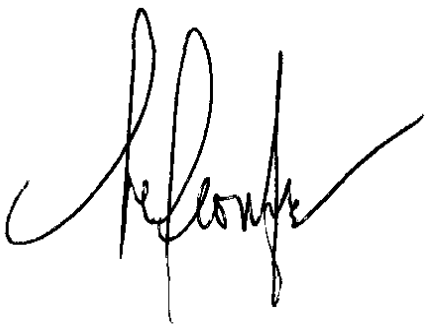
If you want to learn more about Legacy Institute and updates on the institute's various projects in Asia and *find out if volunteer service in Asia is for you*; then please come and join us at either of these places. We would be happy to sit down and get to know you and tell you all about what God is accomplishing in Asia.

Also please pray for the Smith family who are here in Thailand serving as teachers at Legacy Institute. Brian and Stephanie plan to travel at the end of December to visit Michael Hubert, a COG deacon who is preaching the Gospel in Tamil Nadu, India and Pastor Chitti Babu and other members of the Church of God in Kakinada, Andra Pradesh, India. Please pray for their safety and good health. They are taking their sons Noah (5) and Isaak (3) along with them; so it is particularly important we pray that no one gets sick!

The older I get, the more I understand that our lives are like grass that withers and fades in a day. Whether Jesus comes soon – or comes later, our lives are but a wisp of air. We must be diligently doing Our Father's Work while it is the day, because Jesus said the night is fast approaching when no one can work.

May God bless all of you, my fellow-servants in His harvest fields.

In Jesus' Name,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Leon Sexton', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

T. Leon Sexton