



LEGACY INSTITUTE

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Chiang Mai, Thailand

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Greetings to my fellow-laborers in Jesus Christ,

Another Roman year ends and a new one begins. Isn't it revealing that the Roman year begins in the dead of winter and God's year begins with the birth of spring?

The mission of Legacy Institute started as a work of FAITH! It continues to be a work of FAITH. There are times when it is ONLY the knowledge that we are in the hands of God that sustains us! With each passing year, we see much accomplished. But we also see so much more to do! Without our fellow-laborers, we just couldn't do it. We are all in this together and we share in the triumphs together.

Let's talk about one of those triumphs. I recently returned from a speaking tour in the USA. On February 4, we will hold our third Legacy commencement exercise – and this time – for 7 of our students. This year all of our graduates are from Burma. They will return to their homes and relatives and begin new lives; armed with new leadership and vocational skills and a much stronger understanding of the Word of God. Leaving us are Haung Daw, Lu Nan, Seng Raw (all Kachin); and Lal Lian, Ba Lian, Za Lian, and Za Tin Dim (all Chin tribes). They are excited – and a bit sad – to go home after attending 3 years at the *Legacy Institute Leadership Training Center*. Please pray for each and every one of them, and please pray that God will use them to His Eternal Glory.

For the administration and teaching staff of Legacy Institute, we all are sad to see them go. But at the same time we are exhilarated to see the many changes in each student over the course of the past 3 years. Most came with little or no knowledge of English; had never used a computer before; and knew nothing about the skills needed to become effective leaders in their own tribes and communities. Some had never really understood even the most fundamental of Bible Truths. They came to us as immature boys and girls. They leave as young men and women of character.

In a few weeks they will walk away, as fully equipped as we could possibly make them, to face the harsh realities of adult life. We are fully confident that they will demonstrate the high standards of character they have been taught.

It is much like a parent who watches his or her child leave home for the first time to go face the challenges of this world without ever-present parental guidance and direction. It is really hard to let go. But let go we must, otherwise they will never learn to stand on their own two feet. Letting go is one of the most difficult things a parent has to do.

I wonder how God feels when He must let us go so that we can fall on our faces; let go to learn the lessons and get the hard knocks we need; let us go so that we can finally learn the TRUE way of life that brings happiness and contentment. It may be just as hard for Him as it is for us.

We will keep you informed as we receive news of our new graduates and what they will be doing in the future. Please pray diligently for each and every one of them. They must go back into the harsh and repressive environment of Burma. Jobs are scarce and hard to find. Recently I received news that a new campaign against Christianity may soon be starting again in Burma. Please pray for our new Legacy graduates. Please pray that God will protect and guide them.

Our hope and prayer is that some or all of them will get directly involved in preaching the Gospel or possibly becoming a supporter of the Work of the Church of God in Burma. In the future this could possibly prove to be very dangerous work.

But danger did not stop the Work of God in the 1st Century; danger and martyrdom did not completely stop the Work of the Church through the centuries and these will not stop God's Work today, at the end of this age! The people God chooses as His end-time instruments already know they face the potential of imprisonment or even death. It is all part of the calling to preach the Gospel to the whole world.

“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.” John 15:20 NKJV

The rest of the world is not like America. In the countries where Gloria and I travel, we must be constantly aware of the political climate and the level of potential religious bias we might face. Last time I was in Myitkyina (the Capital of Kachinland), I stayed at the YMCA. Every day the Burmese secret police came to check up on me and ask many questions of the staff there about my activities.

In India during the previous government, we had to be very careful about what we did in the villages. Baptisms were performed in a public pool. The actual baptisms took place while in the pool. But observers saw only “swimming”. The questions *before* baptism and the following *laying on of hands* were carried out in a private room away from prying eyes. At the time, there was a law on the books against “forcible conversions” to Christianity. Now, we were not in any way forcing anyone to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and King. It should ALWAYS be the personal decision of the person being led by God to His Son. But in India, it is up to others to define “forcible conversion”, not us.

Lazum Brang has been told that he cannot build a church building in his own home town. It is against the law. So he is building additional rooms onto his house which will double as a large meeting room for worship services and guest rooms for church visitors.

“Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?” Acts 7:52 NKJV

In Malaysia, it is against the law for a Muslim to convert to Christianity. COG members in that country are either ethnic Chinese or Indian. I do not believe I need to say much to you about China. Reports come from China almost weekly of the persecutions of non-state sanctioned Christian movements.

In the USA there are fundamental freedoms by which every citizen and even non-citizens benefit. One of the chief freedoms is FREEDOM of RELIGION. The USA has no state religion. Many of the founders of the 13 colonies fled their homelands to escape religious persecutions. The founding fathers of the United States made sure that constitutional laws were in place to protect the freedom to worship God as each and every American saw fit.

These constitutional rights are rapidly eroding away. But Americans still exercise a powerful freedom of worship. It is a freedom many take for granted.

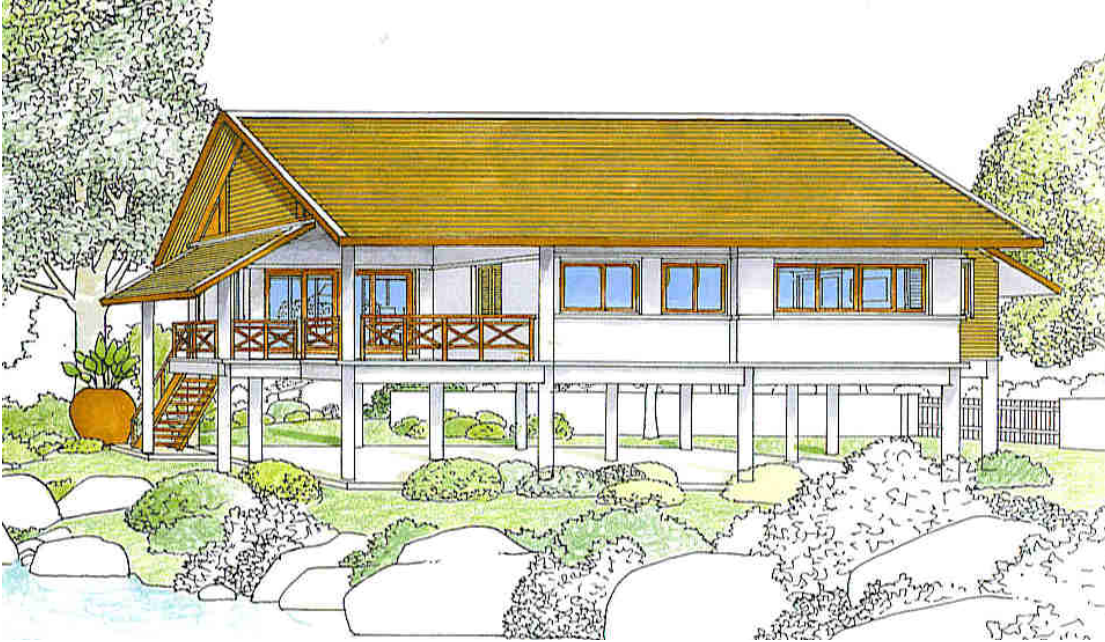
In Asia, this is not true at all. Thailand is perhaps the only nation in Asia that enjoys religious tolerance and freedom. All religions in Thailand are protected by the king himself. This is why the Church of God and Legacy Institute can operate freely in Thailand. We fall under the protection of the king.

If you go to Burma, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, China, India and other countries in Asia, you will not find such religious freedoms. Christians who wish to practice their religious beliefs in these countries stand the chance of facing one sort of persecution or another. Our own students stand the chance of facing such persecutions when they return home. They must be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Please pray for them.

BUILDING FUND

God blessed us 2 years ago with the purchase of about 2 acres to be used as the beginning of our Legacy Institute campus. There were some buildings already on the land – but none that we could use as student dormitories. These we will have to build. So, we need to start a building fund to begin construction on these buildings.

The first building will be an “all-purpose” building. We will use the open-air first story level for classes, meetings and Sabbath services and the second story for classroom space (see drawing below).



Artist's drawing of all-purpose building

Our second building will be a girl's dormitory. Then we will build a boy's dorm. We already have a kitchen that we can refurbish for a school cafeteria. There will be other classrooms added later, but we want to begin with the 3 most necessary buildings and the re-constructed cafeteria.

I have been advised to begin construction on all the buildings at the same time. By doing this we will save money and time. We are now gathering information and pricing available construction materials. We should be able to provide approximate costs for construction materials and labor very soon.

Meanwhile, construction costs are rising and the dollar has gone down against the Thai baht over 12% in 2006. Adding this to inflation means costs continue to rise. But we are faithful that God will provide for our needs. When we are in line with God's will, He provides. He graciously provided for the purchase of the campus land and now He will provide for the buildings we need to house our students and conduct classes and Sabbath services.

We are currently leasing a compound in town for temporary dorms, classrooms and teacher housing. The buildings are old and we are responsible for the cost of maintenance and repairs. The wood is termite infested and the plumbing and electrical wiring are sub-standard. The longer we stay in this compound, the more it will cost us to continue to maintain the buildings and make repairs when we leave. Anyway, why should we continue to put money into property that belongs to someone else? Rather, we should put our money into something that will benefit God's Work for years into the future!

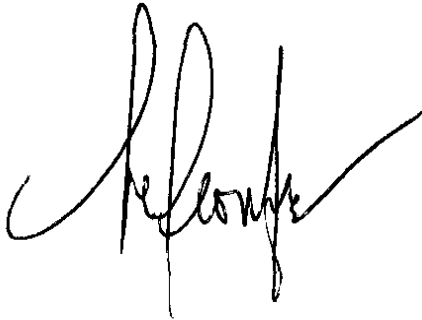
We really don't know how long we have until the coming of our Lord. All signs point that it will be very soon. But whether it is 5 years or 20 years, we all should be doing our best to accomplish His Work in the present and prepare for whatever work He may have for us in the future – all the way until the end!

Legacy Institute International Leadership Training Center was founded to support a FUTURE Work of God in Asia. We are in the business of training leaders for that future Work. We need a campus with adequate dormitories and classrooms. We are fully assured that God will provide for these needs. The school was founded by the Will of God. It will be sustained and developed to its full potential by that same Will! Please pray that God blesses our building program.

In my next letter I will tell you more about our graduation ceremony and the future plans of our graduating students. We will continue to do God's Will and look forward to accomplishing more and more in the future to His Glory and Honor.

Please pray that God will abundantly supply our needs and make a way for us to begin construction of campus buildings. And please pray for our graduating students.

In Our Lord Jesus' service,

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

T. Leon Sexton