



## LEGACY INSTITUTE

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Dear fellow laborers in God's fields,

I recently spoke on the phone with Jay Pabalo, a Legacy Institute 2008 graduate. He is now enrolled as a freshman in one of Thailand's universities majoring in education. He told me how much Legacy had helped him and that he was far ahead of his classmates in English language ability. He said he was very lucky to have graduated from Legacy's three-year program.

He told me one of his teachers is from America. The American teacher asked him where he learned his English and how much English did he know? Jay told him, "Talk to me for awhile in English and then you can decide how much I know."

After he graduates with a degree in Education, Jay plans to go back into the mountains and teach poor students. We are very proud of Jay, who himself is from the Karen hill tribe group and grew up in the mountains of northern Thailand.

This kind of success story is exactly what we are striving for at our Legacy school in Thailand. Jay not only will have an opportunity to embark on a career as a teacher and be able to earn a living for the rest of his life, he will also help others of his own people who are poor and lack opportunity for education. Jay is going to "give back." That is the "Legacy Way"!

Often, non-governmental agencies and charitable organizations come and provide food and clothing to the poor here in Asia. It is a good thing to help the poor when they are in need of the basics of life. The Apostle James said:

If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, 'Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled;' notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit? <sup>1</sup>

In times of emergency, we are to help those in trouble. Legacy has helped in times of natural disaster, such as when the recent typhoon Nargis hit Burma. At that time we were able to provide much needed food, water, and supplies for shelters to those in real need for survival. But in the poor countries of Asia, Africa, and other poor areas of the world, those

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<sup>1</sup> James 2:15-16, King James Version used throughout unless otherwise noted.

in need require much more. It is even more important to teach the poor and uneducated how to take care of themselves. Unless we do this, it will only be a matter of time before they are in real need once again. It goes back to the old saying, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

We have a fundamental philosophy at the foundation of our project in Thailand. We not only teach our students God's way of life that brings happiness and fulfillment to themselves and their families; we also seek to teach them how to stand on their own feet and be able to physically sustain themselves and their families for the future. We teach them how to fish.

My earlier comments about Jay are an example of how the English (and computer as well as other subjects) he learned at Legacy put him ahead of the game in his studies at the university. He told me he was afraid he was going to get bored in his English classes because his level of English was so far advanced, and he credits Legacy for that.

I recall a meeting years ago between King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand and Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, my old teacher. In this meeting they were discussing philosophies of life. Mr. Armstrong told the king that the Americans were great givers. The king said, "That is correct, they are; but one has to know how to give."

The king is right; knowing *how to give* is as important as giving of one's self and one's physical resources. Often I have been with Western people visiting the poor and needy hill tribes or refugees living in squalid border camps without enough to eat or enough clothing to wear. It is important to feed them and give them clothing, since they are hungry and cold. But what's next? Will a full belly and warmth today mean they will have enough food and clothing tomorrow? The answer is no. Giving a fish today is only a temporary solution. What they really need is a way to provide food and clothing for themselves and their families for the day *and* for all the days ahead. They need a lasting solution.

Too often, we feel compassion for the poor and want to help. So we give them money and return home. Within a very short time, the same people we gave the money to are right back in the same state they were in before we gave them the money in the first place. In today's world, there are more people going hungry than there were ten years ago. There is really no end to suffering and poverty.

I remember a conversation I once had with the rector of Khon Kaen University in Northeast Thailand, now over 30 years ago. I forget his name, but I remember vividly the conversation because I learned so much. He described to me what he called the "Cycle of Poverty." He explained that there were three basic elements to the cycle that keep the poor trapped in their poverty.

He began with poverty. Because they are poor, they cannot afford a good enough education to get a good job or buy healthy foods. The second element is education. Without education they lack adequate training and skills for good jobs. The third element is malnutrition. Because they cannot get good food and lack education to understand the

value of good nutrition, the poor do not do well in school, even if they have a chance to learn.

Each of these elements affects the others in a downward spiral of increased poverty and lack of opportunity. He then told me that he was an educator because he believed that only through education could the “Cycle of Poverty” be broken. If you give nutritious food, they are fed for a day, but still lack the education to improve their lives. If you give them money, they will soon spend it all and fall right back into the cycle once again.

But with the right education, they can learn about good health and nutrition and learn the skills needed to get a good job or go on for higher education. He believed firmly that education was the only way to break the poverty cycle.

At Legacy we want to give—the right way. We want to give our students a way to help them stand on their own feet in a sustainable pattern of personal development and success in life. At Legacy, we not only teach them how to live by exposing them to God’s Way of Life, but we also seek to give them skills so they can earn a living. That is why we emphasize English language and computer skills.

Back in America, we all speak English and probably all have one or more computers. We take our education for granted. But over here in the border areas of Thailand, English is a rare and valuable skill and very few hill tribe people have a computer or even know how to use one if they did. If they want to get any kind of job working around foreigners—possibly in the tourist or hotel industries—speaking English is a valuable and saleable skill. And today, almost anywhere in the world, knowing how to operate a computer is a prerequisite for getting a good job.

Our hope is that they will eventually be able to go back and help teach their own poor tribal people so they, too, can have opportunity to break the “Cycle of Poverty.”

I tell our volunteer teachers that quality is far more important than quantity. I would rather graduate 10 young men and women, well-grounded in the truth of the Bible and well-equipped to find a good job or go on for further education, than 100 graduates who now have the ability to earn a living, but with little understanding of HOW to live in a way that brings lasting happiness and real success to themselves and their families.

How does God measure success? I have had many lengthy discussions with Gloria about this. Legacy Institute has been in existence for over ten years now. Yet, if we use the standard human numerical yardstick to measure success, then we must not be very successful.

But God has an entirely different perspective. Remember when Gideon went to battle with the Midianites?<sup>2</sup> God told him he had far too many men with him. God commanded

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<sup>2</sup> Judges 7:

Gideon to reduce the number until finally he had only three hundred men. God said, “With the three hundred men . . . I will save you . . .” Through an effective method of reducing the number, God caused Gideon to end up with fewer numbers, but with men whose hearts were in the cause. They defeated the Midianites and Israel was saved.

It is like the U.S. Marines’ recruiting theme: “Looking for a few good men.” This approach of seeking quality and not quantity is not always easy. We must regularly review our standards and periodically raise the bar. And it is an approach that many times ends in disappointment. Not many catch the vision or wish to dedicate themselves to the cause. It is only the few.

I have to continually remind myself of the parable Jesus relates in Mark:

Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.<sup>3</sup>

What this teaches me is, that out of all the seeds we plant, only a few will ever bear fruit.

We always have hope that our graduates will be called to help us do the Work God gave us. But our success rate in this area is not good if we only look at things from our own human perspectives. We have had many disappointments since we started God’s Work in Asia through Legacy in 1999. It has been like a rollercoaster ride with highs and lows, ups and downs. We have had to battle Satan, the society (a very alien one), and our own faults and weaknesses. There really is no letup. I told Gloria that if I had known the hardship I would have to go through doing this work in Asia, I would have probably made some lame excuse to stay in America. Maybe that is why God never allowed me to know in advance what it would be like.

Now I invariably remember the abuse and hardship that Our Lord Jesus went through during His short ministry on the Earth. Absolutely **NOTHING** that happens to me can even remotely be compared to the terrible abuse, pain, and humiliation He went through in order to save us all.

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<sup>3</sup> Mark 4:3-8

His endurance gives me the strength to endure. His sacrifice gives me the power to sacrifice. His faith strengthens my own. All praise and all glory belong to Him.

So, throughout all of this, we ask ourselves, how can we know how successful we are? Well, the answer to that is, we really can't know as we would like to know. How can we know how much someone's heart has been changed? How can we know what effect we have on someone that may not be apparent until 5, 10 or 20 years down the road—maybe even after we are long gone?

God doesn't think like a man and His ways are many times beyond us.

Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek *it* out, yet he shall not find *it*; yea further; though a wise *man* think to know *it*, yet shall he not be able to find *it*.<sup>4</sup>

I always end up telling Gloria that, no matter what happens, we continue doing what God has given us to do and do our best in faith. Then God will have to do the rest. He is not going to do our job for us. And we can't do His job. It is a partnership of faith.

Our innermost hope is that some of our graduates at Legacy Institute's three-year program will go on to become involved in God's Work in Asia. But we cannot wish and hope that into fruition. We cannot do God's job for Him. The 12 disciples did not choose themselves or somehow sign on with Jesus on their own. Each and every one was called and chosen by Jesus Himself. I tell our teachers, "We teach—God calls." And so we continue this journey in faith.

### CHIANG MAI FEAST OF TABERNACLES

I have been asked if we will still have a Legacy Institute-sponsored Feast of Tabernacles site in Chiang Mai this year, since the United Church of God organization will be holding one in Bangkok. The answer is yes, there will still be a Legacy Feast site this year in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

The purpose of holding a Feast in Chiang Mai is the same as before. The most important reason for the Chiang Mai Feast site is to provide a festival location for the local brethren, brethren from border refugee camps, and some from surrounding countries. Without the Chiang Mai Feast site, they would have nowhere to attend. An additional benefit is that Chiang Mai provides a chance for Western COG members to come and enjoy what

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<sup>4</sup> Ecclesiastes 8:17

Thailand has to offer for the Feast and visit the Legacy school. Having Western brethren visit and enjoy the Feast in Chiang Mai is a wonderful experience for our students and local COG brethren. The Church of God is made up of people of many ethnic backgrounds and walks of life. Local brethren from Thailand, Burma, China, and Malaysia get to learn about others from the West and vice versa. We develop life-long friendships with brothers and sisters who speak another language and live quite differently from ourselves.

And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>5</sup>

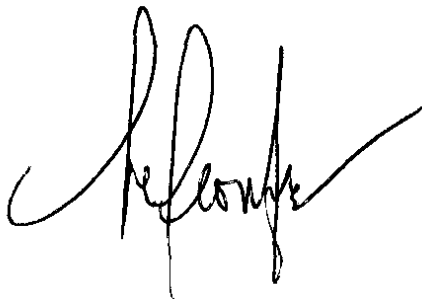
An important benefit of the Feast in Chiang Mai is that Legacy students, who mostly come from non-sabbatarian backgrounds, also get to attend and learn what the Feast of Tabernacles is all about. What a powerful witness about the Kingdom to come!

The Feast will be held at the Empress Hotel, an internationally known 4-star hotel. We are able to keep costs down since we have had a friendship with the General Manager for over 25 years.

If you have not already made your plans for the Feast and you want to learn more about the Chiang Mai Feast site, contact Herbert Vierra at [accmos@verizon.net](mailto:accmos@verizon.net) or call 1.626.357.2588.

With grateful thanks to all of you for your part in God's Work in Asia.

Your fellow laborer in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Leon Sexton', with a large, stylized initial 'T' and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

T. Leon Sexton

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<sup>5</sup> Matthew 8:11