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IN THIS LETTER:

KAREN FAMILY ARRIVES CHIANG MAI

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ACHARN ABBY AND THE GARDEN

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THE PALE HORSE AND HIS RIDER



Abigail and her parents, Dr. Paul and Mrs. Sandra Syltie

Dear Friends and Fellow Laborers,

Two weeks ago Gloria and I traveled to a small village in the mountains near the border with Burma (now called Myanmar). We went to pick up six refugees who are also Church of God members. They have been living in the refugee camp for four years. While the refugee camps are safe havens from the depredations just across the border inside Myanmar, it is also a rather hopeless existence. They can never return to Myanmar because they are members of an ethnic minority called the Karen. While they themselves have never been a part of the Karen armed resistance against the central Burmese government, just the fact that they are Karen means that they are targets of persecution. Going back would be very dangerous for them. They would, at best, face becoming victims of a repressive military regime. The worst means imprisonment or even death. In Myanmar there is no hope.

Recently, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made an unprecedented trip to Myanmar to meet with the military leaders in their new Capital of Naypyitaw. I call the visit unprecedented because she is the highest level American diplomat to visit Myanmar since then Secretary of State nominee Condoleezza Rice called Myanmar one of the "Outposts of Tyranny" in a speech in January, 2005.

Why would the U.S. Secretary of State pay such a high level visit to one of the “Outposts of Tyranny?” The answer is quite simple. Myanmar is one of the poorest countries in the world, yet has a great wealth of natural resources, most of which is untapped. If the U.S.A. and Europeans don’t go after those resources, China will. In fact, China is investing heavily in infrastructure in Myanmar. They are currently building a dam inside Myanmar near the China border. That is one of the causes for the recent fighting between the Myanmar army and the ethnic armies of the Kachin and Wa tribes. Thousands of refugees have fled the fighting, some fleeing across the border into China.

“Up to 10,000 refugees have fled to an area in southwestern Yunnan province, driven by fighting between Myanmar’s military and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), one of the country’s most powerful rebel groups, five aid groups told Reuters. Many of the refugees are women, children and elderly people.

“Although long wary of poor, unstable Myanmar, China has invested heavily in the country. It has brushed off Western sanctions to build infrastructure, hydropower dams and twin oil-and-gas pipelines to help feed southern China’s growing energy needs”¹

Gas and oil are not the only treasures that Myanmar possesses. The country has rubies, sapphires, gold, platinum, tin, uranium, and other rare earth minerals. Myanmar possesses two great rivers of the Himalayan watershed—the Salween and the Irrawaddy—that can be tapped for hydroelectric power. Also, it is not well known that all the highest quality, so-called Chinese jade comes from Kachinland in northern Myanmar. No wonder China’s hungry, exploding economy is first in line to tap Myanmar’s wealth of natural resources. It is no wonder the United States and Europe are willing to hide their eyes at what some human rights watchdog agencies call gross human rights abuses, in order to have their place at the resource trough.

Recently, U.N. sponsored rations in the camps have been cut in half. This is a signal, to any others who might wish to flee to Thailand, that life in the camps will not be so easy. Few will ever be accepted to a third country. The U.S. has all but closed its doors to any more refugees from Southeast Asia. The strong possibility of behind-the-scenes pressure being placed on the U.N. to close the border camps has increased dramatically.

This year, Myanmar will have the chairmanship of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The border camps are an embarrassment to Myanmar, who is supposedly on the road to freedom and democracy, if you choose to believe Secretary Clinton. If peace and democracy are supposed to be blossoming in Myanmar, why would anyone want to flee across the border into Thailand?

¹ Reuters, Feb 7, 2012. Sui-Lee Wee

King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit of Thailand, who are well known for their compassion and humanitarian works, would never allow the refugees to be sent back across the border to face imprisonment or death. So, that leaves the alternative of being somehow absorbed into local northern Thai society.

There are five of SawSeyHtoo's family that are baptized members of the COG. We also brought along one other baptized member, SeyNeePaw who will study at Legacy. All will learn Thai and English languages. All will be able to attend regular Sabbath services, Bible classes, and Bible Studies. All will be able to work and study at Legacy in Chiang Mai with the goal of making better lives for themselves and future COG generations.

The trip back down out of the mountains was uneventful. However, Gloria fell ill with a bad flu. I had to rent a van and take the refugees to Chiang Mai alone. Gloria came back two days later, after getting needed rest and regaining her strength.

Yesterday, the entire family helped me plant soybeans. While working, I taught them some Thai words and phrases. They all learn fast, as they already speak two languages: Karen and Burmese. We are excited to have them with us in Chiang Mai. We know God will bless them and help them get settled into a new way of life in a new land. Please pray for them and all of us here at Legacy in Chiang Mai.

ACHAAN (TEACHER) ABBY AND THE GARDEN

We are now blessed to have Abigail Syltie with us as a volunteer teacher. She arrived on the 1st of February, and has already plunged into her duties. "Achaan Abby" as we call her, grew up on a self-sustaining, organic farm in Fredericksburg, Texas, and later moved to East Texas with her family. Her father is Dr. Syltie, formerly an agriculture professor at Ambassador College in Big Sandy.



Legacy students collecting seeds. L. to R. Katree and Aja



SeyNeePaw and SeyNeeSey week young plants



SeyNeeHtoo planting tomatoes at Legacy's greenhouse.

Even though she has a degree in both fashion design and interior design—not agriculture, she possesses a wealth of knowledge and experience she learned while helping her father, mother, sisters, and brothers take care of their organic farm. Self-sustaining means they bought little food from the market. They grew or raised most of the food they ate. This is exactly the kind of knowledge and experience we need at Legacy.

THE PALE HORSE AND HIS RIDER

Food prices are escalating because of rising costs of transportation and petroleum and natural gas-based pesticides and fertilizers. As well, the demand for food is rising as the world's population explodes to more than seven billion and counting. Bio-fuel production is adding to the rising cost of food, as more and more of the world's croplands are being diverted from food to bio-fuels.

An article published in *Time Magazine* entitled "After the Oil Crisis, a Food Crisis?" researcher Kathleen Kingsbury states, "Since 2006, a portion of land that was also formerly used to grow other crops in the United States is now used to grow corn for biofuels, and a larger share of corn is destined to ethanol production, reaching 25% in 2007."²

As more and more croplands are diverted to bio-fuel production, food prices will continue to climb. Talking about bio-fuels increasingly taking up virgin rain forest and already cultivated, arable lands, a *Greenpeace* blog posting states, "...but these crops need to be grown somewhere. There's a finite amount of arable land on the planet and most, if not all, of that is already being used to feed the 6 billion plus population. Monbiot³ points out that if we rely on crops for our fuel supplies, it will "set up a competition for food between cars and people" and that crop prices are already rising as a result. As food becomes more and more expensive, you can bet it won't be those sitting behind the wheel of a 4x4 going hungry.

"With prices for biofuel crops rising ever higher as demand increases, the temptation to open up new areas of arable land is just too great."⁴

Food prices will continue to climb. They will not be coming down. The world's food reserves are the lowest they have been in 35 years⁵. If the U.S. were to have a major food shortage, the country would be in very deep trouble.

2 Kathleen Kingsbury, *Time Magazine*, (2007-11-16), "After the Oil Crisis, a Food Crisis?"

3 Environmentalist George Monbiot

4 <http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/blog/climate/biofuels-green-dream-or-climate-change-nightmare-20070509>

5 Kathleen Kingsbury, *Time Magazine*, (2007-11-16), "After the Oil Crisis, a Food Crisis?"

Then we have genetically modified foods (GMOs) emerging rapidly on the world scene. This is perhaps the greatest threat to the environment ever to come upon the world. As food prices soar and world population increases, the giant bio-corporations, such as *Monsonito*, will come riding in on their pale horses⁶ ready to save the starving of the world with the panacea of genetically-modified foods. They are already here and changing the natural order of food genetics by creating what some now call “Frankenfood.”

This next statistic should shock you to the marrow of your bones. According to the *Grocery Manufacturers of America* estimates in 2003 (nine years ago!), **75% of processed foods sold in the U.S. contained one or more GMO ingredients**⁷. That is shocking. And since there is no law saying that GMO products must be labeled, **YOU DON'T KNOW!** Most corn oil and corn syrup in the U.S. is manufactured from Bt corn, which has a pesticide genetically implanted into the corn itself. Soybeans (soy oil) is genetically modified to resist herbicides that are sprayed on them. Alfalfa (animal food), cotton (cottonseed oil), canola (canola oil), tomatoes, papaya, and more are GMO. The list continues to grow. Here are some statistics from the Food and Drug Administration of the U.S., and (as of 2010) the percentages of planted acres in the U.S.A. that have adopted GMO crops⁸:

HT soybean	94 %		
HT cotton	75 %	Bt cotton	73 %
HT corn	72 %	Bt corn	65 %
HT means herbicide tolerant		Bt means <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> ⁹	

Even more insidious, all of these GMO crops are subject to international intellectual property laws. This means that when they cross-pollinate with non-GMO crops (and they DO CROSS POLLINATE!), the hapless farmer who was not growing GMO crops is now a criminal and subject to laws against theft of intellectual property. This also means that foods are becoming controlled by the people who own the patents on the GMO crops. It should be no surprise that it is the same multi-national bio-corporations that own the patents.

Big Brother is already here!

6 Revelation 6:8

7 “Genetic Engineering: The Future of Foods?” by Linda Bren, FDA Consumer magazine, November-December 2003 Issue

8 <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/BiotechCrops/>

9 “Genetically Engineered Crops and Pesticide Use in the United States: The First Nine Years.” By Charles M. Benbrook, 2004 (http://www.biotech-info.net/Full_version_first_nine.pdf)

This world is headed for a “perfect storm” of food shortages and the growing control of food production by multi-nationals. Don’t kid yourself: *he who controls food production controls the world*. The Roman Emperors knew this, and that is why the great granary of the empire—Egypt—was so important that the Emperors made Egypt their personal province!

If you look carefully at the prophecy of the four horsemen in Revelation 6, you see that the pale horse is ridden by Death. Pale is actually a poor term for the color of this horse. A better description would be the pale pasty green color of a corpse. This horseman brings disease epidemics and is followed by hell (or ‘hades’), meaning “the grave.” Revelation shows us that disease epidemics will devastate the population of the Earth.

We understand that in the very beginning, God created reproduction systems for plants and animals that produced “after their own kind.” This meant that a horse could not produce a rabbit, or a tomato could not produce a frog. Every living creation was genetically separated from another. Species did not cross. But now human scientists are crossing the species barrier—and even the kingdom barrier—through genetic modification. They have now crossed arctic flounder with tomatoes!¹⁰

Genetic modification of viruses and bacteria is now going on. What will be the results of playing with God’s created systems? It most certainly will backfire. Millions of deaths will be the payoff as super diseases emerge and sweep across the landscape. Much of what we read in Revelation is self inflicted.

What can you do? One way that you can combat rising food prices and genetically modified food products is to raise as much of your own food as possible. Tomatoes (not the fish kind!) can be grown in planters. Beans, herbs, and other kinds of plants can be grown in the same way. My son Bronson is experimenting with growing potatoes in planters. If you live in an apartment, any space can be used, such as windowsills and patios. As long as your plants get sunlight and water, they can even be grown indoors. While living in Bangkok, I knew a friend who grew an entire garden, even with corn, on the roof of the apartment we lived in.

Another way is to read food labels. If it says canola oil (rapeseed oil), corn oil, or cottonseed oil, the chances are it is GMO.

The way we at Legacy are combating this evil here in Thailand is to grow as much food as we can on our own land with open-pollinated, heirloom seeds, which we collect to plant again.

10 Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (1991). Permit Number 91-079-01 tomato; antifreeze gene; staphylococcal Protein A.

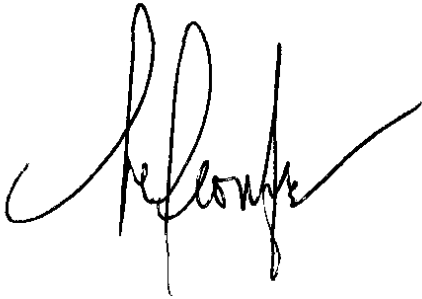
There are many other ways to provide food for self and family. We just need to get back to becoming students of God's natural way of food production and growing cycles according to His Laws. We must make God our partner.

I have asked Abby to write a paragraph or so to keep you informed about progress at the Legacy Farm. I will be posting this on our Legacy blog: <http://www.legacyinstituteorg.blogspot.com/>, and sometimes in the Legacy Letter.

Keep praying for us here. We are where we are supposed to be. God has a great Work ahead for us in this part of the world. Making ourselves self sustaining in food production will go a long way to keep us here as long as God wills. May God bless and protect you all as the horsemen of Revelation 6 start to gallop ever faster and faster.

In the Holy King's Glorious and Just Name,

T. Leon Sexton

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

T. Leon Sexton

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