



## LEGACY INSTITUTE

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Ian Stewart tills ground with the “Denny” tractor provided by The Denny Luker Foundation.<sup>1</sup>

1 January 2016

Dear Friends and Fellow Laborers,

Organic gardening has been an integral part of the Legacy school curriculum since its beginning in May, 2002, fourteen years ago. Students not only learn Bible, computer, English, health, and other academic subjects, they must participate in growing vegetables and grain crops to help feed students and teachers at Legacy. The picture above shows Ian Stewart tilling the soil in preparation for sowing corn and beans.

Why would we emphasize growing vegetables here at Legacy? The answer is simple. In the future, students will need the knowledge to survive in a world that has become increasingly more difficult for young people to earn a living. In America, for instance, young people generally seek

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<sup>1</sup> Photo by Legacy student HtooMya Shwe

to go to college or university to gain a degree that will allow them to get a good-paying white-collar job. Perhaps this would be in the field of computer programs, or maybe in marketing or law. Few want to be farmers in the future.

That is just fine . . . as long as the economy stays strong.

Few of the students that come to Legacy will ever have the opportunity to go to college or university. Good paying jobs are just not easy to find in Burma and Thailand if you are not somehow connected to someone in power. Our students mainly come from hill tribe families. Neither parent has been to college. Many parents have not finished the equivalent of high school. This means their children will either work in a factory with long hours and low pay, or be day laborers in someone else's field, or practice subsistence gardening. Maybe some might land a job in construction, again with low pay.

So while we do teach them skills that can mean opportunity, such as the English language or computer, we also teach organic gardening. When push comes to shove, and there are no jobs open to them to earn money, they can always grow vegetables and raise chickens to feed their families.

I had an interesting and revealing talk with Stelyn Shwe, one of our soon-to-graduate students. I asked him what he wanted to do after graduation. He said he wanted to return to Jawk Taing, Burma, and start farming. His uncles (who live only 10 minutes from our church compound) already have land and grow vegetables and fruits. They have sufficient to feed their families and sell the surplus in the market. They are not rich, but they have enough. He wants to do the same.

I asked him if he learned anything at Legacy about gardening. He said he learned a lot. The skills he picked up at Legacy will be put to good use when he returns home. He will also be using his Bible knowledge to help out at the church. He will be a big help to Seng Aung, our local student pastor in Jawk Taing.

I also asked Stelyn Shwe what would happen if Legacy could no longer help as much because donations were less from the U.S.? He appeared nonplussed. I explained that we must plan ahead for any eventuality. I told him that is why we teach organic farming so that students have more skills to grow their own food.

The world economy is in turmoil. Legacy relies almost entirely upon donations made by individual donors and sometimes from small COG congregations. We have no large COG organizational sponsor. We are also not a church organization, but a foundation. This means Legacy Institute has no tithe paying membership. There are those who do designate some of their tithes to Legacy for the Work of God we are doing here in Asia. But that is a personal choice made by the donor—and we have never asked for tithes.

Now for almost 14 years we have relied on God to supply all our needs at Legacy. This He has faithfully done through the donations and offerings of His saints. Most of our donations come from America. As the U.S. economy worsens, more and more families of our donors become financially strained. That means it is getting harder and harder to have any funds to earmark for Legacy Institute.

In Thailand, Legacy takes care of all students, teachers, and local church and non-church employees.

In Burma, we send funds to take care of our student pastor and his family, and also those we send to help him. For instance, we sent HtooMya Shwe back to help Seng Aung during the Feast of Tabernacles. We also finance Passover, Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of Tabernacles in both Thailand and Burma. Few of our brethren in Burma have any funds to save enough festival tithe to travel to the Jawk Taing Feast site.

Legacy must take care of all the food and other costs at the annual Feasts. Any special second tithe donations would be very appreciated by the brethren so they can keep the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread this year.

In the coming years, food production will become necessary as food prices go up and water resources become scarce. This is already happening worldwide. We want to have the students learn the importance of growing food for themselves and their families, and possibly have a surplus to sell at the local markets. It will become more and more important from now on. I will see what can be developed for the church in Burma when Gloria and I go there this spring for Passover.

I am reminded of the incident in Daniel when the hand appeared out of nowhere and wrote on the wall, “Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin.”<sup>2</sup> The message was from God to Belshazzar, king of Babylon. Daniel interpreted God’s message. It was:

*This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old. (Daniel 5:26-31)*

America is being weighed in the balance right now! Even as Belshazzar did not give God the glory, the U.S. is refusing to give our God the glory. God is being systematically removed from all our American institutions at an accelerated pace. Just recently I read about an elementary school near Louisville, Kentucky, actually editing out a Bible passage about Jesus from a Peanuts Christmas play!<sup>3</sup> That is insane! PC fanatics have gone mad!

I do not observe Christmas since it is not in the Bible; but the school administrators did not get rid of references to Christmas—they got rid of references to Jesus. They said that they were afraid of lawsuits by atheist organizations. **Since when do atheists dictate what Americans can and cannot believe?**

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel 5:5

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-kentucky-charliebrown-idUSKBN0TZ2TP20151216>

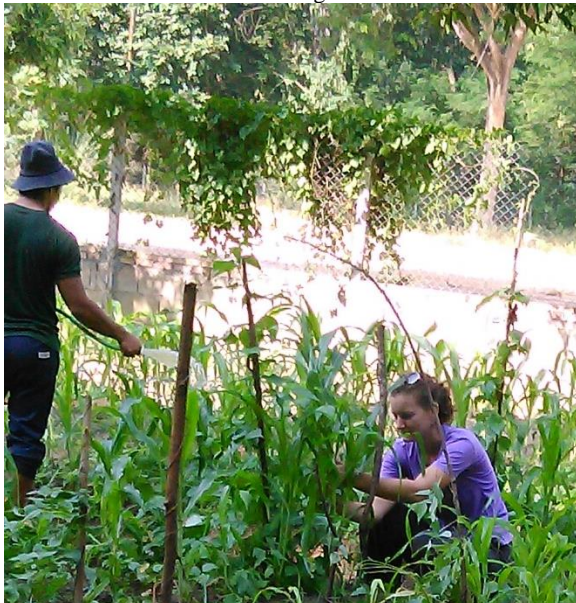




Planting



Watering.



Cassie McQuoid staking green beans.

One thing that really makes me angry is the way that godless people have twisted the Establishment clause and the Free Exercise clause of the First Amendment. There is no way that the founders of our nation who wrote the Bill of Rights intended that we use the Freedom of Religion clauses to throw God out of our government and government-supported institutions. It reads: *Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...* This was added to the Constitution to prevent the creation of a state religion and to prevent government from meddling in the religious practices of citizens. It had nothing to do with keeping God out of government. Any person who is honest with the history of the United States will have to admit this.

My own Sexton ancestors fled Ireland because they were Protestants, and Cromwell's Puritan troops were persecuting anyone who did not adhere to Cromwell's faith and rule. This included both Catholics and Protestants in Ireland. Many fled to America from the Old World to escape religious persecution. They fled into the relative unknown, trusting God to help them start a new life. Hence the protection of religious freedom we find in the founding document of the new nation of freedom called the United States of America.

### TRUSTING GOD

Now we need to address the idea of trusting God for all our needs. Faith is all important. But we must remember that faith without works is dead! (James 2)

God expects us to do something, not just sit around and wait. For example, Abraham was faithful and trusted God, but he did not sit around in Canaan and starve to death when there was a famine. He took his wife and people to Egypt where food was readily available.

When there was a famine in Israel, Elimelech of Bethlehem, his wife Naomi, and his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, went to live in Moab and grow food. Ruth, the Moabitess and daughter-in-law of Elimelech, returned to Bethlehem with

Naomi. Ruth, a woman full of faith in God, later married Boaz and became an ancestor of King David.

Faith without works is dead. The time to start thinking about the fulfillment of prophecy is not when the sky falls upon us. The time to start preparing for what is coming is today. Be pro-active—not re-active, when it is too late.

We are teaching our students to do everything they can to prepare for food shortages or food that is too expensive for them to buy. I call this ACTIVE FAITH. If we do all we can, God will take care of the rest.

Another example of active faith from our Legacy school is this: we pray and ask God to bless our production in the garden. But if we are not obeying His farm laws, can we expect Him to bless us? We again kept the Land Sabbath which ended the day before the Feast of Trumpets this year. We present first fruits of the harvests to God. We tithe on the increase. We do all we can to follow His way of agriculture. We can then expect the blessings of God to pour down upon us, sometimes literally, when we need rain for our crops or protection from pests. All along, our students are learning to rely on God and to follow His laws of agriculture and land use.

My mother and father used to have a big garden. They both had regular jobs, but worked hard in the garden on weekends and any spare time. I grew up hoeing corn and other vegetables. We also had a milk cow and had fresh milk and butter. It all took work and sometimes my brother and I would have rather slept in. But my Grandma's broom usually won out over our desire to stay in bed after being out late the night before.

Grandma lived next door and spent many hours working in the garden to produce food. My father, mother, and grandmother all canned and kept food in store. We had a root cellar with potatoes and canned fruits, and vegetables. They knew what hard times were like and all had gone through the Great Depression and World War II. Some of our readers still have parents who lived through the shortages and rationing of World War II, although most of that generation are gone now.

The Bible gives us clear warning that bad times are coming again. Europe, Britain, and America are under siege by foreign, non-Israelite people intent on our destruction. We have had God's protection up until now, but God is being pushed out of our society. God says that He will not be mocked, we will reap what we sow.<sup>4</sup>

It is time for all of us to invite God into our lives more than ever before and do whatever possible to prepare for the difficult times ahead.

We here at Legacy will do all we can to grow food—and *then* ask God to bless us and supply our needs. It is a partnership of faith.

Please remember our brothers and sisters in Burma. Gloria and I will make our annual trip to Burma for the Passover and Spring Feast. This gives us a chance to fellowship with those we do

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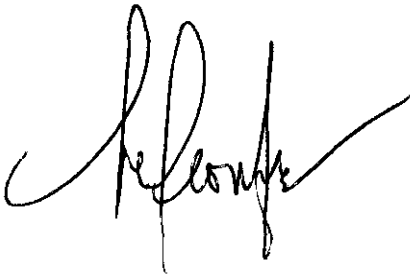
<sup>4</sup> Galations 6:7

not see on a regular basis. It also means we can give intensive Bible instruction over a ten-day period. We are also able to discuss many important issues for the upcoming year and strategically plan for future possibilities for the work of God in Burma.

I would like to thank every one of you, our fellow laborers, for your contributions over these last fourteen-plus years, and even previous to that, when we called this letter the “Karen Letter.” (Legacy Institute started in 1999.) Some of you have been regular donors for all those years and some have given extra when needs have arisen. We are grateful to all of you and thank our God who put it in your generous and kind hearts to help.

Until next letter,

In Jesus’ service,

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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