

# Graduate of Legacy training center has big plans

*This article is from the "Edifying the Body" section of the Church of God Big Sandy's Web site, churchofgodbigandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of March 13-14, 2010. A version of this article appeared in the Feb. 28, 2010, issue of The Journal: News of the Churches of God.*

**By Nathan Kimmons**

CHIANG MAI, Thailand—Lanunan is a Kachin tribesman from Shan state in Burma (also known as Myanmar). He will graduate from a three-year program at Legacy Institute Leadership Training center on March 7, 2010.

Lanunan has studied at Legacy Institute for more than three years straight now without an opportunity to visit his family and home in Burma.

His work ethic and moral fiber have won him honors such as the Spirit of Excellence award in 2008 and 2009, the Academic Excellence (top GPA) award in 2008 and the position of student-body president in 2010—not to mention the respect and admiration of his teachers and peers.

## **Example of determination**

Even though all other students in his year dropped out at various times for various reasons, Lanunan has persevered. He has stayed motivated to continue his studies in a class of one during his third year at Legacy.

Not only is he on track to finish all of his classes with top grades, he has taken the initiative to take advantage of Legacy's TOEFL preparation materials. (TOEFL is the main international English-proficiency exam, the Test of English as a Foreign Language.)

In addition to his studies, Lanunan has served at Legacy in many ways. He has called on his language abilities to translate church services (both at Legacy Institute and in the refugee camps), translate booklets and give sermonettes.

While most people would want to go home and get on with their lives after three years in Thailand, Lanunan wants to continue his education.

This is not to say he is not concerned with the dire situation in his home country. He cares deeply.

He has been torn over the last year between staying in Thailand to continue his education and returning home to help his family and people.

The Kachin people and the Burmese army have struggled for years. At times he's considered going home to help, but he thinks he can be more useful to his country and family by furthering his education and assisting from the outside.

So, thanks to his outstanding record, Legacy will present him a scholarship to attend Payap University's International College to earn a four-year communications degree.

During the four years he will study at Payap, Lanunan has agreed to continue to live and serve at Legacy as well.

### **Next four years**

I recently had a long conversation with Lanunan about his plans for the next four years.

Payap University is a Burmese-friendly institution. Most Thai people have a strong prejudice or even hatred towards the Burmese because of a long history of war and invasion.

However, Payap has loads of foreigners in the International College who are sympathetic to the rough situation in Burma.

Legacy students and teachers have participated in fund-raising events at Payap over the last couple of years. While studying there, Lanunan will actively involve himself in organizing events such as clothing and food drives and fund-raisers.

He can use his contacts with Legacy Institute to deliver these donations to the Burmese refugee camps on the border.

He has recently worked at organizing mission trips into the camps every couple of weeks by himself already.

We at Legacy are all proud of his accomplishments and excited about his plans.