

# LEI Messenger Asia Edition 2021

*"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." | MATTHEW 5:10 ESV*



Literacy & Evangelism  
INTERNATIONAL

- Established 1967 -

# LEI President Dr. Sid Rice

Dear Co-laborer in Christ:

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10 NIV). **Literacy and Evangelism International (LEI) is reaching parts of the globe that are increasingly closed to, and persecuted for, sharing the transformative story of Jesus.**



This publication highlights just one of the many persecuted regions of the world where LEI is faithfully sharing the message of Christ. I invite you to read accounts from Asia, shared through firsthand reports by LEI missionaries and partners. I trust you will be inspired by the narratives.

In addition to these stories, I am excited to announce LEI Korea has become the newest LEI Member Nation partner. They have a long history of serving in literacy evangelism ministry under the name of Global Literacy Mission (GLM). Under the leadership of Dr. Nam-Hyeon Kim, GLM has been creating Bible-content literacy materials, training teachers, and establishing literacy ministries and offices in many Southeast Asian countries for over 20 years.



I am honored to announce Rev. Bok Ae (Phoebe) Park as the new Director of LEI Korea. In 2018, Phoebe attended LEI's International Literacy Training Institute in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and has served as a missionary in Southeast Asia for years. She has been in ministry with and mentored by Dr. Kim.

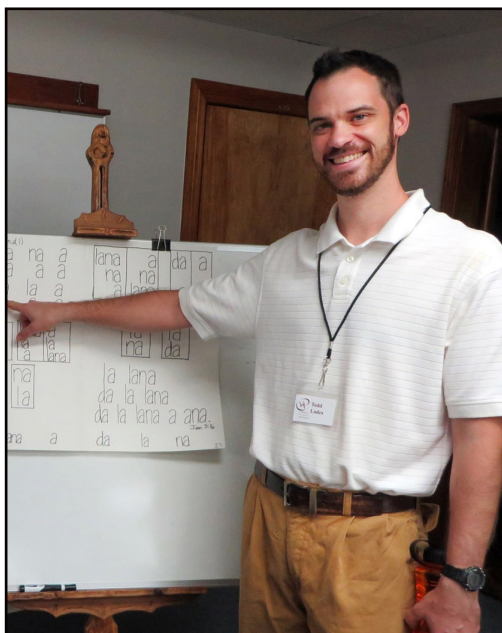
May God continue to bless and protect LEI workers across Asia.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sid Rice".

*This is an expanded, hard copy version of our summer online-only Messenger: Asia Edition newsletter. Some names and places in this publication have been changed or omitted, and faces have been rasterized for the safety of our missionaries, teachers, and students.*

# LEI Managing Director of Southern Asia John McDonnell

Southern Asia is a region of rich history and culture. Alongside Hebrew, the Indian Subcontinent languages of Sanskrit and Tamil are considered to be the oldest in the world. Although most people naturally associate the region with religions that originated there (Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, etc.) Christianity has been a presence there for two millennia. According to church history, the apostle Thomas brought the Gospel to the subcontinent around



52 AD and the church took root. Still, as a minority religion, Christians in the region have historically remained marginalized and their populations relatively small.

In this current era of globalization, technology, and heightened focus on human rights, it is hard to realize that widespread persecution against the church is not only prevalent, but getting more extreme. It is in this context of frequent opposition that our missionaries and partners are faithfully forging ahead and steadily advancing the Gospel. They understand that their persecutors are deeply loved by God.

I've been reading through the book of Acts with my kids, and we're marveling at the courage and fortitude of the believers of the early church. When I see that they kept preaching the Gospel, despite the threats and abuse of the authorities, I can't help but think of our friends serving in these countries. The stories that follow tell of that same bravery and resolve.

**Literacy and language learning happen to be the tools they use, but their purpose is far deeper; they work tirelessly to strengthen the church, reach the lost, and minister to the poor.** These effective tools, along with their great faith, are what God has used to bring eternal transformation. When you pray, please remember Southern Asia and these servants of the Most High.

# A Passion for God, Compassion for People

Dr. Boke Ae Phoebe Park, Director LEI Korea



One day, about four years ago, a woman dropped by my office by chance. While talking about many things with her, I found that she was passionate about literacy education. At that time, I had taught reading for a long time, so I was also passionate about literacy education which is the foundation of reading.

I'm sure that God sent her to me for the literacy mission. She introduced me to Dr. Nam-Hyeon Kim and the Global Literacy Mission (GLM) in

Korea. She now serves as a board member of GLM.

Dr. Kim recommended I attend the International Literacy Training Institute in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which I did.

I believe that sharing the gift of reading opens the eyes of the illiterate, literally and spiritually. It reminds me that the word of Jesus Christ says, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40 NIV).

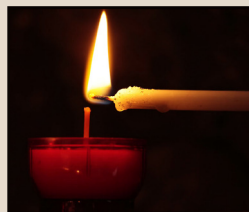
It is not easy to find the illiterate in Korea because the illiteracy rate of Korea is below 1%. As a great witness of the message of Jesus Christ, I have prayed to share the gift of reading not only in Korea, but also all over the world with passion for God and compassion for people. I do believe that "I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13 NIV).

*I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me (Acts 26:17b-18 NIV).*

# "Lit" to Bring Literacy

## "Charles" - A Literacy Light Bringer in Asia

My name is "Charles," and I am a "light bringer." I was in high school when I learned the verse Matthew 5:16, "Let your light shine," and I embraced it as my life's verse. I am thankful to have served in Asia as a literacy ambassador since 2002.



With faltering feet but a happy heart, I came to know the Light of the World when I was seven, and stepped up in faithfulness at age fourteen.

Then, on a sweet summer day in 1992, "O.M." visited us. They worked on the Servant ship. Externally, they were so different from us, but internally they were so devoted to the ultimate Servant Leader. That encounter marked me.

I earned my B.A. in architecture. Shortly after graduation, my dad was involved in a farm accident that left him legally blind and disabled. As the eldest son, I was committed to providing for our family, materially and spiritually. A year later, in 2002, I met LEI workers Bob and Mary Mulloy. Two weeks later, they hired me to assist in Cebuano primer construction, a language that I know. They made it possible for me to gain an M.A. in practical linguistics in 2007. Simultaneously, they provided on-the-job training which resulted in production, printing, distribution, and effective usage of over a dozen primers in more than ten languages.

One nail-biting job was with a seafaring ethnic group. Their primary income came through kidnapping, so our faith was always tested and strengthened. Historically, no one had ever analyzed their language or made an alphabet. So, we did it in two years and then created the first reading primer. In the process we loved these "cousins" in various ways, including community projects and enabling many teens (and adults) to finish high school. Slowly but surely, Scripture translation is progressing. The ultimate goal, regeneration of individuals and families, is happening. Please intercede for these maritime nomads.

In these 19 years of service, I've been immersed in several languages and settings including working as a government consultant in multi-lingual education in my homeland and the Pacific Rim. Honestly, I've often felt inadequate. I dread large gatherings, but I'm learning that His grace is sufficient. I can trust His heart, even when I cannot read His mind.

Each of us has a story, and we know that somehow we are part of the greatest story ever told. Personally, I love training others to design story books. I am passionate about encouraging people to tell their stories, to write their stories, to read good stories, and to experience metamorphosis by The Word.

I am forever grateful that He "lit" me to use me as His small candle to disperse the darkness, doing so as a literacy ambassador, living out Matthew 5:16 for the glory of our Father in heaven. I invite you to shine your light, too.

# Out of Asia

by Bob Mulloy

Try this geography I.Q. test. What Asian country:

1. has planted over a million landmines in over 10% of its townships?
2. has the world's longest ongoing civil war (77+ years)?
3. lost 133,000+ people when a cyclone hit in 2008?

The answer to all of the above is Burma, called Myanmar since 1989.

Burma is a nation of 54 million people and is made up of 135 ethnic groups. One ethnic group, Burmese, numbers 1 million. Another, the predominantly Christian Karen (pronounced ka-REN), numbers 7 million.

For decades, the United States has welcomed thousands of Asian war refugees. The average wait in refugee camps is 17 years. Many come to Clarkston in east Atlanta and quickly land jobs in one of Georgia's many chicken processing plants.

LEI has excellent English materials for beginners. When refugees arrive, they need everything, especially survival English and friendship. Mary and I were introduced to Karen people in Clarkston in August 2009. In these subsequent 12 years, our hearts have been rebuked and enriched by Karen believers and other refugees. We can't do a lot for a lot of families, but we can do a lot for some.

After a Saturday English class for about 40 Karen and Chin kids at Saw and Paw O's home, I was asked to check their utilities. The city water bill for the home they had just bought was 10 times their neighbor's. We discovered the septic system in the home had some breaks, so we raised funds to help with repairs. A plumber offered to dig a trench and put in a new PEX line for \$2,500. Instead, ten Karen volunteers dug the 100 foot trench, and we provided perfect PIZZA. Two Indian pastors finished the plumbing. The job cost, when completed, was about \$80 instead of \$2,500.

Most of our 80 million 'displaced' neighbors are from cultures that are big on relationships. In subsequent encounters, especially with these ten men, we're tight because we got smelly and dirty together. They see that we love them. I relate this story to demonstrate that ANYBODY can bless a refugee. You too!

*These lovely people, some from our ESL class, wanted to celebrate the Fourth of July in a memorable way. Wearing their traditional Karen outfits of red, white, and blue, we celebrated America's birthday by taking the group on a picnic.*



# Journal from an LEI Missionary in Southern Asia

## Total Transformation Through Literacy

In the year 2008, the Lord opened the doors for me to start an adult literacy ministry in a village called Bulati, which lies under the foothills of the mountains. Around 100 families from at least five different ethnic groups live here. The village was devoid of an established church; in fact, there was even a particular community which was extremely hostile towards Christians. The illiteracy rate among adults was more than 80%.

In early 2009, four literacy classes were started in the entire village, under the dynamic leadership of literacy worker Saranta and her husband Rehoboam. The classes comprised more than 50 women students. The ministry opened further doors for us. A tuition-free class for the kids of the adult literacy students, who were school dropouts, and a health-awareness program were added on a regular basis. Slowly but steadily, the adult classes, the tuition centers, and the health-awareness programs began to create a great impact on the lives of the people. A great transformation became visible.

Some new readers became believers and convinced their family members of the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Women improved the living standards of their families by honing their reading skills, improving their health care, and sending their children to school. Today, every household in the entire village has a toilet, an improved drinking water system, a vast improvement in health, and school-going children! As of now, 16 families consisting of 55 adult baptized members have formed a small church in Bulati. The number of seekers is increasing all the time! The little church functions with a missionary aim and reaches out to the nearby villages with the love of Christ. As a result, in another village, eight families from another faith became believers and were baptized. Truly, adult literacy ministry gives an opening even in hostile areas and amazingly empowers and transforms lives! All glory to Christ alone!

I am currently assisting in facilitating the online primer construction course that is a part of the ongoing Virtual Literacy Training Institute. I am also teaching English as a Second Language to a group of nine young men and women and adult literacy to seven adult students in my native place. Please pray for us!



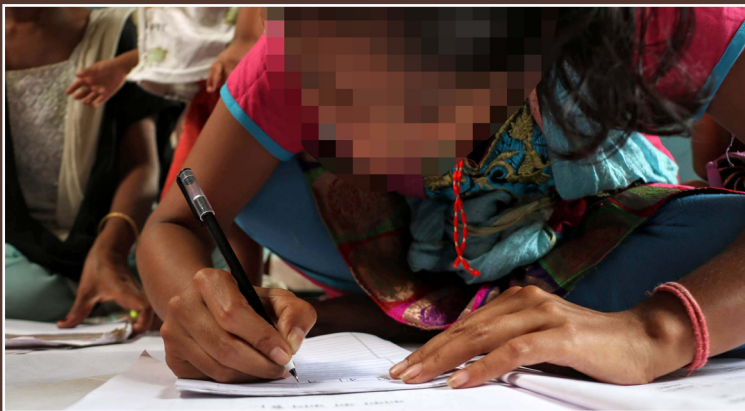
# A Southern Asia Partner's Transformation Stories

These transformation stories are shared by one of our oldest literacy partners. They work in a restricted area.

**Dodhal** (34 years old) is from a small village in a state known for religious persecution. He is a day laborer. He spent all the money that he earned. He was unable to provide a better living for his wife and two daughters. Wardesh, the teacher, invited him to the literacy night class. Dodhal willingly joined the class as he had the desire to learn. He started to read and write and do a little math. He was very happy to write his own name. He also learned to save money and the importance of saving money through literacy classes. With the money that he saved for the past six months, he opened a grocery shop at his village. He is very happy as his business is improving day after day. His lifestyle has also changed for the better.

**Maigur** (26 years old) is from another village and is a member of an unreached people group in a restricted state. Her people live in the forest and make their living by foraging. Their literacy rate is 17.96%, which is very low. Their male literacy is 30.95%, and their female literacy is appallingly low - 7.35%.

Maigur is married with two children. She was illiterate and works daily in the farm to get a meager amount. She used to consume illicit liquor every night. This resulted in continuous quarrels with her mother-in-law. When our literacy teacher, Paul, invited her to attend the adult literacy night class, she joined it with great joy. At the class, she learned about the ill effects of consuming liquor. Now she has stopped taking it, and there is peace in the family. Maigur decided to send her children to school. She is now reading and writing sentences. This is the power of God through literacy ministry!





# A Southern Asia Partner's Transformation Stories



The grace of God miraculously operates through literacy ministry. The title of the adult literacy primer we use for our adult literacy projects is *Light Has Come!* The updated version of this language primer was developed with a vision of bringing illiterates, trapped in darkness and blinded by Satan the god of this world, into the light of the Gospel. Coincidentally, after the construction of this language primer, and by God's divine plan, connections with a tribal group called "Rulali" (which means "dark people") spread across three states.

The original occupation of this tribal community was rat and snake catching, but the community has moved out in search of other livelihoods, becoming day laborers in the fields and bonded laborers in rice mills, tea estates, construction sites, etc. As the Rulali settle down at the outer edges of various villages, they are developmentally behind due to their remote location, making illiteracy and poverty prevalent in their communities. They have minimal basic amenities, nutritional deficiencies, and high dropout rates in schools. Children start working at a young age. Child marriage is common. Inadequate healthcare and poor educational facilities for children are increasing problems.

**Adult literacy serves as a tool of transformation and empowerment on both the individual and the community level. It improves the awareness of the importance of education and healthcare.**

One literacy student testified, "A family member was suffering with diarrhea in the middle of the night, and it was on the same day I learned about the home remedy for diarrhea in the health lesson series. With no clinics nearby and no facilities to travel to that night, the health lesson helped me to do the right thing at the right time to relieve him from diarrhea."

We have already worked in three areas of this tribal community, helping members make meaning of their lives as they develop the desire to explore and learn how to become better people, linking to the "Good News of Great Joy." Praise God! We have witnessed transformation in the adults who attend classes, and also in their children, as they grow in faith and godly values.

One-on-one teaching, in reading and writing, gives absolute fulfillment in reaching the unreached through literacy ministry.

The first student I taught, after receiving my literacy evangelism training in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was a poor woman living a difficult life with an alcoholic husband and two teenage girls. She helped a few families with their household chores and earned little to bring up her children. She had such low self-esteem and confidence that she refused to sit in a chair when I began teaching her. As days went by and we progressed through the lessons, I noticed a lot of changes in her personality and self-esteem. She could read the stories confidently in a few weeks. She never leaves the class without hearing her teachers read and explain the Bible passages included with the stories. She reminds her instructors to pray regularly for her and her family after every class. We see her faith grow day by day as she visits us for prayer and counseling. She testifies joyfully, **"The Bible was just a show piece in my house, but now I can read it to receive comfort and strength every day."**

Thanks to LEI's literacy training and the curriculum that has been developed, we witness the miracle of individuals and communities who arise, shine, and experience the Great Light that redeems from darkness. Truly, the light has come!



# Pray for LEI Missionaries

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks.  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 ASV*

<b>MON</b>	Please thank our good Lord for ongoing literacy evangelism work in Asia despite severe health and political challenges.
<b>TUE</b>	Please pray for peace in Asia and safety for Christians.
<b>WED</b>	Please pray for literacy champions especially those in "at risk" areas of Asia as they share the Good News.
<b>THU</b>	Please pray for LEI missionaries and our Member Nation partner, LEI Korea.
<b>FRI</b>	Please pray for learners being tutored in English and mother-tongue literacy, that they would persevere, being dedicated in their learning so they can read God's Word for themselves.
<b>SAT</b>	Please pray for all who are being strengthened in their relationship with our Lord Jesus because they can read God's Word and for those who are meeting and accepting Jesus for the first time.
<b>SUN</b>	Thank the Lord for every literacy evangelism opportunity to share the loving message of Jesus Christ through sharing the gift of reading.



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