



FIRSTLIGHT INTERNATIONAL

■ In This Issue:

- Smart Steps pg.1
- All Is Not Lost pg.2
- Ministry Platforms 2014 pg.2
- Top Stories pg.3
- Moving forward in 2014 pg.3
- Current News - E5 Project pg.4
- Prayer Points pg.4
- On a personal note pg.4

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Smart Steps

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5&6 NAS

When I was at Penn State, there were men from the Gideon’s Society passing out free Bibles on campus. I took one, small and green, and began to read. To my knowledge, it is the first time I ever ‘studied’ the word of God for myself.

I had attended church every single Sunday my entire life, only listening to words being read by others. As I paged through this little book of the New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs, my gaze was drawn to the above passage: Proverbs 3:5,6. My heart was pierced with these words. Now my life verse.

Even though I was immature in my faith, I wanted so badly for my life to be directed by God, so that it would turn out well. To please Him, no wasted in years of wandering and wondering. I was young, but I wanted my life to count, to matter...for something. For Someone.

I wanted to trust the Lord. I wanted Him to direct my paths. The secret seemed to be in the middle portion: to NOT LEAN upon my own understanding. Ah. There’s the rub.



More inside

The desire to figure every little thing out is human. But this verse was telling me that there was another way to live. A life, dedicated to God, acknowledging Him. Him being the Shepherd of my Soul. Leading me. Keeping me on the straight path.

That was the first time I took smart steps...in the direction of the Lord. Keeping my ear inclined to hear that still, small Voice. My eyes looking ahead for His hand directing me. I was ready to make new steps. Smart steps.

I still am. Lead me onward, Lord. I am trusting You.



Debbie Ecker

Vice President
Firstlight International

■ All Is Not Lost

I've been captivated by the story of the man who recently washed ashore on a tiny island in the South Pacific after having been lost at sea for 13 months. What began as a one-day fishing expedition for Jose Salvador Alvarenga and a friend along the coast of Mexico turned tragic when a storm blew the tiny boat off course and the engines ran dry. Alvarenga survived for over a year in the open ocean off of rainwater and the fish and turtles he was able to catch. Unfortunately, his friend did not survive. Interestingly, this real life ordeal is eerily similar the plot of Robert

Redford's character in his recent movie, *All is Lost*. [Spoiler alert!] Just when you think Redford is going under for the last time a mysterious hand reaches down and pulls him to safety.

The Bible teaches that all of us have been blown off course. Every person has gone astray (Romans 3:12,23). Although we find ways to stay alive, we drift aimlessly on an ocean of quiet desperation until, by a miracle of grace, the Rescuer finds us. Luke's gospel tells me that the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost (Lk. 19:10). Jesus is the hand that plunges into the deep, lifts us out of the darkness and into the light.

He gives us a life filled with gratitude, meaning, and direction.

Firstlight International is one of the rescue boats Jesus uses to carry him to lost people in Thailand and elsewhere. When you partner with Firstlight you are helping to extend Jesus' hand to others who are "lost at sea."

The good news of the gospel is that all is not lost because Jesus is on a rescue mission, and he invites you and me to join him.



Bill Ellis

Lead pastor Riverside Community Church, Oakmont, Pa
Board Member
Firstlight International

■ Ministry Platforms: 2014



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**Firstlight Fellowship
Church Network**



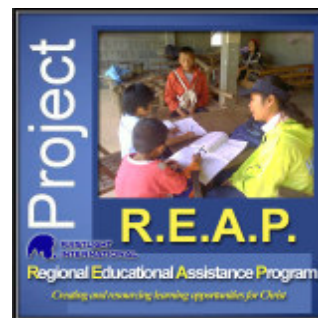
Through a series of ministry platforms geared toward: Health, Education, Moral, Economic and Community Development, we are bringing fulfillment to the great commission in the places where we serve in Thailand, and in the nations surrounding it.

Your prayers and financial giving each month are helping to make that possible. Thank you!

Through the Firstlight Fellowship Church Network - Thailand, we are touching the lives of hundreds in six locations where Firstlight is planting churches. Meeting the needs of families and children from fatherless homes is taking place through projects like: Families Without Fathers (FWF) and REAP: Regional Education

Assistance Program. We become the Lord's hands and his feet to the hurting in the lives of 86 children in 6 locations across Thailand. And the results are encouraging.

This month more people who are coming to Christ will be trained and water baptized in the Firstlight Fellowship church in Seka. Several of these are the children that are being reached through FWF in that area this year. PTL!



Through each of these ministry platforms, the Lord is using each one to bring others to Himself. Let God arise through each of these ministry platforms in 2014.



Dan Ecker

President
Firstlight International

Top Stories ...

■ The E5 Project Moves Forward: Plans for a brick project for church planting is taking shape for Laos ...

At the heart of the E5 Project is a passion for training leaders to reach the harvest and to multiply churches among responsive people. This strategy is working in many places across Asia where the E5 Project is being taught and implemented. We are excited to have the opportunity to expand into Laos to raise up more leaders, plant more churches to reach more souls.



E5 Project Moves Forward For Laos

■ Firstlight Fellowship Church Network - Thailand: A network of churches for His Glory is rising up! ..



Planning Meetings Are Taking Place

If there is one thing that we are learning about church planting in Thailand is this: Every journey begins with a plan - God's plan. Therefore, it is vital that we take time regularly to pray together as a Team of leaders over these churches to find out what that plan is, and how the Lord wants to implement it. It is moments like these when collective wisdom comes forth around a common vision of what is about to take place. Plan the work!

■ Reaching The Next Generation: Thailand's children & youth are getting hungry for God ...

One of the things that keeps coming up on our radar screen in our prayer closet is: What is our part in raising up the next generation? No matter where we go children, youth, and young adults are being drawn to us. Often times, without our knowing it. It just seems to happen! So ... as spiritual parents (*Mamas & Papas*), we are taking our role seriously and we are positioning ourselves to be a part of bringing forth this next generation of Jesus lovers *everywhere!*



FWF Church Family Camp 2013

■ Moving forward in 2014 ...

KRA'S & AMP'S ... Do you have them?

No matter what we do in life, we all seem to have a common desire to succeed in what we are called to and to accomplish great things. It's who we are: How God made us. Hardwired if you will to see things move forward, to progress and to be satisfied with the results of your labors.

A lot of that depends on what it is that you are wanting to accomplish or areas that we would like to see results or successes. You could call those Key Result Areas (KRA'S). Areas upon which a clear outcome has been defined as a result of an action being taken. These KRA'S - the results or the outcomes of our actions must be defined so that we know what success looks like when it occurs. They become the measurements by which progress is determined as we move through life. Once we have those, we can then commit them to a set of plans - the action steps that will be taken to get the results we desire. In Firstlight we call these steps our Annual Ministry Plans (AMP'S). These plans spell out the specific steps that we need to take on an annual basis to accomplish our mission of changing lives and transforming communities through Health, Education, Moral Economic & Community Development. And, its working!



Dan Ecker

President
Firstlight International

■ Current News - E5 Project

In 2013 we poured our hearts into 20 new leaders of the Myanmar Christian Fellowship in Penang Malaysia. They added a new campus to the work and organized an outreach where 500 people attended and heard the gospel preached, demonstrated through drama, testimonies of God's amazing grace, and sung about by professional Myanmar Christian singers.

But one of the most exciting things that happened was the discovery of 30 villages along the Thai / Laos border where the name of Jesus has never been proclaimed. I got to visit one of

our church plants in that region. The church has 150 people from a village of 300. Located along a mountain range that runs along the Thai / Laos border in the Nan province is the Boklua district live more than 10,000 Khatin and Khamet Laos. In 1975 these two people groups fled the communist take over of Laos and made the Boklua district their home. It was a great honor spending a week with Pastor Nott from Lom Sak reaching out to some of the villages in that district. We ministered in a village of around 300 that has been

reached. Nott reached one woman for Christ and that one woman opened the door for the gospel. Now there are 150 people in that church today. The next night we travelled to another village where much the same thing had taken place. One family was brought to Christ and as a result there is a church of 80 people worshipping Christ.



Tony Foster

OWNER, of the E5 Project
Church Planter, Bible Trainer

■ Online connections



More news and updates posted online ... follow Firstlight on Facebook and twitter ...

www.firstlightinternational.net



■ On a personal note ...

It is always so surprising how good it feels to be back, on familiar turf, here in Thailand. Truly the Lord has been blessing our going in and our going out! There are no regrets, each leaving seems to be covered by His grace. Each coming back seems to be the same. Dan and I always look at each other, grinning and say: "Isn't this great?" After truly blessed times with our families and friends in the States, it has been lovely to reconnect with our precious friends and co-workers here. To hear about how the Lord has blessed their ministry, and how souls have been added to the Kingdom, even in our absence. We are truly in a new season in our lives. The work prospers, and new laborers are added. New doors of opportunity swing open in so many directions. We have a new phrase, given by our dear friend and one of our 'sons' in the Lord, Beau Key. 'There are good doors, and there are God doors.' As we look to Jesus, acknowledging Him in everything, we are trusting that He will continue to guide us into Good Steps...His steps for us, in 2014. Bless you, our friends. Your prayers help us to hear and continue down this blessed path.



Debbie Ecker

Vice President
Firstlight International

Thank you for your love and prayers for us!



“O Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells.” Psalms 26:8

■ This months Prayer Points ...

- 1. Smart Steps for each of our Firstlight Area Teams, Projects and Churches.**
- 2. Good planning meetings this month, and next month's Annual Events.**
- 3. For God's FULL provision for Firstlight International during the 2nd quarter of 2014.**