



# FIRSTLIGHT INTERNATIONAL

## ■ In This Issue:

- His Story ... pg. 1
- Orphans & Widows ... pg.2
- FWF - 2014 Updates ... pg.2
- Top Stories ... pg.3
- Moving Forward In 2014 ... pg.3
- ThaiLights ... pg.4
- Prayer Points ... pg.4
- On a personal note ... pg.4

## ■ CONTRIBUTIONS:

• **On line** by using PayPal straight from the website:  
[www.firstlightinternational.net](http://www.firstlightinternational.net)

• **By Mail** payable to  
Firstlight International  
P.O. Box 252  
Springdale, Pa.15144-0252

## ■ A non - profit corporation:

As a registered public charity 501 C(3) non-profit corporation, all financial contributions are U.S. tax deductible by making checks payable to Firstlight International.

## ■ Website:

[www.firstlightinternational.net](http://www.firstlightinternational.net)

## ■ Phone:

724.254.6145

## ■ E-mail:

[helloeckers@gmail.com](mailto:helloeckers@gmail.com)

## His Story

**“... if the alive-and-present God who raised Jesus from the dead moves into your life, He’ll do the same thing in you that He did in Jesus, bringing you alive to Himself.” Rom. 8:11 The Message**

The triumph of the human spirit over the hardships of life is a most compelling story. The greater the triumph the more we are drawn. We cannot look away. It is the ‘out of the ashes’ story that captivates us. Our hearts cry out for that resurrection theme. It has been indelibly etched on our hearts by the hand of Him Who created us.

How great, how wondrous, then, the greatest story the world has ever seen: the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For in His death, the sins of the world were atoned for. In His resurrection, our own ascension from the ashes of our fallen lives secured. In Him there is life. In Him we HAVE life.

Over the years, we have seen the resurrection power of Jesus touch and transform lives. A woman whose body was sickened with AIDS, receiving healing

prayer, turning first her heart from death to life; her body also responding and her doctor one year later giving her a clean bill of health. Children who did not know if they would even be able to stay in

elementary school, finishing not only high school, and now onto higher education. Old women without family or connection, trying to raise abandoned grandchildren alone...now joined in fellowship, love and the bond of hope...that comes from knowing a

Risen Savior who loves them, each and every one.

This is His Story. It has become our story. May the Lord grant you, this Easter season, a true connection to the One Who conquered the grave. He is Risen!



## More inside



**Debbie Ecker**

Vice President  
Firstlight International

## ■ Caring For Orphans & Widows

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you” John 14:18.

Caring for the orphans and widows came at a high cost; Jesus was soon to face verbal abuse, a beating, and death on a cross. He knew the fear his disciples would face without someone to be their friend and advocate. But Jesus had a plan to ‘come to them’ through His Holy Spirit.

My 89 year old, widowed, mother-in-law, battling COPD, has been in in-home hospice care for the last two

years. Her youngest son has chosen to live with her and tend to her every need. He is her companion, her advocate, her house cleaner, her nurse, her cook – 24/7. He has set his own life aside in order to serve his ailing mother. And he has determined to see things through to the end. We know the eyes of the Lord are constantly scanning the world for those, like her, in desperate need of an advocate.

One day the Holy Spirit saw the plight of fatherless families in a

remote part of Thailand, spoke to Dan and Debbie about it, and FWF was birthed. Firstlight ‘came to’ families in Thailand with the love of Christ; it’s sacrificial, hands-on, and intimate.

Thank you, our loyal supporters, for your generous prayers and gifts. God sees your hearts.



**Kirk "Mac" McCabe**  
Owner, OCN Enterprises  
Board member  
Firstlight International

## ■ FWF 2014 Project Updates Families Without Fathers

A Support & Care Ministry Project of Firstlight International



Everyday throughout the year we are given a tremendous opportunity to help the hurting here in Thailand through Families Without Fathers (FWF). The past six years has been a remarkable testimony of lives that are being changed.

For children and young people like Teda age 14, the weekly visits to their homes and area schools is making a difference. Each visit includes a brief interview where prayer is offered and often times the scriptures are shared. This helps us to get to know each family in a personal way. We learn about their history, their disappointments, their hopes and dreams. We learn, too, about some of the needs of each family, we ask God and look for ways to help. Over the past six years, approx 80% of these children have come to Christ, having been water baptized and are in church regularly. Presently there are 86 children from fatherless homes in 6 locations across Thailand being reached.

A major part of the mission of FWF is to provide a level of financial assistance with: School fees, related supplies, transportation costs to and from school. These fees are paid out twice a year for every child involved in the program in May and in October. Some families receive a small bag of food each month: Breakfast drinks, eggs, cooking oil, dried noodle packs, soap and shampoo.

Right now each of our Firstlight Area Teams are putting together the numbers to reach 100 kids in 2014. That’s our goal.

**We are going to need to see the Lord’s provision of \$18,000.00 to make that happen. You can help by sending a special financial gift today to support FWF in 2014. Please do what you can to help.**



Teda age 14 - Nong Bua Lam Phu



**Dan Ecker**  
President  
Firstlight International

# Top stories ...

## ■ Just back from Myanmar (Burma) - Local church leadership conference ..

Working together as a team we participated in a pastors and leaders conference in the city of Kalaymyo northwest of the city of Mandalay. This group of churches are from the Chin tribe who are predominantly Baptist in their conversion from the missionaries long ago. Inside this group there are several churches that have become more evangelical / charismatic in recent years and have formed a new network of churches and ministries.



**Chuck Lenhart teaching the word**

## ■ Challenging church leaders to fulfill the great commission - Together we can do it! ..



**Scott Gourley sharing God's word**

One of the challenges of the church in Myanmar is to go beyond their initial tribal groups to the least evangelized places of their country and or among the tribes that are yet to be reached with the gospel. One of our roles was to challenge these church leaders to take up the task of reaching the remaining unreached of their country. There is a deep sense in the Holy Spirit to help them to get the job done. We are preparing to do more.

## ■ Forming partnerships to reach the harvest - A must in the days to come ...



**Only God can make it happen!**

We believe that our time there with these group of churches was important. We are now in prayer together with them to see how the Lord puts together a plan for a return visit for ongoing teaching and training among them. As the country of Myanmar continues to develop the potential is great for the gospel. There is a warm welcome by these pastors and leaders to form a partnership in the days to come. Please join with us in prayer.

## ■ Moving forward in 2014 ...

### P.U.S.H.

Sometime over the past three years I heard someone use this phrase: P.U.S.H. Pray Until Something Happens. "What a statement" I said to myself. "I am going to use this someday" I further added, and "I am going to make this a reality in my life."

You see, the scriptures are full of examples of those who did just that. Prayed Until Something Happened. Elijah confronting the prophets of Baal on mount carmel ... the God who answers by fire, let Him be God. And so it was. The early church in Acts chapter 12 - Peter was kept in prison and the church prayed fervently (v.5), they prayed until Peter was released and came knocking for them .... knocking at the door . They prayed until something happened! They prayed until Peter was released.

Jesus' example of the unrighteous judge in Luke chapter 18 was to teach us that man ought always to pray and not to lose heart. In other words: Pray Until Something Happens. In that story, the unrighteous judge did not fear God nor did he respect men. But .... because of the persistence of the widow who kept bothering him, lest she wear him out, he gave her what she asked for. She Prayed Until Something Happened! Let's P.U.S.H. together in 2014.



**Dan Ecker**

President  
Firstlight International



# ThaiLights

Thai culture differs from other developing nations in many ways. Patience in all situations is the ideal. Children are taught from a young age not to push oneself forward. Wait for the slower ones. Share before devouring. Unlike the 'win at all costs' attitudes of both western and some eastern nations, Thais are concerned with face saving; be that the face of a small child who cannot master the lesson, or the face of a noodle shop

owner who is dealing with an impatient customer.

This quality is both endearing and confounding at the same time, depending on what one is trying to accomplish. In teaching English, I would shake my head when the quicker learners would whisper the answer to the slower ones, not allowing them even a minute or two of thinking to come up with the right answer. I have stood in lines at

checkouts in grocery stores and watched in horror as a Chinese tourist got pushy with the little, young cashier. Inevitably, that cashier would work SLOWER to teach her impatient customer to calm down.

Always with a smile, they extend patience freely often times when I need it most. Whew! Face saved!



**Debbie Becker**  
Vice President  
Firstlight International

## News and views ...



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

[www.firstlightinternational.net](http://www.firstlightinternational.net)



## On a personal note ...

We are drawing near to those special days where we tend to think longingly of ones near and dear to us. First, our son, Josiah, turns 23 this month. He is doing so well, working hard on his studies and has found a job, teaching swimming to children at a nearby recreation center. We had a good chuckle when he told us that his students ranged in age from 2 – 10. Both fun and exasperating at times we can only imagine. We always miss Josiah, but there is always a bit more of a tug over his birthday. Then, also this month is Easter. Perhaps we will celebrate by going to our favorite "Khao Soi" restaurant where we went with other missionary families in years past, because it was the kids' favorite. Open air with a bank of rotating fans blowing from all angles, the noodles were always hot and delicious, served up quickly, because there was not much else on the menu. The kids slurped down their Thai teas, and the adults enjoyed fresh guava juice. Yum! Different than ham? You bet! Have a happy and blessed Easter, everyone!



**Debbie Becker**  
Vice President  
Firstlight International



**"Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son." John 14:13 NAS**

### ■ This months Prayer Points ...

- 1. Firstlight Annual Event April 13-18 in the south. Pray for us as we gather this month.**
- 2. Families Without Fathers (FWF). Pray as a new Thai school term begins in May. Preparations for school fees are underway.**
- 3. For God's abundant provision for Firstlight International during the 2nd quarter of 2014.**