



September 2014 News

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Look for us:



Same Same

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord the Spirit.” II Cor. 3:18 NAS

I will always remember those first feelings of culture shock when we moved to Thailand fifteen years ago. It was the summer of 1999 just before the W2K scare and the global challenges that we were told would change the world. Fortunately, it turned out to be the biggest non-event in history. In fact, in most of the countries like Thailand, during that time, the year 2000 had already happen and those of us from the West were just catching up. Never the less, we like many others, we were advised to make sure we had some cash, fresh water, a few candles and matches. We did and we were fine. In fact, we used those matches and candles for years that followed every time there was a power outage. How funny!

Looking back on those years, even though Debbie and I were seasoned missionaries, the adjustments to a new culture and language was a challenge like no other. Josiah was eight years old and just about ready to start third grade. We had left everything that was familiar to us: Family, friends, life in America as we knew it to embrace the will of God to reach a people different than anyone we had ever met. The sights, the smells, the food - the heat, the weather ... so different. Even though we tried to be brave, we found ourselves looking for things that were familiar to us, only to find

that it wasn't the same, at least not like we thought. Through the years we learned to adjust to the changes that we faced one by one. Just because something is not the same, doesn't make it wrong just different.

One day while walking through a mall near our home, there was a Thai person wearing a T Shirt that said: Same Same. On the backside it said: But different. To this day it makes me laugh every time I see it.

The same can be said in our walk with the Lord. According to the above verse, we are going through a process of change, of growing into His likeness and image. A transformation if you will. And through this process, there are times when we look around and try to identify with something that we are familiar with only to find that we've changed! Or that we don't 'fit' that norm anymore, that we've moved on to a new place in the things of God and that we're not the same person that we used to be. Same Same on the outside but, different on the inside. “As He is so are we in this world.” I John 4:17c



DAN ECKER
 President
 Firstlight International

Prayer Changes Things!

On July 6th my husband Mark and I arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia after a 1 day delay in Fredericton while an actual hurricane blew threw knocking out the electricity. In spite of the challenges, we went ahead with a God given plan for the next day to pray for the Americas especially Canada. We started at the city Courthouse. Our faith was building as we continued to pray for the many cases that would be tried there that day and in the days and years to come. We prayed for justice and righteousness to prevail and for Christian judges to emerge and be strong. We prayed in the spirit until His peace filled our hearts and we drove on.

That evening, we heard the news channel report a landmark settlement of \$29,000,000 was reached in sexual allegations at the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children. It had been 93 years, 1 month and 1 day after the Dartmouth facility opened its doors on June 6, 1921 and 14 years after suit was filed between the province and the plaintiffs (an act of collective bravery fueled these victims to push passed the shame and stigma of rape and forced prostitution into this new dialogue of acknowledgement). According to the terms of the settlement, the province does not admit liability. The newspaper in the morning said the closure brought about by the decision of the NS Supreme Court Justice Arthur Leblanc could very well be the beginning of healing. More freedom has come as the plaintiffs began telling their horrifying stories in public arenas. More prayer is needed for them all as well as courage for the province and the home to acknowledge their negligence. God is slowly working for His freedom as people pray.

Firstlight International is well aware of the power of prayer and has always operated this way--praying, hearing from The Lord and obeying! When Firstlight began, Dan and Debbie Ecker, didn't know all the details but they knew they were in it for the long haul to serve faithfully and see souls saved no matter the cost. Now they are pressing in to pray for Pastor Nalong and his wife Ruepaw. The success of the sick being healed and saved is opening the way to prayerfully expand into five new cells in the rural areas of Khon Kaen, Thailand. It doesn't get easier but we are aware of the enemies tactics. Pray with us that The Lord will establish these new cell churches.



ELLIE GEPPERT
Board Member
Firstlight International



A Thai elementary school opens up to us for outreach in Khon Kaen, Thailand. 96 elementary age students, 70% come from fatherless homes.

Kids in any culture are great. These children in particular are becoming close to our hearts as we walk through an open door to reach them with the Gospel.

In fact, during a recent visit after addressing the kids with a brief talk, the Thai director of the school asked if I (Dan) would like to become these kids Father. And, he wasn't kidding! In Thai culture, it is most proper to address a person like me (*age and status in life*) as Father. To them its quite natural. **I soon learned that over half (70%) of the 96 children are from fatherless homes.** I am in awe at the tremendous opportunity that the Lord is opening us to bring His love and care into these families through the children of this school. **The door is opening and we are going through it!**

Through our Families Without Fathers project, (FWF) we will embrace as many of this children as we can during the second Thai school term which starts in October. Right now we are reviewing each child's family profile and we are put together a strategy for home visits and more. We are releasing funds to repaint the boys and girls bathrooms this month. Praise the Lord!



Teaching the Word to believers among the Firstlight Fellowship Church Network - Thailand, and churches in Laos, last month.

Places like these is something that I (Dan) have become very accustomed to. Asian style house church meetings were believers gather for worship, prayer, teaching, fellowship, training and more. Sitting on straw mats or sometimes on small plastic chairs in store front type buildings, they are becoming the Church - the Body of Christ in their communities. And something great is happening in each location.

Over the past seven years a network of five churches are being planted in Thailand, and we continue to pursue training opportunities in several of the neighboring counties in the region. Three trainings took place in Thailand one in Laos last month. PTL!

No matter how many times I do this, there is always at least one experience that stands out above the rest. This time it was in Laos. Leaders from several churches gathered for a half a day training. We taught on the life and ministry of the early disciples, some of the events in the life of Christ, and church planting principles from the book of Acts. Return visits are being planned for 2015.

"What God thinks and feels about you is worth far more than the best advice from the most important people around you." - Mike Bickle

"Whatever Jesus is doing, get involved. Wherever He is, be there." – Robert Ferguson

"Effective leadership begins on the inside, with your heart. Get it right on the inside and you'll get it right on the outside."- Ken Blanchard

Did you know?

Less than 1% of Thailand's total population of 67 million people profess faith in Jesus Christ. Christianity has been in Thailand for over 500 years. Thailand has 77 provinces and 4 main regions: North, Northeast, Central and South. Thailand's deep south (3 provinces) are predominately Muslim. Currently under military rule since May 20, 2014.

Sharing Christ

Through Medical Partnerships

Join us this month as we conduct eye care screenings for evangelism in the northeast region of Thailand with Dr. George Rooney from His Servants Ministries, (HSM).

Through medical partnerships like these, we are reaching into rural areas of Thailand with eye care teams where Firstlight is planting churches. It is proving to be a wonderful ministry platform in settings like these.

During September 16 - 27th, we will be in two major provinces: Buagkan, (*Seka district*) and in Khon Kaen. Our goal is to screen 200 persons per day, in multiple villages in each location. Hundreds of Thai Buddhists will receive top quality free eye care, and they will have the opportunity to hear about Jesus and His great love for them.

Your prayers this month can have a major impact in the lives of those we are seeking to reach. Ask the Lord to use this time for His glory and for souls to be saved. **Amen!**



DAN ECKER
President
Firstlight International

China's Revival Report

There is a spiritual hunger all across China today. Religion isn't filling the gap, materialism isn't filling the gap, and the traditions of man are empty and vain. The big challenge is to get to where the people are. Many are living in remote regions and very difficult places to access. If we are willing to go a little bit further, if we could pray a little bit harder some of the most difficult people can be reached for Christ.

Three years ago we started a church plant among the Mongolians and today this plant has grown three times its size in the last 1 and a half. Just recently my son Jared was on an outreach in Inner Mongolia. His

team and him drove over 10 hours to visit some of our convert's parents to present the gospel to them. Six of the parents received Christ as their personal savior, and 20 were baptized. People are finding their true worth, value, and purpose in life after they receive Christ and follow Him.

One of the biggest challenges we have as a ministry is persecution and pressure from the authorities. It is still illegal to hold a bible study in your own home. You can be arrested and thrown in prison for preaching publicly or handing out Christian literature. Pray for God's great hands of protection and guidance over all the training centers we have, and all

the outreaches that are going on. Pray the enemy would be bound and blinded. In September we take a team into a very remote and unreached areas of China. Most are 0% Christian, and have no one in the church focusing on them in anyway. Pray God would give us the break through there. We are believing new churches will sprout up in the region, and the peoples will turn from their idols to the true and living God!



CHUCK LENHART
President
Frontier Harvest Ministries
Board Member
Firstlight International

On A Personal Note



This has been a most exciting summer for us in so many ways. Just this past month we have had a special visit with Debbie's two grand nephews Michael age 15 and Daylin age 11, from South Bend Indiana. The boys were with us for a week and it was fun to have them with us in Pittsburgh. Debbie's cousin Tom Smith and I, took the boys fishing on the Youghhehony river, near Confluence, Pa. Needless to say I was the only one that didn't catch a fish that day. It was a fun day out with the guys. Another special moment for us last month was to have Josiah with us for a short visit from Seattle. It was the first time Debbie and seen him since last Christmas! We did some fun things together like: fishing, visiting with family, site seeing around Pittsburgh and a lot of cook outs on the grill. Last month, too, we celebrated Debbie's birthday on August 23rd and Debbie's father's birthday, Mr. Jim Graham 85th birthday on August 27th. This month my Mom turns 81 on September 17th. We are planning to celebrate that with her on August 14th, just before I had back to Thailand. Thank you for your prayers and financial giving.

We are blessed by your partnership each month which helps to make all of this possible. Great things are happening!



DAN ECKER
President
Firstlight International

Prayer Points

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

Please pray for:

1. For the new school outreach in Khon Kean, Thailand.
2. Ask the Lord to release: Divine Favor, Abundant Finance & Lasting Fruit.
3. For all Firstlight projects, peoples, - Area Teams, Area Churches - all members and leaders.
4. For an increase of souls saved in each location.