



April 2015 News

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Look for us:



A God of Faithfulness

“The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He.” Deuteronomy 32:4 NAS

I am not sure if you have heard the news that on February 19, 2015 I was given an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from the Emmanuel Theological Seminary in Kalaymyo, Myanmar.

It was an incredible moment in my life and one that could only be orchestrated by a loving Heavenly Father who knows how to give good gifts to His children. For the scriptures teach us that: *“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”* James 1:17 His mercies are new every morning great is His faithfulness!

I first met Pastor Mun Thang, President of Emmanuel Theological Seminary (ETS), in February 2013, we seemed to have a lot in common: A love for the Word of God, for reaching the lost, prayer, the Church, and the Person of the Holy Spirit, missions, church planting and for training men and women for the ministry. I was deeply interested to learn that the seminary was 12 years old and that they had graduated 150 students all of whom are involved in some form of service in the local church in different parts of Myanmar. I did not know that during the course of our meeting together, that the Lord

began to talk to him about giving me an honorary doctorate degree. He said: *“Up until we met you we never thought about giving anyone an honorary doctorate degree.”* He researched and learned of some of the things that I had been doing for the past 28 years of full time Christian service. During my second time to Myanmar that year, he said that the Lord had shown them that they were to give me the degree in honor for the work that I have been doing for Christ and the Gospel. He said that: *“When the Holy Spirit said that to me, I had to follow that.”*

Beloved. As these events began to unfold, I cannot help but think of the many people in my life that helped to make this moment possible. Special thanks to my wife Debbie who walked with me through all of what has been accomplished none of which I could have done without you. I love you baby! So glad that you, too, could be there there on this special day. And a big thanks to ALL of you who have been a part of my journey of serving the Lord these many years. I am pressing on towards the goal, for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus!



DAN ECKER
President
Firstlight International

Eyewitnesses of His Majesty

In all my life, the most amazing thing I have ever witnessed, is the moment when someone, who did not know God, first experiences the presence of God and realizes how much God loves them. To see their faces, the happy tears, the ensuing worship and prayer and praise...not taught in a classroom or a book, but straight from their hearts. Whether that person had been a Hindu or a Buddhist, an atheist or a Christian who was nominal in their faith, God in His infinite mercy is still reaching out and intersecting with mankind even today. He desires to have fellowship with us.

To be an eyewitness to this transformation in the lives of so many is my most treasured gift

from this life. To see their lives continue to grow in that love and grace through the years is an unspeakable blessing. What a gift, to be an eyewitness of His majesty!

Eyewitnesses. We are still eyewitnesses of His glory, each and every time we see a life transformed by the transcendent love of Jesus, His healing power and His deliverance in our lives from fear and rejection. We are eyewitnesses, almost in the same way that Peter was, who saw Christ in the flesh. We who have been touched, who have been transformed, who have been filled, who have been delivered. We are eyewitnesses to His glory, and that He still walks among men, today.

“For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory, saying, ‘This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.’ We ourselves heard this voice that came down from heaven when we were with Him on that sacred mountain.” 2 Peter 1:16-18

Beloved. We are eyewitnesses to something spectacular. Let us go and tell.



DEBBIE ECKER
Vice President
Firstlight International

Ministry News

Top Stories: To God be the glory



This was an incredible moment in my life! Thankful for the many people over the past 30 years that have helped to make this possible!

My Mom, Betty Jane Vedro
My Dad, Charles Ecker
My Grandfather, Julius Telegdy
My brother, Chuck Ecker
All my family members
My wife Deborah Graham Ecker
My father in law James Graham
Pastor Ray Patterson, and Gloria
Mark & Ellie Geppert
Nick & Mary Cay Burt
Dr. Roger and Linda Shore
Joe Ewen
Alan Parsons
Myron Patterson
Brad & Jan Thurston
Bobby Nishimoto
All current and former Board of Directors of Firstlight International
All of our supporting churches - past & present
All who prayed for me and supported us financially through the years
All of our Firstlight Area Teams in Thailand
Pastor Mun Thang & the Emmanuel Theological Seminary
Dr. Richard Wells for his part in the graduation ceremony
Bishop Joseph Garlington Sr.

Top Stories: *Training in Myanmar*

On this particular day we had a remarkable opportunity of teaching a two day seminar to about 40 local church leaders in the Agape Baptist Church, in Kaylaymyo, Myanmar. Debbie taught amazingly well on how to believe God for miracles, signs and wonders from the life of Christ, and from the story of the feeding of the five thousand.

Each time we go, we continue to walk through the doors of training that the Lord is opening up to us in this amazing place. The country of Myanmar is definitely on our Holy Spirit radar screen over the next 1-3 years. Our goal is to DREAM To participate with the Lord in bringing this nation into it's eternal destiny by: Praying for and evangelizing the lost. Engaging the church. Equipping Leaders. Sending workers. Going to the unreached. Planting new churches. Pursuing educational needs and health care opportunities. Advancing the Kingdom.



Top Stories: *Local church life, Thailand*



In each of these locations there are groups of Thai believers who gather regularly for worship and prayer. They make up a network of 11 Firstlight Fellowship Churches in the north, and northeast of Thailand. Most are meeting in homes in rural communities where there is very little gospel witness in their communities. The Lord is shining His light and love into the hearts of those who are worshipping Him in places like these.

Your partnership is supporting a series of ministry platforms that the Lord is using to bring others to Himself. Thank you for your prayers and financial giving. Children, adults and in some cases entire families are coming to know the Lord. Regular trainings are taking place to equip the saints for the works of service. An Ephesians 4:12 - 16 type module. It is exciting to see each of these congregations coming together to worship JESUS in spirit and in truth! Ask the Lord for: Divine favor. Abundant provision. And Lasting fruit. Amen!

Significance of God's Patience in Mission

In this Instagram, global-connection, 24-hour-news-cycle world, many Christians are secretly disillusioned and wonder as to why God does not just seem to effect change quickly and “zap the world” with the snap of finger. However, God just seems to have a different idea in mind. Why? The answer is in the heart of God, and the character of God as reflected in 2 Peter 3:9. **“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”**

In this scripture, Peter provides the heart-beat of God. It is clear that God desires everyone must have an opportunity to hear the life-saving message of salvation in Jesus Christ and turn to the Father. Therefore, this “delay” in Christ's return

to judge and reign should not be counted “slowness” or “laxness” on the part of God, but His patience.

Somehow, “long-term” or “patience” have taken on almost the same negative connotation as “ineffective” for many Christians when discussing mission-related topics. Most of us forget that Christendom has been 2015 years in the making if we only narrowly focus on early Christianity in the Greek/Roman world and beyond as a 1st-century Jewish sect.

This is 2015 years of empires, ideologies, technologies, triumphs, degradation, revivals, wars and more. Yet throughout it all, God has been long-suffering and patient with us.

Fortunately, the work of Firstlight International is not a “flashy, crash and burn” effort. From the design of programs such as Families Without Fathers (FWF), language literacy, micro-business initiatives, effective church planting, cross-culture church leadership development, all reflect the patient and long-suffering nature of God. We hold God's love and patience in our heart for various communities we serve, “not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”



YC CHEN
Board Member
Firstlight International

Featured Article

On A Personal Note



My heart is FULL this month as we share with you all the blessing Dan received in Myanmar when he was honored by the Emmanuel Theological Seminary. I have watched Dan over the years as he has taken on challenge after challenge, whether he knew how to do something or not. If he knew his heavenly Father wanted him to do something, he would learn how to do it. I watched him, at 40 learning to read and preach in an Asian tonal language with a different alphabet. I watched him, reading and reading and reading books on leadership, non-profits, small business, as well as doctrine and theology, discipleship and church planting. When he called me from Myanmar in the fall to tell me that he had been offered a Doctorate in Divinity based on his life of service to the Lord, I said, “Sweetheart, this one comes straight from your Heavenly Father.” And, indeed, that is how it felt. There was so much peace in my going along, so much joy in this celebration of graduation for all of the students, in recognition of their efforts. Jesus is the God who sees. He has seen in secret and rewarded openly. We are both humbled and blessed. And I am so very happy I was able to be there to eyewitness this special day. Thank You, Jesus!



DEBBIE ECKER
Vice President
Firstlight International

Featured Item

Prayer Points

“Ah Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You.” Jer.32:17 NAS

Please pray for:

1. For the network of 11 Firstlight Fellowship Churches in Thailand.
2. For each of our Firstlight Area Teams as they engage the culture daily with Gospel: Divine appointments. Souls saved. Disciples made. Churches planted.
3. For God's abundant provision during the 2nd quarter of 2015.