



Pioneers

January 2016 News

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Look for us:



“But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.”

Proverbs 4:18 NAS

In the soft quiet breathless landscape of a brand new year stands the vast array of paths yet taken. It is as if the world is covered in new fallen snow, and we get to decide where to place those first steps.

No matter what dashed hopes and challenges unmet the year gone by has dealt, we all tend to turn our head toward the first new days of the new, new year. The pioneer that lives in all of us rises in hope. It is a call to start again.

Pioneering is not for the faint of heart. Conquering new challenges, new realms, be they in our own pathway or in the community at large, plowing up that new ground must occur before there can be any lasting fruit that remains.

In the case of the young, perhaps they are looking ahead to the new year, their eyes eagerly strain to see the path the Lord is bringing to their feet. What will they decide in this year? Where will they go? Who will they meet? What are they to do? Their spiritual ears strain to hear that Still, Small Voice saying: “This is the way, walk ye in it.”

For those in the middle of full thrall living, their kids in school, jobs to do, lunches to pack, life together to live, it

can seem as if one year simply tumbles into the next. The needs of others often crowd out their own needs. There is hardly a chance to take a breath, look around, and say, “Hello, Lord! Oh, How I need You! Speak, for your servant heareth!”

For those of us in the older, quieter season this becomes an exciting, albeit daunting time. Our hearts long for the adventure of pioneering even as our aging flesh whispers, ‘Willing, but weak.’ OH, praise God that our hearts can answer our flesh and say, “His strength is made perfect in my weakness.” Even in our weakness, yet we dream. We hope. We plan. We go on. Our path grows brighter and brighter.

What new pioneering path is your heart leaning toward in the gift of this new year, 2016? I, for one, am delighted to be alive and present in this year, whatever it may bring. My eyes strain, my heart leans, my ears listen: Speak, Lord. Your servant, heareth. Show me Your way. I will walk in it.



DEBBIE ECKER
Vice President
Firstlight International

A Beautiful Mind

Philippians 4:8-9

Finally brothers whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, THINK about these things. Whatever you have learned and received and heard and seen in me PRACTICE these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

We all want to prevail in life. The scripture above gives us the *map*, and the *means* to do so and articulates a clear method into the *how*...to make that happen! In short, we must **THINK on** and **PRACTICE** these things spoken of in verse 8.

Each day there is plenty of thrown at us to think upon. The news, our own thoughts and the enemy all vie for our attentions. These things often grab our “thinking time” like a vise and won’t let go. If you are a news junkie like me, we allow way too much of the world to occupy our mind. And in the end, this can change us for the worse. One Sunday in November our Pastor said, “*You’re not what you think you are...but what you think, you are*”. Let that sink in!

Firstlight International is a wonderfully effective mission spreading the Gospel to the lost, serving the poor that they may succeed in life, providing fathers to

the father-less and doing so very much with so little.

If you have not already teamed up with Dan and Deb, consider doing it today. If you are already part of their team, then think about them at least weekly and pray for them and for the ministry personally. It is their heart to do all that God has called them to do. They are pioneers and *OUR* hands and feet to the nations. Think on these things when you pray for them.



JAY DEEMS
Board Member
Firstlight International

Become a Support Team Partner in 2016

It's easier than you think. Here's how!

As we are preparing to step into a brand New Year, we have prayed over and have put together our ministry plans for 2016 and beyond. The work of Firstlight is prospering and we are ready to do more!

[What would it take for you to become a regular support team partner in 2016?](#)

A financial gift of \$40.00 a month or a ONE-TIME financial gift of \$50.00, \$100.00 or more makes you a support team partner and it would mean a world of difference in the lives of those being reached.

Your financial gift will help to support the projects and the ministry platforms that the Lord is using to bring others to Himself in

places like Thailand, and the nations surrounding it. Through projects like: Families Without Fathers (FWF), children and families from fatherless homes are being reached. Firstlight Foundation will enter into its ninth year in 2016, and the Firstlight Fellowship Church Network – Thailand, has grown to embrace 11 churches around the country. More are coming to Christ on a regular basis and we are blessed!

* If you are currently supporting Firstlight - Thank you! Your prayers and financial giving is not taken lightly and we consider it a great honor to be supported by you.

* If you have given to Firstlight in previous years, and haven't in a while, why not become a support

team partner again, in 2016? We would be blessed to have you with us again this year. Welcome back!

* Or if you have never given to Firstlight before, why not join the Team today with a financial gift.

When sending your gift, if you are new, please use the contribution card (*this month only*) and the return envelope enclosed each month.

Debbie and I would thank you for considering us, and the ministry of Firstlight International as part of your missions giving in 2016.

Thank you in advance for your continued partnership!



DAN ECKER
President
Firstlight International

Top Stories - *FWF News in Thailand*



Families Without Fathers (FWF) enters it's eighth year in Thailand, in 2016.

Every year we are giving a tremendous opportunity to reach into the lives families from fatherless homes in seven locations across Thailand. Like every child in any culture, they all have hopes of finishing their education and having somewhat of a normal life. However, in the lives of these children, because of the absence of a father (*either by death, divorce or abandonment*) has resulted in damaged lives and broken dreams. But for some of these kids, there is hope!

Over the past eight years, FWF has touched the lives of well over 100 children! Approx 80% have come to Christ, have been water baptized and are in church regularly. There are currently 70 plus kids being reached. Our goal over the next 1-3 years is to reach a 100 kids through FWF. **Won't you help in 2016?**

Top Stories - *A New Generation is Rising!*



All across Asia, the picture is the same.

In 2016 and beyond, Firstlight International is committed to doing our part in helping to raise up the next generation of disciples in the places where we serve.

During the first part of this year, we are pursuing opportunities to teach and to train national workers for Christian service in Myanmar, China, Laos and Thailand.

With Holy Spirit fire and a passion for the Presence of God, they are soon becoming the face of church leadership, church planters, worship leaders - modern day Apostles and Prophets to their generation. Like an unstoppable force, they are rising up to advance the Kingdom everywhere they go. And we have been giving the opportunity to help them find their place in the move of God. **Join us this year to equip them!**

What Does 2016 Have in Store?

I have always been the type of person that wants to know how things are going to turn out. For instance, if Debbie and I are watching a movie, that she has seen before, or she knows how it will end, I will ask her: "how does this turn out?" She will say: " just wait and see, you'll find out." I knew that would be her answer but it never helps me!

Another example of this is when my birthday is coming up, or even when Christmas is approaching. I start 'snooping' looking around at the packages that she brings in from the car, hoping to discover what my present might be. Even when Josiah was younger, I would ask him if Mom

bought anything at the store when they were shopping! He was too good not to tell me I think he was instructed not to by his Mom. He would look at me and say: "nothing Dad" .. and then he would smile!

I guess I haven't changed. I am always asking the Lord what's next, what's up ahead, what does the year look like? What sort of things should I expect or even believe Him to unfold to us.

I think God likes it when we have a sense of wonder when it comes to Him. And as long as we are seeking Him in relationship, we can be assured that He is going to reveal Himself to us. Throughout this year,

our mission will be to: Change lives and transform communities through: Heath, Education, Moral, Economic, and Community Development.

Through our current projects and ministry platforms, we will grow FWF to reach 100 kids. The Firstlight Fellowship Church Network - Thailand will grow, and we will further operations Firstlight Foundation in Thailand. Growing in prayer and in finance will be key to our success this year also.



DAN ECKER
President
Firstlight International

On A Personal Note



How can one year be so completely challenging, and yet, so filled with fruit and encouragement. And that is what 2015 was for me. In the beginning of the year, I rejoiced to be able to travel to our beloved Asia once again and see Dan receive his Doctorate of Divinity in Burma. Then we were blessed to go to Seattle and see our dear Josiah graduate with his Bachelor of Science in Psychology. Our joy was palpable. THEN our dear son proposed marriage to his beloved McKenna and she accepted. Our hearts exploded. Then we attended the Presence conference in June and I had such an encounter with God I felt like His mighty angels surrounded me and never left my side throughout the rest of the year. Which was good, because next, I was diagnosed with cancer. Challenges like I have never known, tests, pain, weakness. BUT, for each trial I have beloved friends and my Danny by my side And those amazing, powerful angels giving me a peace that passed all understanding. As you are reading this, I will know for certain if I will need a surgery, or not. We are, of course leaning towards the not. All things are possible in this new, wonderful gift of a year: 2016. God bless you all and THANK you for every single prayer and kind thought.



DEBBIE ECKER
Vice President
Firstlight International

Prayer Points

11 "But the land into which you are about to cross to possess it, 12 a land for which the Lord your God cares; the eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning even to the end of the year."

Duet.11:11-12 NAS

- 1. Ask the Lord to release: Divine Favor, Abundant Finance & Lasting Fruit.**
- 2. For all Firstlight projects, peoples, - Area Teams, Area Churches.**
- 3. For an increase of souls saved in each location.**
- 4. For 50 new support team partners this year!**