



December 2017 News

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Look for us:



Love Came Down

“For God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

John 3:17 NAS

One of the hallmarks of the Christmas season is the wonderful music. In churches and even in the stores as a back drop to frantic shopping, we sing about Christmas because it is a time of rejoicing. Even those who do not fully believe find it a special time and hum along. We were never more surprised than to see the Buddhist nation of Thailand fully embrace Christmas, arms wide open, with malls filled with trees and elves, and ‘Joy to the World’ playing in the background.

The music of Christmas for much of the world has been the backdrop to a season of longing; longing to push past all the bad news that surrounds us day in and day out. World troubles and family troubles...all fade as this special season settles in and we begin to enjoy the most important things: Family. Faith. Love. Peace. Hope.

Hope! Yes, but hope in what? I would put it to you that Christmas is a time of rescue. It is our remembrance of a time, when a very great God looked down with mercy upon the earth and said. “It is time...” Jesus was sent to us, not as a mere child, but as a RANSOM and a REDEEMER. He came to seek and save that which was lost. Us. We were lost, but now, we are found, in Him. Saved. Safe. Loved.

“O come, O come, Emanuel, and ransom captive Israel...”

“Joy to the world, the Lord is come...let Earth receive her King...”

And this verse, buried deep inside ‘O Little Town of Bethlehem.’:

“How silently how silently, the wondrous gift is given. So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His heaven. No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin, Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in...”

Where meek souls will receive Him still...the dear Christ enters in. Here is the eternal truth behind this season of love and wonder, children and gifts, dreams and hopes. All that is true is that God, the Father of All, sent His only begotten and beloved Son. He sent Him not into a palace filled with servants, but rather as an indigent. A nomad. Soon in His infancy to know what it is to flee for His life as a refugee.

“Love came down and rescued me, Love came down and set me free...I am Yours. I am forever Yours...”

“You didn’t want heaven without us. So, Jesus You brought heaven down...what a beautiful Name it is...”

I pray that this season our souls will be meek, so that we can receive Him fully, and allow that marvelous gift of His love and salvation to find a real home in our hearts. Bless you, one and all, for this blessed season. Christ is Alive and ever lives to be our Ransom and our Rescuer.



WRITTEN BY,
DEBBIE ECKER

His Gift is Eternal Life for All

It's time to share the Christ of Christmas



WRITTEN BY
BOB ROTH

One of my all time favorite songs I often play in my head was recorded by Jaci Velasquez,

"For God so loved..." using the words of John 3:16. It was a song significant to me because it was popular when I gave my life to serving our Lord.

The timing of the song's impact on my faith walk was close to Christmas and my wife and I were working with our home church, planning our first mission trip to Mexico. Songwriters, especially Christian artists often perfectly convey our innermost feelings in words and melody. If you have a few minutes, play this song

while reflecting on God's most precious gift, His son our Savior. Every minute, hour, day, week or month of the coming year can present an opportunity to speak of this special gift of love without limitations to this lost world. Please take this Christmas season to be especially bold about your faith in Jesus and invite others to join with the ever growing body of believers. Use this significant time of year as a time of refreshment and excitement to give the gift of love everyday beyond Christmas.

As one example, Dan and Deb along with a Firstlight team had just been serving a few weeks this past October in Thailand and Laos. In partnership with HSM/His Servants Ministries with Dr Rooney and other

ophthamologists to bring clear vision and the light of the world into their lives. Most of those ministered to had their first opportunity to receive Jesus as their Lord. Firstlight will continue to bring the Good News of the Gospel and the light of the world daily as we celebrate this Christmas into the coming days and weeks beyond our Lords birth.

Join us in prayer, and in finance and come along side of us in 2018 as together, we live out the fulfillment of Romans 10:14-15... How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Good News!

Have a very blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year serving an awesome God!

Thank You for helping to make all of this possible!

Celebrating a Year of God's Incredible Faithfulness & Your Partnership



Your prayers and financial giving each month is bringing forth a bountiful harvest of righteousness in places like: Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, and China, this year.

With your help the work of Firstlight International has prospered and God's kingdom is advancing through each of our projects and ministry platforms.

On behalf of our family, the Board of Directors of Firstlight International, our Firstlight Area Teams, Firstlight Fellowship Church Network - Thailand, and on behalf of the many people in the place where we serve, **thank you for helping to make 2017 a remarkable year.**

Join us as we follow God's plan (Jesus) into a brand New Year! The Lord's plans for us in 2018 are GREAT!

Dan, Debbie & Josiah Ecker

Awakened to hear His Voice - Global Training Platforms



Thailand: During the Father's Heart Camp, at the Z - Gen Church in Chonburi, Thailand we had some powerful moments of experiencing the Father's love in fresh new ways. Extended times of worship was one of the highlights of the event that enabled us to come 'boldly' to the throne of grace. (Heb.4:16) Hearts and lives were changed by the embrace of Heaven. The Lord spoke powerfully through the word in nine total training sessions. Pastor Daniel, his wife Ooy, and their Leadership Team are doing an exceptional job at stewarding the presence of God through a network of growing churches in the region.

China: At the reading of this newsletter, I (Dan) have been called upon to serve the training needs of several training schools in different locations around the country with Frontier Harvest Ministries and the Lenhart family. In each location we will train and equip leaders to reach the harvest.

Caring for Kids in Myanmar - Harvest Children's Home



We are partnering with some incredible people (*Luke, Jenniveve & their national team of co-workers*) who are laying down their lives for the sake of the gospel in some very remote places in northern Myanmar. They are leading up the operations of the Harvest Children's Home (*close to 25 children being reached*) and the church planting efforts of the Pulang in over 48 villages. An incredible testimony of God's saving power at work!

Throughout the year, there are multiple evangelistic training and sendings of jungle preachers taking place, regular new covert and leadership trainings being conducted as well as annual Harvest events. Regular water baptisms are underway as a cluster of house churches are being formed.

The Harvest Children's Home is supported ministry of Firstlight International. We are blessed to be a blessing!

Getting Ready to Step into Something Brand New in 2018...



WRITTEN BY,
DAN ECKER

I have always enjoyed this time of year as one year is ending and a New Year is

ready to begin. A natural transition if you will for one to 'look back' in review on the previous year and 'look ahead' for what will soon be in the year to come. However, I strongly believe that there is more to just a 'natural transition' but an 'internal transition' - a pivotal moment to all of this and here's why.

Every now and then there comes a point in time when you sense that something great is about to take place. And you know that in order to cooperate with what is about to unfold it is going to require a *'change'* in the way you think, act, pray and believe. Knowing that what got you to where

you are now is not necessarily going to get you to where you need to be or to where you believe you should be. The desire to move on is inevitable.

The fact that those feelings do exist tells you that you haven't yet arrived to the place where you long to be and that down in your 'knower' there is a sense that the Lord has more in store for you and that the need of wanting to get clearer about your purpose, calling, and direction is crucial for you to find success and happiness in this next season. The danger is allowing oneself to settle for 'what once was' or for 'what now is' but rather to press on and find meaning for 'what is about to' and/or for 'what wants to' unfold.

That knowing on the inside that there is more is what is leading you to make some much needed internal adjustments, fundamental shifts if you

will, in the way you see yourself, God, others, and the world around you as we see God's eternal plans manifested in our current and future realities.

This 'gap' between 'where I am now' and what is 'my next' is where most of us find the greatest challenge. Leaving the familiar to embrace the unfamiliar is never easy and it is going to require a deepening of our love, faith and trust in God resulting in a stronger sense of who we are, our direction and beliefs. I believe that a future and a hope is about to be revealed. (See Jer.29:11-13)

Over the next ten days please do take some time to prepare by asking yourself a few simple questions about this past year, 'what once was', about your current 'my now is' and about your 'what wants to unfold' in the days to come. Your best is yet to come!

His Love - Our Life!

On a personal note ...



WRITTEN BY,
DEBBIE ECKER

This is our seventh Christmas in a row stateside!! This is a personal record in my life from the past 34 years! Josiah will join us for a few days, and we will have our special things we do as a family. Dan got a deer this season, so we are in for some great venison curry!! On another note, this is always the time of year when we seek the Lord for a word, or words for the upcoming year. Last year, 2017, I felt like the Lord spoke 3 specific things to me: 1st. Just show up. I am happy to report, that over the past 12 months, I have been overseas, at Dan's side, for fully 5 months! Also, we traveled and ministered here in the US for at least 6 weeks or so. I showed up! And in every place and every setting, Jesus was there with me! The 2nd thing I felt the Lord say, is: Timing is everything. This has been SO true, from praying and booking hotels, plane tickets, to reaching out to specific people to pray for them, give them a word of encouragement. Finally, I felt the Lord calling me to fall in love with Him all over again; that His deep, abiding love would both lead and keep me. And indeed, it has. A Merry Christmas and Spirit led New Year to you all!

Prayer Points

"Everything I prophesied has come true, and now I will prophesy again. I will tell you the future before it happens." Isa. 42:9 NLT

Please pray for:

- 1. Global Training Platforms China this month. (see pg.2)**
- 2. Harvest Children's Home ministry partner. (see pg.2)**
- 3. Stepping Into Something Brand New. (see pg.4)**
- 4. God's abundant provision for Firstlight International during this 4th quarter of 2017.**