



## July 2018 News

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Look for us:



# Elevation

**“He makes me as surefooted as a deer, enabling me to stand on mountain heights.” Psalms 18:33 NLT**

I saw a cartoon the other day. In it was a stick figure standing at a little stick desk. Above him a sign read, ‘Returns.’ In the next frame another stick figure approached his desk, stating, ‘I’d like to make a return.’

“What is it you would like to return?”

“Twitter.”

“And to whom would you like to return it?” he is asked.

“Lucifer.”

I laughed out loud. Then, I caught myself. The issues of our times are a blaze so intense, sometimes I think our whole world will burn down. Fiery words fly across the internet. Complete strangers call each other mocking names based on political ideals. I am a champion of social media and its capacity to do good, but I am more and more aware of how darkness, anger and ugliness can also find it's voice in that public forum.

Further illustrating this molten rage, within a week, REAL lava burst through the earth's crust and poured in fast flowing rivers, releasing toxic gases and incinerating everything and everyone in its path. Honestly, human anger unchecked can have a similar impact in the world and human relationships. Anger is a toxic stew that becomes stronger and more bitter the more time and attention one gives to it.

There is a safe place for a believer to go in the lava-like storm. Run to Jesus and hide yourself in Him. Fully submit to His rulership. Do not give ourselves

permission to spout off in anger towards those who disagree with us. Take EVERY thought captive to the obedience of Christ, so that our words might be seasoned with salt, to make others hungry, not laden with brimstone to make others sick.

Beloved, God is love. His gift of Christ, both in life and in death are an example of what it will take to win a lost and fallen world. If we want Christ to be seen in us, we must first die. We must die to the right to be right. We must die to the quick retorts and angry rebukes. We must die to the negative, combative emotions that pull us in into a dark dungeon where there is no light.

Following Jesus means elevation. For Christ calls us up. His ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts higher than our thoughts. The way to walking in God's ways is up. Rise above anger and empty arguments. They win NO one to the cross. Instead, let us take up our cross and follow. His words must be our words; His thoughts, our thoughts.

His blood that was shed on the cross for the sins of the whole world. He is the only one who has the right to be offended or angry with the world. But He chooses to love, and love and love and love. Jesus. May we do the same. Take us up higher, Lord.



DEBBIE ECKER  
 Vice President  
 Firstlight International

# Short-Term Mission Trips: A Fresh Look



WRITTEN BY  
TONY FOSTER

The Great Commission is the backbone

for the existence of the Church. It is our “true north” navigation point. It sets our focus and determines our success. It provides the ongoing importance of disciple making through the ages. It could send us next door or across the ocean. However, Ed Stetzer reminds us that, “Jesus’ earliest followers understood that the Great Commission meant more than simply telling their neighbor about Christ because they went far beyond next door.” We must come to grips with that mandate

and ask our Lord how and where does He want us to participate.

All it takes is for us to lift up our eyes and see the harvest around us. In John 4:35-36 Jesus issued this challenge to his faithful followers during an excursion to the Samaritan town of Sychar: “Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, then comes the harvest?’ Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.” One of the best ways to take a look is on a short-term mission trip.

A short-term mission trip connects you to a part of the world that normally you would never have a chance to see. You will get the opportunity to experience the “go” command of the Great

Commission. You will begin to live life by lifting up your eyes and seeing the world as a harvest field and you will get a glimpse of what heaven will look like: “And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.’” Revelation 5:9-10

Why don’t you begin to plan on joining a short-team today?

Ministry News  
TOP STORY

## Upward and Onward

Pressing on towards the goal for the prize ...



WRITTEN BY  
DAN ECKER

Earlier this year I was in the Emmanuel Theological Seminary (ETS) in Kalaymyo, Myanmar teaching a group of third and fourth year students from a series of selective bible studies that I felt would be beneficial to them, as each one was starting their journey of learning how to follow Christ.

What came out of my time there was a fresh reminder to ‘keep reaching forward’ to that which lies ahead: A re-occurring theme throughout the Scriptures that teaches us to do just that. (See Phil 3:12-14, Isa 43:18-19)

The goal to ‘lay hold of’ by that which ‘Christ has laid hold of me’ and the good news is: none of us has arrived yet! And the ‘prize’ is to hear the words: ‘well done good and faithful servant enter into the joy of your master.’ (See Matt.25:21) God has MORE things in store!

Our Firstlight projects and ministry platforms in the second half of 2018 will take us further into the plans of what the Father has in mind. (See Jer. 29:11) Next up: Thailand, Myanmar & Egypt!



## **PROJECT: Families Without Fathers (FWF) is Bringing Christ to the Fatherless**



Children and families from fatherless homes are being reached through FWF in four locations across Thailand this year.

FWF Community Learning Groups are being established in each location for bringing Christ in!

This particular group meets regularly in the Seka district in northeast Thailand.

The Lord is the Host of every interaction that is taking place. Amen!

## **Pulang Church Planting in Myanmar ... More are being water baptized!**



Through an amazing partnership with Frontier Harvest Ministries (FHM), the Pulang church planting initiatives are expanding and prospering as the Gospel is going forth!

Listed as one of the larger unreached people groups of Southeast Asia, these Pulang are located in northern Myanmar in a large mountainous area roughly sixty kilometers from the border of Southwest China.

They are a people ready to be reached and Firstlight and FHM are working together to see an established church among the them for Jesus.

The reports of the regular water baptisms that are taking place are encouraging! Your prayers and financial giving is helping to make this happen! *Thank you!*

## Jenna's Mission News - *Home & Away!*



WRITTEN BY,  
JENNA  
BIERNESSER

Tears rolled down my face, as I sat at the gate, waiting to board the plane. The

six months in Thailand had quickly come to an end; I was left wondering if it was really time for me to come home. I had found new family and had seen Jesus touch people's lives here. Leaving here was harder than leaving Pittsburgh. "I know what you need," echoed in my heart as I boarded the plane.

Arriving home, I was excited to see my family and friends, welcome a new

niece into the world and celebrate the wedding of a good friend. What I didn't know was that home would greet me with a final breakup of an unsteady dating relationship, the death of two friends who struggled with heroin addiction, and sickness all in the same month. Driving one night, I cried out to God, "I can't handle any more bad news." His response was "Thank Me."

So, I started to thank God and He changed my perspective. He showed me the beauty in pain. The bullet wounds that stung my heart had now become secret coves for us to meet. What was meant for destruction turned into construction as I allowed

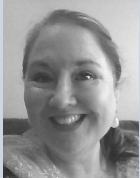
God to heal what I had failed to guard; and left me tasting the fruit of true joy from trial.

As I am home, I am preparing for my next trip out of the country. I will be heading to Iraq to work with Partner's Relief and Development to help refugees, going to Egypt for an intercession trip, and serving in a refugee camp in Israel.

God knew that it was necessary for me to come home to heal, to rest and to prepare before going into the Middle East. I am constantly amazed that we worship a God who knows exactly what we need.

## Our eyes are on YOU!

*On a personal note!*



WRITTEN BY  
DEBBIE ECKER

Well as the summer settles, in we are settling into a new life with my father living with us. Mom was here for several weeks; for now, she will be making visits here between us and family in South Bend. Dad is doing AMAZINGLY well. His doctors are all very pleased. We LOVE the Pittsburgh VA, they have been so good to us! His oxygen needs have lowered so that our supplies last for more hours each trip out. With summer here, that means longer rides, a few more stops. One of dad's favorites is Chinese food, so sometimes we stop at a restaurant. I also have made him some good Thai curry which he enjoys. Thank you everyone for your prayers for him and for us as we have made this transition. Many of you have asked how Josiah is doing. He is doing very well, has a new job in Seattle, however that job means, for now, he cannot travel. We have gone from seeing him 6 times in 2017, to NOT AT ALL in 2018. My mother's heart is aching, and we are praying for a time to open where he can swoop in for a quick but sweet visit. Thank you all so much for praying for us. Many times I can literally feel them!

## Prayer Points

**"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. Isa. 55:8 NAS**

### **Please pray for:**

- 1. For the FWF project 2018 each family and every child reached!**
- 2. Upcoming Global Training Platforms in Thailand, & Myanmar.**
- 3. Pulang work - Next steps of development.**
- 4. God's abundant provision for Firstlight International during this 3rd quarter of 2018.**