



February 2019 News

In This Issue:

* Ministry News:

- To Build and To Plantpg. 2
- Kingdom Advance Partnerships .pg.3
- Myanmar Updatespg.3

* Features:

- Article - Catalystspg.1
- Article - Board Member..... pg.2
- Article - On A Personal Note ... pg.4
- Article - Opportune Time pg.4
- Item - Prayer Points pg.4

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Look for us:

Catalysts

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.” John 14:12 NAS

Catalyst – an event or a person who brings about change.

Hundreds of years ago missionary Adoniram Judson was in a Burmese jail. In that jail, he met some Karen tribesmen, fellow prisoners, and he began to share the story of Jesus with them. They lit up, recognizing immediately a story that had been passed down to them through their ancestors. The story of creation, the fall of man, a flood, the promise of a savior. **That they were incomplete, and that they would be completed when "white foreigners" were to come across the sea from the west on "white wings" (sails).** In that story, was the promise that the white man would have a scroll that would tell them the way to heaven. **The name of their supreme God was Y'ma .** Today, most of the Karen tribe are Christian.

Many decades ago, a young Albanian nun went to Calcutta to teach in a Catholic school. While there, she encountered the overwhelming suffering of endless numbers of sick and poor people, many of whom would live and die in the streets of that city. She began to bring the dying in off the streets, clean their wounds, give them food and water. It was an impossible task, one she began with only 5 rupees and no helpers. And a movement of the love of Jesus was born that is now spoken about all over the earth. Today there are 4,500 Sisters of Charity working in 600 mission stations in 133 countries!

Several decades ago, a young missionary couple in their early 30's heard the call of God to leave their work on their mission field in Guatemala and return to their

hometown in Pittsburgh, to open a Bible Training Center and raise up a generation of world changers who would take ‘The Word to the World in the 80’s.’ Mark and Ellie Geppert left a thriving ministry and helped in planting a church and a mission school in a failing steel town in an abandoned supermarket with 5 acres of cracked paved parking. And in the decade that followed, streams of broke, busted and disgruntled men and women can flowing through those doors, to receive 2 years of Holy Spirit filled, doctrinally sound, faith empowering teaching, that changed them forever. There, a missions movement was born that has swept the world and changed nations through those graduates.

When we open our hearts and fully surrender our lives to the power of the living God and HIS plans for our lives, the living seed of the Creator comes in and changes us...from the inside out. Faith to go through closed doors. Love to climb high mountains to reach the unreachable. Wisdom and grace to know how to ‘be’ among a people we do not know. Passion for the Presence of the One we love most of all. These things make us Divine Catalysts: Agents of Change. People who enter a place, a country, a group, a job, a situation...and bring LIGHT and CHANGE and HOPE and HEALING. God Carriers. Catalysts. Change Agents.

Lord. Have Your way!



Written by, Debbie Ecker

Discipleship 101 - Back to the Basics!



WRITTEN BY,
BILL
THEMELARAS

As Christians, being a disciple is basically a no-brainer. It is

not up for debate; it's at the core of Christianity. You see, being a Christ follower requires us to both be disciples and make disciples. This means the same today as it did when Jesus first said, 'Come, follow Me.' Discipleship has been discussed by theologians for years. Countless books on discipleship, and how to apply it to our lives. I needed to define this for my own life, I needed to present clear direction to my congregation as well.

Of the many scriptures available to describe discipleship, I land on a

passage in Matthew most often. Matthew 4:18-22 ESV where Jesus first calls His disciples. *In verse 19, we find a key sentence. 19 And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

There are three elements represented here that we can apply: our head, our heart and our hands.

When you follow Jesus, that's a decision that you make (head). When Jesus is "making" you, He is actually changing something inside (heart). When you are committed to the mission of Jesus, you are doing something about it (hands). In other words a disciple is someone who is following, being changed and committed to the vision.

My definition of discipleship is this: "A disciple is someone who is surrendered to Jesus, who is being changed by following Jesus and who is on a mission to help others do the same."

We are leading people from spiritual immaturity to spiritual maturity. We are continually being changed by Jesus. We are always the clay and He is always the Potter.

In 2019, seek not only be a better disciple, but to make a disciple, as well.

Who is the one person you can invest in this year? Your part in the work of Firstlight is a great place to start! Be one - Make one!

To Build and To Plant!.. *Kingdom Builders Conference in Myanmar*



WRITTEN BY,
DAN ECKER

What a joy for us to be back in Kalaymyo, Myanmar this month for a Kingdom Builders Conference

with Chuck Lenhart, and Frontier Harvest Ministries (FHM). We are blessed to be a part of such an amazing opportunity to further advance the kingdom in places like these.

This particular group are some of the core leaders from a network of "Spirit Filled" Baptists churches that we meet up with over four years ago. We will continue to build upon the theme of apostolic structures for effective church planting as the formation of a new wineskin is underway in preparation for a fresh outpouring of Holy Ghost power that is necessary to reach the end time harvest that is waiting to be reached.

Our role in training and equipping national church leaders creates a mutual partnership for kingdom expansion in key areas around the country. My time there will also include a two day teaching slot in the Emmanuel Theological Seminary (ETS) as the School graduates another batch of Bachelor degree students. For such a time as this!



Kingdom Advance Partnerships ...

Over decades of ministry in places like Thailand and beyond, the Lord has linked us with some incredible people who are doing amazing things for God.

Pastor Kumphon to the right pastored the City Gate Church, in Chiang Mai. Debbie and I first meet he and his wife during the earlier stages of our relocation to Thailand as missionaries in 1999. Because the nature of our work took us in a different part of the country, we hadn't seen each other for years! We meet up again last year in Chon Buri, doing a conference that John Paul Sprecher and I did with the Z-Gen Church, with Pastor Daniel and his wife Ooy. Meeting up with Pastor Kumphon was an encouraging moment in both of our lives. He has grown into a nationally known leader among several networks of churches across the country and the Lord is using him in a mighty way.

It is an honor to stand with him and many others as 'equippers and trainers' of the next generation!



More Myanmar Updates! ..



A little over four years ago, we engaged in a partnership between Frontier Harvest Ministries (FHM) and Firstlight, in a church planting effort among the Pulang in northern Myanmar. The work has grown quite substantially in over 48 villages in selected areas. There are a good number of 'jungle preachers' that are scanning the countryside sowing seeds of the gospel, preaching the good news, following up converts and baptizing new believers. Our host couple Luke and Jennive have advanced the work by relocating to the city of Mandalay, last August to plant Harvest City Church through a business platform of a coffee house. The Harvest Childrens Home in Lishio now has over 50 children at risk and plans are being formed to purchase land and build a new facility to house more kids. FHM has launched a child sponsorship program called Another World to sponsor another 66 children. More news to follow as the project continues to advance.

My Eyes are Continually Towards the Lord



WRITTEN BY,
DAN ECKER

Every now and again, there are moments that occur in our lives

that bring with them a heightened sense of meaning and purpose. A desire to do things differently, to make a fresh start or to attempt the same challenge but from a different perspective or from a new approach.

What I have found is that it is during these times that a renewed commitment to God's plans and purpose begins to emerge in a fresh way and you soon realize that you are not where you once were and that you are stepping into something

new - making even the day-to-day mundane things more a part of the grander scheme of the things of God. It is as if something has shifted, changed, or has been altered, and what you perceived to be holding your back has somehow been removed and you begin to move forward at a much faster pace.

It is in moments like these that the ability to recognize and to becoming more aware of what is possible is determined by where ones focus is. And by avoiding the countless number of distractions that the enemy uses to get us derailed or to defocus our intentions away from what is about to unfold. David gives us a key by saying: "My eyes are continually towards the Lord and he

will pluck my feet out of the net." Psalms 25:15

That unbroken glance of heartfelt devotion of "fixing our eyes on Jesus" (See Heb.12:1-2) becomes the deciding factor for many of the victories to the challenges we face.

In 2019 my eyes are [and/or shall be] continually towards the Lord. Join us each month as we engage in *Kingdom Advance Partnerships*, with national churches and overseas ministries, pursue opportunities to train national workers through our *Global Training Platforms*, and to provide *Care For Kingdom Families* through Families Without Fathers (FWF) and Project REAP. Together we are moving forward into all that God has for us!

And Suddenly! *On a personal note ...*



Written by,
Debbie Ecker

In the heart of winter we are thankful for the Lord's goodness and provision to us. As per his custom, Dan has gone out hunting and brought not one, but TWO deer in to fill our freezer! He even did the butchering in our new shed out back which he and his brother Jules built just a few months ago! Over a hundred pounds of free meat for our winter's stews, curries and casseroles! Mom and Dad are doing very well, both have had remarkable doctor visits where their doctors and very happy with their progress. Mom especially has seemed to have a received a miracle: when she came to us in August, she was in full blown heart failure. An echocardiogram revealed that her heart was in very bad shape with a leaky valve. Well, in January she had a new echo...and NO MORE LEAKY VALVE. Praise God. Right before the really cold weather came, I was able to take Mom and Dad out for a 'spin' to get some exercise. We went to the Monroeville Mall, where my father remembers working there 50 years ago when it first opened. We walked the entire length of the mall and back again, finishing up with a nice strong cup of coffee before heading for home. So thankful for their continued health and strength.

Prayer Points

"Blessed be the Lord, my rock, Who trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle;" Psalms 144:1 NAS

Please pray for:

1. Kingdom Builders Conference, in Myanmar. (see pg.2 Top Story)
2. Pulang church planting (see pg.3 Top Story)
3. Firstlight Global Training Platforms in 2019: Thailand, Myanmar, China, Laos, India, U.S.A.
4. For God's abundant provision during the first quarter of 2019.