



### August 2019 News

### In This Issue:

#### \* Ministry News:

- Top Story FLF Church Thailand ..... pg.2
- Top Story FWF & Project REAP. .... pg.3
- Top Story MEDIT Updates .....pg.3
- Top Story Middle East Updates ..... pg.4

#### \* Features:

- Article Hope Rising ..... pg.1
- Article - Board Member ..... pg.2
- Article - On A Personal Note ..... pg.4
- Item - Prayer Points ..... pg.4

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Look for us:



# Hope Rising

**“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”**

**Romans 15:4 NASB**

Dan and I have developed some incredible systems that, somehow, with the Lord’s help, just work! One of these systems is our monthly newsletter. I have been doing a monthly newsletter since 1985. I believe we have only missed twice, once during the birth of our son in 1991 and the other because, (gasp) we both forgot!!

Our current system is this: God gives Dan the title, usually two words. Then, amazingly, without much difficulty, I sit down and write the main article.

Only this month, even though I LOVED the title, ‘Hope Rising,’ I could not seem to get my heart to find its footing for the words. It has been somewhat of a crushing month for me, personally: Dad has been put on home hospice, and although we are SO grateful for the added help that brings to us, the sadness of it being that time keeps me close to tears. I feel very fragile when I speak about it to anyone. Also, my dear mother, who has my heart always, has not been able to settle here, and so it has been decided that she will be returning to South Bend to live in her home once again, this time with her 2 great grandsons who have promised to take care of her and look after her. She is very physically fit and this move, we are hoping will bring her some measure of peace and happiness.

I think about the words, “Hope Rising,” and this thought occurs to me: We do not need hope when all is perfect. We do not need hope when then sun is shining and there are no storms raging. The time for hope is when all seems lost. When pain and sorrow are knocking insistently at the doors of our hearts, demanding to be let in to wreak havoc.

In those moments, Hope is the answer, arising, like a miracle, to chase away the darkness. Hope shines against the lies of the enemy who batters us with sorrow and regrets. In the dark stormy night, hope rises.

The Holy Spirit spoke to me today about Hope. My hope is in Christ alone. My hope RESTS securely in His love for me. Like a bulwark that will not fail.

And then the Lord also reminded me that Hope is the first cousin of Joy. And my heart exploded with a smile. YES. Christ is in me, the Hope of Glory, and in His presence is fulness of joy. This is my way forward. This is your way forward. Always place your hope upon Him. Our hope can rest, securely, upon Him.



WRITTEN BY  
DEBBIE ECKER

# Getting God's Heartbeat for the Nations!

**A must-have for all those who are followers of Christ**



WRITTEN BY  
CHUCK LENHART

From the beginning God has had all nations,

peoples, and families of the earth at His best interests and purposes. His heart yearns to see ALL come to His saving grace and mercies. He has the ability to look past color, culture, criminal past, and straight into the heart of man and his spiritual need to be restored back to the Father's love. You have to open yourself up and expose yourself to His gravitating personality and love for others!

When you do this, it's easy to love the unlovely, it's easy to embrace the poor, and orphaned children of

the world. Once your heart is tenderized and has become the reflection of His heart, it moves you to action! Jesus saw the man with leprosy and was filled with compassion and healed him! We must be full of compassion and find ways and create opportunities to reach people.

The work that FHM and Firstlight is doing in Myanmar is a prime example: We have a city church centrally located in the middle of Mandalay; there we are developing opportunity for locals to hear the gospel through our coffee house church. Harvest Coffee House has an active outreach in the city through English Corner, inviting local Burmese in to practice their

English with native English speakers. The Harvest Church Coffee House setting is sending local missionaries to surrounding villages to preach the gospel among the one million unreached Pulang people. Firstlight has been there from the conception of this church plant, Dan's teaching, input and encouragement has helped this work get up off the ground.

If you have never supported Firstlight to touch the nations now is that time! We are a cutting-edge ministry that is making a difference in the nations. Making disciples, those who are fearlessly following after Jesus Christ, and making a difference in their communities.

Ministry News  
TOP STORY

## The Firstlight Fellowship Church in Seka, Thailand: A family of faith is under way!



WRITTEN BY,  
DAN ECKER



It has been some time since my last visit to our Firstlight Fellowship Church in Seka, Thailand. The church is now completely under Thai local leadership for the past two and half years.

In spite of the many challenges they face, the church continues to do well, representing Christ in the rural setting of northeast Thailand. Through the years, hundreds have been ministered to, helped, and reached with the gospel. They continue to meet regularly for worship, prayer and community witness in the homes and for Sunday morning celebration services. These are just a few.

## Care For Kingdom Families: A work of faith ... a labor of love!

Thank you for your part in helping to reach children and families for Christ in Thailand. Through your prayers and financial giving Families Without Fathers (FWF) and Project REAP: Regional Education Assistance Program is proving to be a much needed approach for reaching into the homes and area schools with the good news of Jesus Christ!

For each of these children, every interaction with these projects represents a demonstration of Christ and his great love for them. Every life is precious to God and FWF and Project REAP is helping them to better understand God's great design of who they are intended to be. Weekly visits are taking place to the home and area schools as well as other types of projects and church related activities. School fees and related supplies in 2019 are being provided to help them to move forward in life towards a brighter future in God. Blessed to be a blessing!



## MEDIT: Micro Economic Development In Thailand: Updates on a new business!

As one of the many projects and ministry platforms of Firstlight International this one is MEDIT: Micro Economic Development In Thailand. Through the years we have done much to train and equip Thai nationals launch different types of micro businesses. By God's grace there were many lessons learned!

In the life cycle of micro enterprising, many of these small initiatives have run their course while several have done well. This new launch is off to a great start. The owners [Firstlight Fellowship Church Pastor and his wife in Seka, northeast Thailand] are proving to be hard working - they got a great product [fried coated fish balls], a good business plan and are well positioned in the market place.



## Mission News from the Middle East!



WRITTEN BY,  
JENNA  
BIERNESSE

When living in the Middle East it will take one long to learn what

the Yazidi and Muslim people value most in this life, that is, relationships. Whether it's getting invited into a neighbor's house for a cup of tea or sharing meals with families; I have found that investing in relationships, above programs, ministries and distributions, is what matters most.

From a Syrian mother who had no friends after being here for seven years to a teenage girl who lost her home, her mother, her eye

and finger fleeing from ISIS, to sisters who were recently released from ISIS captivity, all are asking for one gift, that is the gift of presence.

We make our way into their tents or unfinished houses and spend time in the summer heat just being. When I give the gift of presence, I am not giving of myself, but allowing the Holy Spirit to be the one to lead the conversations and to bind up the wounds of the broken hearted, I am inviting Jesus' presence to come and meet these ostracized women and He always shows up. There are stories you hear and moments shared that will

never leave your heart. There have been days where the tents are filled with dancing and laughter, with tears and weeping, with prayers and empowerment, but what I will remember most are the women.

I will continue to work with Partner's Relief and Development here in Iraq until the fall. Elisa and I currently work to empower women through education and art.

After serving here, I will be ready to transition back to the states to step into whatever God has next in Pittsburgh. The desire to work within Syria will always remain in my heart, so my yes is willing, ready and waiting to one day go.

Featured Article  
FAMILY NEWS

## Surrounded by His love!

*On a personal note!*



WRITTEN BY  
DEBBIE ECKER

August is always a momentous month for us. No more so than this year, with my dear father living with us and celebrating his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in our home. I have so loved having both of my parents here for this past year or so, they are living history, with their childhood memories of living in East Liberty in the 30's and 40's. Of childhoods filled with horse drawn carts bringing ice for the ice box, rags for cleaning, vegetables for the nightly soup to go with the day-old bread that was a staple in most Depression households. They told of sled riding down the dangerously steep streets near the zoo, and of ice skating on the reservoir of Highland Park. Street cars, and before they were old enough for street cars, walking in all weather to school. NO snow days because everyone lived within walking distance of their respective schools. They told of candy shops and mom's favorite childhood treat: a HUGE deli pickle! Her greatest treat was to visit the Isaly's in Turtle Creek, to have a chipped ham sandwich and one such pickle. She was delighted! We will greatly miss having her own sweet brand of fun in our house, but we are so grateful for the times we did share. We trust the Lord to take care of her as she returns to South Bend.

Featured Item

## Prayer Points

**“Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.” Psalm 2:8**

**Please pray for:**

- 1. Ministry Plans 2nd half of 2019 \* U.S. & Overseas**
- 2. FWF & Project REAP 2019. \* children & families**
- 3. Debbie's Mom & Dad! \*wisdom \* health**
- 4. God's abundant provision for Firstlight International during the 3rd quarter of 2019.**