



## January 2020 News

# Perfect Vision

**“ I have set the Lord continually before me; ...”  
Psalm 16:8a NAS**

### In This Issue:

#### \* Ministry News:

- Work Plans for 2020 .....pg.2
- Top Stories ..... pg.2&3

#### \* Features:

- Article - Perfect Vision ..... pg.1
- Article - Middle East ..... pg.2
- Article - Take time to pray .... pg.4
- Item - Prayer Points ..... pg.4
- Article - On a personal note .... pg.4

During the year she lived with us, my 89 year old mother often delighted us with her funny, insightful observations. One such time she asked me incredulously, ‘Deborah, is it really true that next year will be 2020??’ When I answered in the affirmative, she shook her head in wonder. Then she asked, ‘Do you suppose this will be there year that we all can see clearly?’ I laughed and clapped my hands at the way her mind tied the year, 2020, with perfect eyesight. Perfect vision.

every new season and decade. We are never without that Light, unless, by choice, we turn away. That is why it is imperative that we treasure His words, and hide them in our hearts. “Thy Word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.” In this we understand that as an inoculation against sin, the Word of God lights up the darkest corners of our souls, guarding our thoughts, correcting our actions. God’s Word is a safe, safe place to hide my heart, my needs, my sorrows, my questions. Even my doubts.

Friends. If there is one thing the world needs in this new decade, is a people whose vision is pure and unobstructed. There is so much darkness moving to quench our Light; but our fire is from within. So long as we keep the coals of love burning for the Vision Giver, then our eyes will remain clear and able to see into the future in a more perfect way.

Life isn’t fair nor is it easy. Without a doubt, if we do not avail ourselves of the abundance of mercy offered us at the Throne of Grace, our light will grow dimmer and dimmer. The Lord encourages us, at every step, to keep looking forward. Towards Him. Keeping Him every before us.

The Bible is filled with language imagery for our lives, our paths being filled with obstacles, stumbling blocks, challenges and hardships. But from the Psalms comes this picture: “Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet and a Light unto my path...’

In the dawn of a new decade, may our eyes be filled with Light, our hearts be trained in righteousness, our thoughts be pure and our actions full of kindness.

Lord. We look to You for 2020. The year You gave us Perfect Vision.

God’s word is a bright Light. It does not change. Not ever. It lives and breaths life and light and direction into every new day, every new year,



WRITTEN BY,  
DEBBIE ECKER

### Donations:

Online via PayPal  
[www.firstlightinternational.net](http://www.firstlightinternational.net)

By Mail, payable to:  
Firstlight International  
P.O. Box 252  
Springdale, PA 15144-0252

As a registered public charity 501 (c) 3 nonprofit corporation, all financial contributions are U.S. tax deductible by making checks payable to Firstlight International.

### Contact:

[www.firstlightinternational.net](http://www.firstlightinternational.net)  
Tel: 724.254.6145  
E-mail: [helloeckers@gmail.com](mailto:helloeckers@gmail.com)

### Look for us:





WRITTEN BY  
ELISA  
WOLCOTT

In September 2019, Jenna finished teaching her beginner and advanced English classes while I continued to paint

murals the school that Partners Relief and Development (PRD) renovated in Iraq earlier that year. We also did a couple more weeks of a pop-up school in the newly rebuilt facilities, hosting approximately sixty kids. Teaching the 30 minute art projects was one of the highlights of my time here... One week I had each student color a triangular piece of paper, taking them afterwards and stringing them together and hanging them in the classroom the following week. The look of amazement, wonder, and joy on the kids' faces when they saw their artwork displayed was overwhelming. It's rare for schools to have art classes. If they do, their projects are rarely displayed.

I was astounded at how painting the murals in this school brought the community together... Little ones (and teenagers) continued to surround me as I worked,

eagerly waiting for the moments when they could take a turn with the brush or jabbering at me in Kurdish as I brokenly tried to communicate in turn.

One day I was painting the front of the school with the usual dozen kids watching me and another dozen were clustered around Jenna as they sat in the shade. I heard Jenna say, "Have you heard the story of Jesus? Would you like to hear?" She proceeded to share the Gospel to all of these little ones who had never heard what Jesus had done for them. It was in a moment of loving them, being with them, enjoying their company, without a program or plan. At a later date we came with sparkly bows, clips, and nailpolish to give the little girls "makeovers" and balls for the boys. Sometimes love looks like hairties and braiding hair. Or maybe it means playing a game of soccer.

Regardless of the activity, love looks like being *present* with whoever is in front of you.

All my love, *Elisa*

## Planning the Work, and Working the Plan in 2020!



WRITTEN BY,  
DAN ECKER

Debbie and I are deeply honored to have

another opportunity to partner with you once again, in missionary service in 2020.

With our focus on the Lord [*Perfect Vision*] please read the opening article we are taking steps of faith towards a "future" and "hope" that is about to unfold over the next twelve months and beyond! (See Jer. 29:11)

As 2020 holds a lot of promise I wanted to take a moment and share with you about some of things that we are dedicated to this year.

Throughout this year, we are committed to bring fulfillment to the great commission as we pursue *Global Training Platforms*, provide *Care For Kingdom Families*, and to

engage in *Kingdom Advance Partnerships*. These are our three strategic objectives this year!

Thailand continues to be a primary country where Firstlight is focused. This is being done through a good number of projects like Families Without Fathers (FWF), REAP: Regional Education Assistance Program, and The Firstlight Fellowship Church Network - Thailand.

In the larger region, we are currently partnered with like minded ministries and churches to train leaders and national church planters in places like: Myanmar, Laos, China and India.

Trainings like these are being planned to take place in each location on a regular basis throughout the year.

During the first part of 2020, plans are firming up for us to be in Thailand, Myanmar, and possibly the Netherlands.

### Why not join the team today? ..

**A financial gift of any size each month or a ONE-TIME gift of \$50.00, \$75.00, \$100.00 or more, [and/or] a commitment to prayer makes you a Firstlight, Support Team Partner.**

When sending your gift, please use the return envelope enclosed. This same envelope can be used to send us your requests each month. We would love to have the opportunity to pray with you!

**Thank you in advance for your continued partnership this year.**

## *New Friendships are Being Formed!*

One of those moments where kind gestures are given and received as new friendships are being formed with several Thai hospital staff, in Northeast Thailand.

**We were warmly welcomed into this region by hospital staff, and local government officials of Kalasin province.**

**Such an opportunity to extend eye care screenings to a little over 1,400 people in six days!** Among those who came each day there were lots of seeds sown for the gospel with a potential of a future harvest.

Our partnership with a network of churches in the area provides a strong net for sharing the gospel and for follow up. Daily people were hearing about Jesus!

**We are giving God praise for the lives of those who did come to Christ and for a good number of others who are in the process of being followed up on.**



## *What A Crew! ... HSM-Firstlight Eye Care Team!*



A **“BIG THANK YOU”** to Dr. George Rooney, and Dr. Fred Martin along with the many others from His Servants Ministries (HSM) for your partnership with Firstlight in Thailand.

Your commitment to places like these to bring Christ into rural settings with top quality eye care is remarkable.

Every year the Lord puts together a wonderful team and this year was no exception. Four nations represented as ambassadors of Christ bringing the good news of Jesus to those who are desperately in need of Him.

The interaction with the people during those six days of being “salt” and “light” is causing others to recognize the “greater good” of our Father in heaven! **Praise His Name!**

## Our Times Are In His Hands! .. Psalms 31:15



WRITTEN BY,  
DAN ECKER

One of our annual rhythms that we have

and over all of our commitments that we are making this year: Commitments to people, places, all of our projects and ministry platforms. Asking the Lord to confirm our steps - each and every one!

Our home church, Covenant Church of Pittsburgh, [during this time of year] call it Times Of Refreshing (TOR) - twenty-one days of prayer and fasting setting aside selected times annually to seek the Lord afresh.

established over the past few years, is to begin the *New Year* with a time of seeking the Lord afresh. We do our best to slow down the pace of life [so to speak] as much as we can and to spend some extra quality time with the Lord. The month of January every year is one of those times.

This may come to no surprise; that what we are learning is that there are many others who do the same thing. Several of the churches in our area [*in the Pittsburgh area*] and others around the country during this time of year launch a “Daniel Fast” Prayer Campaign normally twenty-one days which helps to set the tone for the year as God’s plans and purpose begin to unfold. For us it happens like clock work!

These types of TOR moments have proved to be beneficial to us each year. The Scriptures teach us that our times are in His hands! (See Ps.31:15)

For us it is a time to break out the new prayer journals to use with our daily bible reading plans being sure to take good notes on any impressions or leadings from the Lord. It is also a time to pray over the calendars and

Why not join us in this special time of year to seek the Lord afresh in your life? Make January 2020 starting point. Begin by asking the Lord for fresh insight into the plans and purposes that He has for you this year!

## Feeling Blessed!

*On a personal note ...*



WRITTEN BY,  
DEBBIE ECKER

For most of our son’s life we lived overseas and celebrated the holidays together. We had our own special traditions: Christmas eve enjoying a meal of Sherried Crab Bisque (which Josiah lovingly dubbed Mummie’s Booze Soup until I realized you did not add the sherry right before serving, but rather cooked it until the alcohol had burned off.) Hey! With Dan traveling so much for our work in other provinces, we always spent Christmas week at home, in Chiang Mai. We would do all of the touristy things others did. Drives up into the mountains for a multi-family camping trip on the tallest peak in Thailand. SO cold, but OH, how we loved to shiver. Living in the US has been wonderful to have time with our extended families at holidays, but, OH, sometimes I do miss the crisp feel in our Thai house, without any heat source, so that every chair had a blanket to cozy up in and wearing wool caps inside during the evening was expected. Mostly, I miss seeing my son’s sweet face every single day. These days due to jobs and location, we are having more Christmas’s apart than I ever thought we would. All of you young parents out there, exhausted and running off your feet. Take a moment. Look at yourself in a mirror, and tell yourself, “These are the glory years...”

## Prayer Points

**“You have crowned the year with Your bounty, And Your paths drip with fatness.”  
Psalm 65:11 NAS**

**Please pray for:**

- 1. Ask the Lord to release: Divine Favor, Abundant Finance & Lasting Fruit throughout all of 2020.**
- 2. Increase and breakthroughs for all Firstlight projects, peoples, and Area Teams.**
- 3. God’s abundant provision for Firstlight International during this 1st quarter of 2020.**