



March 2023 News

# Reflections

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Look for us:



**“But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” Galatians 6:14 NASB**

When I was a girl I was raised in a devoutly Catholic tradition. All the Holy Days were observed, as well as special practices of devotion, such as going to mass on the First Friday of every month. No meat on Fridays, and, believe it or not, we also as a family fasted from Saturday night until Sunday after church to prepare ourselves to receive Christ in the Eucharist each week.

My dear mother was the driving force behind this devotion. I often find myself reflecting on the wonderful example of faith and devotion she taught us in our most formative years. Prayer was a given. Fasting expected. Years later I thought on this when reading Jesus’s teaching in the gospels: “WHEN you fast...” And, “WHEN you pray...”. These were common practices which we in modernity often forgo in leu of busy, hectic schedules, and also our theology causing us to bask in the tradition of, ‘For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast.’ Eph. 2:8-9

And, yet. Why can there not be prayer and fasting that is not for salvation, but simply for a sign of devotion, of care and concern? Fasting on behalf of others. Spending time in regular prayer and supplication on behalf of the sick, the broken, the suffering? Pouring out our hearts before the Mercy Seat of the Most High?

The Lenten season which is upon us now, is such a perfect time for reflection. Traditionally 40 days long, it is meant to be a time of taking stock of our lives, our shortcomings. A time of repentance and acknowledgement of what is true. Not wallowing in condemnation, but taking a good look with an honest eye, and asking God who loves us to help us, correct us, set us upon the right path once again. For His ways are always towards freedom and wholeness, and His plans for us are always good.

Brothers and sisters, in this Lenten season, let us pray for one another with genuine love and concern. Let us pray for our neighbors and our communities with love, and kindness. Let us repent of the times we have fallen far short of that love. Let us seek God that we might love one another with a sincere heart, and determine to live our lives in such a way that others might see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

For even as it by faith alone that we are saved, let us never forget that the same Divine Author also wrote, “For faith, without works, is dead.” James 2:26. Lord! Hear our prayer. Amen.



WRITTEN BY,  
DEBBIE ECKER

## On A Personal Note ...



WRITTEN BY,  
DEBBIE ECKER

It has been two months since the passing of my brother. My dear Mother who is nearly 93 keeps forgetting that Ted is gone and will frequently ask us to go wake him up, to tell him that dinner is ready. Each time, we have to tell her again that he has gone to Jesus. Each time she meets the news with wonder and even happiness for him. "Well!" she says, "I don't need to worry about him any more!" Such faith!

## On The Clock ...



WRITTEN BY,  
DAN ECKER

In the course of life *[if you are like me]* I'm sure you may have heard it said that: "Timing is everything." I'm not quite sure who invented the phrase even though it might be a bit extreme it does help one to discover those moments in life when it really does come down to a person being in the *right place* at the *right time*.

Those moments in life when you have a sense of knowing something significant wants to unfold even though you do not have all the details.

This could be what the Scriptures describe as a *kairos* moment. An opportune time or a favorable time. (See Gal 4:4; Acts 2:1; Ps. 31:15; Eccl 3:1)

These moments are never without a *slight* sense of uncertainty - often times masked as excitement or even with a little bit of nervousness. However, that's when faith kicks in. With the right amount of information bathed in prayer, an informed decision is made by the leading of the Spirit and God's plan unfolds in remarkable ways. (See Heb 11:1; II Cor 5:7; Mark 11:23; Prov 16:9)

## More Phuket Happenings ...

The Rapha Ministries Church in Phuket, Thailand continues to meet regularly for worship, prayer, training and equipping events.

Weekly outreaches to local neighborhoods around the city is bringing the gospel to many in several underserved communities.

The Lord is raising up a strong Christian community of believers with a passion to reach the least, the lost and the last. This month begins *Weekend Training Schools* to make disciples and to grow leaders.



## Kingdom Advance Partnerships...



Our role as academic advisors to the Emmanuel Theological Seminary (ETS) in Kalaymyo, Myanmar is proving to be successful through a *Kingdom Advance Partnership* with Firstlight.

Courses like these are being taught throughout the year by national bible teachers and outside guests.

The next academic year starts again in June with another batch of students waiting to be trained.

Over the next few months we will be offering *Intensive Training Courses* to equip faculty and school staff.

## Prayer Points

“And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me.” John 11:41-42 NKJ

**Why not give it a try?**

1. Pray for our Global Training Platforms in Thailand, & Myanmar this year!
2. For our Care For Kingdom Families Projects: REAP: and the FWF in Thailand, during the 1st quarter of 2023.
3. Ministry plans to unfold for all of Firstlight to be strategically placed in 2023 and beyond! \*projects, \*people, \*places, \*increased funding!
4. For God to arise in all that we do!