

**JOURNALS** POSTED ON JANUARY 2, 2019

## Pressing On to Know Him



DEBBY & KYLE WITMER



SUPPORT PLEDGED



I was struck today by these words from Hosea 6:

“Oh, that we might know the Lord!  
Let us press on to know him.  
He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn  
or the coming of rains in early spring.”

What an appropriate thought for the new year – pressing on to know the Lord. As I look back over 2018, I can see the times when He drew us in to know Him better. Indeed, those times were often the hardest of days, as the truth plays out that our faith is strengthened by trials. Even as I sit in my living room at this moment, feeling the breeze and watching the sunlight play on the trees, thankful for the coming of the cool season, grief sits heavy in my heart. Today Kyle is in a village, attending the funeral of one of his students, Moo, a young man with a ready smile and a song on his lips, eager to learn and always willing to help us. We are no longer the ones delighting in his presence, yet he knows the delights of our Savior today.



The new year has already brought sorrow with it; yet “this we call to mind and we have hope... great is Your faithfulness.” This will simply be one more time when we press on to know the Lord, one more time when He meets us in our need and reveals His truth to us. Looking forward to the coming year, I know with certainty that our need for Him will be ever before us. But the years past have taught us the truths of Hosea, that “God will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn.” Our prayer for you for 2019 is that you, too, will

press on to know the Lord, taking joy and comfort in Him as He walks with you.

Blessings,  
Debby

### **Looking back with thanksgiving...**

2018 began with a surgery for Kyle’s hip, and **we are thankful every day for the healing that God has brought** through that surgery. Kyle continues to enjoy mobility without pain.

In March, another class graduated from Siloam, and **we thank God for His continued work at the school** as a new crop of students are released into the world to share the gospel with others (and for those still studying with us).

During the months of April and May, our family made a trip back to the US, where we spent time with family and friends as well as some supporters. **We always thank God for these loved ones who support us so faithfully** with their love, prayers, and giving.



2018 graduation class of Karen Siloam Bible Institute, along with honored guests

Debby's time was filled with planning and execution of worship leadership for several conferences here in Chiang Mai, and **she is thankful for the opportunities to join family and friends and even strangers in places of deep worship of the God we love.** Our family also has continued to provide worship leadership at our church here in Chiang Mai, and **we thank God daily for the blessing of the CMCC community.**

Kyle made a trip to Myanmar in October with other International Ministries (IM) co-workers, and **he was thankful for the**



Leading worship for the TBMF conference

Debby and Julia were blessed to be asked to sing during the ceremony. **We are thankful for our Thai teachers** – mother and daughter – and pray that as the daughter and her husband embark upon married life, God will be at work in and through them to bless each other and those around them.

In December, we celebrated Brennan's graduation with a few friends here at our

In June, Kyle began his third year of teaching at Siloam, picking up some new classes that he hasn't taught before, as well as continuing some former subjects. In addition to teaching, he continues to make the most of every opportunity to build relationships with the students and staff there, and **we are thankful for the relationships that God has allowed to bloom and grow** in that place and with other members of the Karen community.

In July, September, October, and November,



Meeting with friends and supporters

**opportunity to encourage and strengthen believers in that country,** both those in the local churches and those in leadership positions in the government. It was an exciting new experience, as he participated in workshops designed to strengthen local congregations and also met with several members of the congress in order to pray for them.

November brought a wonderful celebration as the kids' Thai teacher was married. We enjoyed our first Thai Christian wedding, and

Kyle in Myanmar with other IM representatives

home and many friends and family via Facebook live. It was a wonderful event, and **we are thankful both for our son and his accomplishments as well as for modern technology and the ability to share our joys** with loved ones around the world.



And now, as the year comes to a close, we enjoy our final few days with our daughter, Hannah, visiting from the US for the holidays, and **we thank God for this time we have together** to celebrate the season and count our blessings as a family.

And finally, dear readers, **we are thankful for you**, who follow our journey and support us in so many ways.

### **Looking ahead with hope...**

2019 will bring with it some big changes in our lives, as our US/Puerto Rico assignment (formerly known as “furlough” or “deputation”), when we return to the US for one year, begins this spring. There are many arrangements still to be made, and though we are tempted to give in to the anxiety and stress, **we daily look to Jesus to be our guide and find our hope in Him**. Although it will be difficult to say good-bye to the students and staff at Siloam, as well as the other friends we have made here in Thailand, **we are looking forward with hope to the opportunity to spend time with family and friends in the US, as well as visiting many churches and other faithful supporters**. The coming months will find us making plans for where to live, what cars to drive, what belongings to pack for storage in Thailand, what things to pack to take with us to the US, and so much more. **Please be in prayer for us as we face all of these challenges, specifically for decisions to be made about where to live during our year in the US and what would be best for our sweet dog that we have here in Thailand (whether to try to bring her with us, or find another home for her during our time away)**. In addition, if you have any ideas for housing possibilities – including mission houses, church parsonages, or private residences that might be available for rent – please let us know.

There are other travels on the horizon as well, as Kyle will be making two visits back to the US before our home assignment begins, in order to fulfill his role on an advisory board that is reviewing the missionary support process. **We are very hopeful as this group works together** to find the best ways of ensuring the work of IM continues through the coming years in the best possible way. In addition, March will bring with it a special graduation trip for Brennan and Kyle, as they head to Israel to explore the land **where Jesus was born, lived, died, and rose again to give us everlasting hope**. **Please be in prayer over these upcoming travels, the first of which begins on January 13**.

And now, dear friends, as we greet the new year together, we pray that you, too, will be looking forward with hope. We pray the words of Paul from Romans 15:13: ***“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”*** Let us know how we can pray for you.

In Christ,  
The Witmers

Debby, Kyle, Hannah, Brennan, Julia and Emma

