



# Evangelical Friends Mission

## May 2022 Prayer Letter

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Our purpose and passion is to fuel a worldwide movement of people who seek first the kingdom of God, planting churches that live and die to carry out the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandment.

### A. and M. A. | Serving in Bangladesh

#### The Cost of Following Jesus

Jesus said in Luke 14:26,27, 33, *“If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry their own cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. ... In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.”*

Jesus clearly mentioned three costs of following him: we must hate our families and ourselves (14:26), we must carry our own cross (14:27), and we must give up all our possessions (14:33).



If we truly want to follow Jesus Christ, we must consider the cost and put him above everything else. We know that salvation is absolutely free, but it costs us our very life. Sometimes some preachers talk about receiving all blessings if we belong to Christ. Our life will be full of joy, everything will be provided by God since God is Jehovah Jireh. He will protect us from all our enemies since he is our protector, he will heal us from all our diseases because he is the healer. All that is true. Nothing is wrong. God has promised us to be our protector, provider, and healer. But this is only one part of the coin. This is namely prosperity gospel. But this is not all the true picture of Christianity. Where there is no cross, there will never be a resurrection. Christ without cross has no meaning in Christianity.

Jesus is not forcing anyone to follow him. This is a personal choice. In Luke 14:26 Jesus said, *“If anyone comes to me...”* There is no obligation to follow him. But he is reminding us of the cost of following him. He said, *“If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.”* He further said, *“And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”* Following Jesus means giving up everything.

In the country where we live, it is mostly impossible to live a life without pain after being Christian. Almost everyone who has accepted Christ and wants to follow Jesus must carry their own cross every day. Let me share a true, brief story of our ministry.

Fatima heard the gospel from Mafuza. She understood that only Jesus can offer her eternal life. She decided to follow Christ and took a public testimony of baptism. In the photo above, Mafuza is giving her the public testimony of baptism. There is no pond or river in this area. Therefore, Mafuza is pouring a bucket of tubewell water. Five other family members also decided to do the same. Mafuza gave everyone a bible so that they can read and grow in faith. After some days following Jesus, another member of her family noticed that she is no more praying to Allah and does not follow Islamic rituals. They came to know that she became a follower of Christ. Physical torture was started by her family member. They stopped even giving food. But Fatima stood firm in the faith. She said, *“Christianity is not very easy to practice. I have accepted Christ and cannot leave him. If God wills, my family will remain or else it will break up. I cannot stay at my house anymore. I must leave my home and need to go to Dhaka for my personal security. Pray that God would give me patience”*. The persecution became so extreme that Fatima had to leave her husband, house, family, possessions, and job. I got the news that all the bibles that we offered them were taken away by her family member along with blankets that we gave her family. I do not know how long this situation will remain.

#### Questions for personal reflection:

How do you feel about Fatima’s faith in Christ? If you are in the same situation what would be your response? How would you handle the situation? Would you compromise or leave everything for following Christ?

## From the EFM Office

### *Praise God...*

- For the face-to-face time our directors (Stan Leach, Matt Macy, Kimberly Mer, and Dan Cammack) got to have when they met in Canton, Ohio, in April. They also got to spend time with some of the staff of Evangelical Friends Church-Eastern Region (Rusty Savage, Marie Hagin, and Ed Walsh).
- For the positive response to the devotional guide for Holy Week that EFM sent out in support of this year's Easter Offering.

### *Please Pray...*

- For the search for an administrative assistant to join our staff.
- For the EFM board meetings that will take place at Quaker Ridge, Colorado, May 26 and 27.
- Preceding the board meetings there will be a new training event called, "How to Create a Sending Culture in the Local Church," designed especially for church leaders in North America. The training will also take place at Quaker Ridge, Colorado, and will be May 23-25.

## EFM Five-Year Goal:

**To send 10 new missionary households from North America to launch 5 new fields by December 31, 2025.**

### *Praise God...*

- For the first of ten Luke 10 Exploration Trips that will likely happen this year. This one took place April 19-29 in Mexico. We are looking forward to hearing the report of the 16 Friends from the U.S. and Mexico who participated in this trip!
- For the future-missionary event that took place in Cleveland, Ohio, in early April. One of the main organizers was Cindy Aufrance, former missionary to Hong Kong with her husband, Dave. It was hosted by North Olmsted Evangelical Friends Church. Stan and Matt participated in the event and were encouraged by the interest several young adults are showing in regard to missionary service.

### *Please Pray...*

- For the Lord of the harvest to send more workers into the harvest fields.
- For the Future-Missionary Retreat that will be held May 23-26 at Quaker Ridge, Colorado. Pray for just the right combination of people who are exploring a call to missionary service and missionary mentors who can walk alongside them.
- For the two Luke 10 Exploration Trips which will depart from the U.S. on May 30. The first will be in Ecuador until June 16, focusing especially on opportunities for the gospel among a tribe called the Shuar who live in the jungle. So far that team is made up of ten Friends from Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Kansas, Mexico, and Bolivia. The second trip will be in Greece until June 10. So far there are six on the team from Oregon, California, Kansas, and Athens, Greece.

**SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:** Join us on the 2nd Thursday of each month from 10-11 AM PST for our Luke 10:2 Gathering via Zoom in support of EFM's Five-Year Goal. If you would like to participate in this gathering you can sign up for it at <https://friendsmission.com/prayer-gathering>. You will receive some prayer points and the link for the gathering a few days before the event.

## From D.K. and Choity Sarkar Serving in India

### *Praise God...*

- Some people accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. They are ready to take a public testimony of baptism.
- Some Muslim people are ready for a public testimony of baptism.
- We have a new ministry at Siliguri, Darjeeling District.

### *Please Pray...*

- For Pastor Soumen Naskar, he will go in for an open-heart surgery.
- For those people that took a public testimony of baptism on the 23rd of April.
- For the results of the outreach programs that took place during Good Friday and Easter time.

## From G. and S. Massey Serving in India

### *Praise God...*

- We had very good Lent days and Passion week meetings at our church in Chhatarpur
- We have a new Principal for the Christian English College in Chhatarpur. M.P.
- We are able to have regular classes after the pandemic.

### *Please Pray...*

- For the new Principal Mr. John A. Lal as he has taken the charge on April 1, 2022.
- For the board examinations of Class X and XII from April 25 to June 6- that all will go well.
- For the safety of school staff and children during severe hot season this year. School closes May 1st for summer holidays.

## From Samson and Priscilla Retnaraj Serving in Nepal

### *Praise God...*

- For our ministry, as the work continues even as we transitioned from one place to another during the last two-three months. Priscilla has a full-time job as a Professor in a College of Nursing in Lucknow, and this also helps her to be near her mother and help as and when necessary. Samson is based in Nepalganj and able to help in a small clinic in Rupaidiha as well as coordinate the efforts for the Far West Nepal ministry with the help of some pastors and leaders from that area. CHE Trainings and Small Business Development trainings have been planned for this year among newer churches and communities.
- For Purne Pun in Tapara who regained her health after a severe illness which almost incapacitated her completely. She came to fellowship last Sunday to worship with all the believers who has unceasingly prayed for her during these trying times and praised God for his mercy.
- The Rautahat CHE committee has now been registered with the government of Nepal Social Welfare Ministry and has its own constitution, committee and bank account formed with the help of CHE Training over the last nine years. This will be a strong step to make them self-supported in the coming years.

### *Please Pray...*

- For Joseph from Chitwan as he prepares to go to Japan on a student visa and also get a job there. He grew up in Gokarna's family and loves the Lord.
- For the education awareness day meetings to be held in the important town squares of Cha'pur (Rautahat) to get more children enrolled into formal education run by the government and private schools of the district. The district education officer will be addressing public meetings which has been organized by the Rautahat CHE Committee.
- For the five young girls from Baidehi and Aurahi who took a public testimony of baptism on Easter Day after three-four years of attending Children's CHE training. Each of them will be "missionaries" as and when they go to their husband's home after marriage. Arun and Babli organized these and reported progress in the medical clinic. A film showing the resurrection story was organized in Baidehi also on Easter day and many people attended mostly from the Musahar community.

## From B. and D. A. Serving in Nepal

### *Praise God...*

- We praise the Lord that during Easter time we had 73 Hindus and 1 Buddhist accept the Lord.

### *Please Pray...*

- For these new converts on a regular basis to stand for the Lord when the Hindus persecute them.

**From Voicu and Ana Marian**  
**Retired EFM Missionaries from Romania**  
*Praise God...*

- For God's amazing ways to bring good out of the present situation. Though the number Ukrainian refugees all over Romania is constantly changing, there are many ministries geared toward them. Churches and individuals are sending aid across the border, but there are extraordinary efforts to help those who've reached our towns and villages, placement into families, special classes for Ukrainian children and communication in their language, since most refugees do not speak English either.
- The peace God maintains in our hearts, in spite of the constant bad news and the reality of evil around us. We are thankful that we can see Christ's kingdom rise and people being saved, and we want to do our part, feeling like we are where God wants us. Voicu continues to serve and encourage the small church in Gura Raului. Ana continues to facilitate women's bible studies and teaches English from the home to several children and adults.
- We are thankful for safety and good health for our family.

*Please Pray...*

- For the proclamation of the gospel, for people to receive it and be saved; for the message of hope and courage and God's love to be manifested. Please pray against Satan's schemes, his deceiving spirit and hate oftentimes propagated through news channels. Please pray for this war and its horrific crimes to end, for the fear of the Lord and the Spirit of wisdom to sweep over nations.
- For the women's retreat planned for May 6-8. Ladies from three villages, from teens to retirement age have participated in Bible studies the last few years. Most have never experienced such an event, they all need a time of encouragement and refreshing. Please pray for it to be a blessing with vast ramifications and eternal effect.
- We appreciate prayers for clear direction and obedience to God for us as well as for our children. Our son Johnny continues to work in construction with a Christian organization in Calarasi but is considering an alternative employment outside Romania for this summer and the future.

**From Rupak and Pramila Tamang**  
**Serving in Bhutan**

*Praise God...*

- Bhutan is opening after long lock down.
- For churches that have started fellowship smoothly.
- For my visit to Haa.

*Please Pray...*

- For our church house construction at Samtse Kharbandi and sipsu Tashi choling. The pastors are Sanchora and David.
- For our new pastors to come up with a vision to plant multiple more churches
- For our church members get jobs to support themselves.

**From Abe and Diane Bible**  
**Serving in Ukraine**

*Praise God...*

- We have come to North America after much prayer and the Lord was with us as we made decisions and then traveled, needing to go by car to Warsaw, Poland, to catch flights onward. Made all connections. Our luggage got lost along the way, but...it was delivered to us in less than 24 hours! Now isn't that a praiseworthy item?

*Please Pray...*

- We will be making an extensive tour across the US to the west coast and then to Canada returning east and finally ending back up in Ohio. Pray that we would make God's appointments along the way.
- That people's hearts would be open to Ukraine and the huge needs there. Yes, humanitarian aid but also spiritual. We will be challenging people to give and pray.
- Continue to pray that God would have mercy and stop the war. The suffering is incomprehensible—and such a useless waste. Pray that the Lord would release the heavenly hosts to fight the spiritual powers of darkness.

**From Tony and Agi Frei**  
**Serving in Hungary**

*Praise God...*

- We started to renovate the foundation house at the end of April. We will continue the work with our church house of Tolna. Glory to God, there is a great deal of cooperation between us.
- My older daughter, Timi had a health problem with her intestines. Praise God, she is much better.
- Our church prospered with a new baby (called Bianca) in November. She is five months old now. At Easter, she got a stomach virus. In order not to dry out, she was placed in hospital, and she stayed there some days, with her mother. She received an infusion. Praise God, the little Bianca is much better, so they could go home yesterday afternoon.

*Please Pray...*

- For my father-in-law, Árpád. As you know, he has a big health problem. Unfortunately, his condition has deteriorated. As he is unable to move, his legs are swollen, and he has ulcers on his legs. Árpád was admitted to the hospital and he got sick. He is still in a hospital. Please, pray for Ági's father with us!
- For my brother-in-law, my sister's husband, Attila. Attila has a health problem too. He has pain in his joints (in his shoulders and in his hip). Please, pray for his healing!
- Some youth from our mission are facing a big task with their studies. Andrew and Susan will take a final exam in early May. They are in Secondary Grammar School. One of my nephews, Christian, will graduate in mid-May. He is studying in Budapest, at the Liszt Ferenc College of Music.

**From David Thomas**  
**EFM Whole Life Discipleship**

*Praise God... (Thailand)*

- For The Way Foundation in Chiang Rai, Thailand! Even though COVID-19 stopped their work in the villages, they are saying D4D is now a part of their organizational culture (For example: valuing servants and empowering leadership, discipling people in all areas of life, adult learning – teaching in a participatory and empowering way, using Bible Telling skills in many settings, and deliberately discipling with Personal Development Plans).

*Please Pray...(Thailand)*

- For favor, blessing, and wisdom for Yosapa as he leads The Way Foundation D4D team. Pray for favor, blessing, and wisdom as they reengage the villages of JaTaw and JaSawPa in the D4D process of mobilizing their communities towards the transformation God desires them to experience.

*Praise God... (Bolivia)*

- For Navigator Latin American leadership interest in starting a D4D work in Bolivia. Thank God for three young Bolivian ladies with an interest in missions who are studying in Atlanta's 10-month D4D course! Praise God for a few Bolivian Friends Church leaders connected to David Thomas who have a desire to learn to disciple the poor in their neighborhoods in a holistic way.

*Please Pray... (Bolivia)*

- For wisdom and favor and Holy Spirit's clear leading for Gary and Merri Lee Hipp and David Thomas as they navigate the journey towards forming the partnerships needed for establishing a potentially new D4D work in Bolivia.

*Praise God... (Rwanda)*

- For many examples of transforming lives, families, churches, and communities! Praise God for experienced, humble, capable country D4D leaders. Praise God for 2 Timothy 2:2 expansion, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others."

*Please Pray... (Rwanda)*

- For ongoing 2 Timothy 2:2 expansion of leaders in Rwanda and add to it Luke 10:2, "He told them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'" May this whole-life, disciple-making, community-transforming, and church-planting movement continue to grow and expand!

**From Maria Giron**  
**Serving as the Missions Mobilizer for Hispanic Friends**  
***Praise God...***

- For an exploration trip that was safe, productive, and eye opening by the Spirit to realize the great need to know Jesus and the gospel that so many people still have. In nine days, the team stepped on the ground of 16 towns within the states of Jalisco, Nayarit, and Colima.
- For our great team of 15 people; from the US: Trent Jack from EFC-MAYM, Matt Macy- EFM Director of Mobilization, Nathan Macy-Future Missionary, Edwin and Maria Giro; from Mexico: Ernesto Ramirez- Superintendent of Mexico YM and his wife Elizabeth, Pastors from Coahuila-Sergio and Luisa Ayala, Pastor from Aguascalientes Israel De La Torre and five Potential Future Missionaries from Coahuila: Jeremias Ayala, Anna Wong, Angelica De La Cruz, Ximena Maldonado, Camila Carrillo). Without a doubt a team formed by God. Each member was a contributor with their different gifts and personalities.
- That, in each town, God allowed us to have direct encounters with people who marked our journey, and we believe that we mark their lives by reflecting Jesus through conversations and prayers. Glory to God for all the stories and testimonies that we now have to tell that came out of this trip.

***Please Pray...***

- This exploration trip is over, but the work of the discernment process continues. Please pray that we can present a defined and clear report to the EFM Think Tanks that will then bring recommendations to the EFM Board as to where to launch new fields. The report of this exploration trip will also remain in the history of the Friends.
- As Jesus asks us in Luke 10:2, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send workers to these 16 explored places. In most of the places we visited the team had a feeling of being welcomed and even invited, by local people, to come and plant churches.
- For the six young potential future missionaries who were part of the team. For more opportunities for them to continue exploring their calling, for clarity for their future, and for some day in the future to see them being sent to a mission field.