



Evangelical Friends Mission

July 2023 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.

David Thomas | EFM Whole Life Discipleship

One of my favorite verses is Ephesians 2:10, *“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (NIV).”* My version with input from various translations is:

We are God’s masterpiece, an amazing poem, recreated new in Christ Jesus, that we will fulfill our destiny, walking the paths and doing the good works he prepared for us long ago.



I love Holy Spirit’s work in my life, enveloping me in Papa’s love, and continually recreating me new in Christ Jesus. I love belonging to Papa, Jesus, and Holy Spirit. Debby and I enjoy hiking and discovering new trails. I love walking with Holy Spirit at this time of my life, enjoying our current path, and imagining what’s up ahead as we discover what God has prepared for us.

Currently, on my path, I’m enjoying my relationships with my Lahu, Thailand brothers and sisters in The Way Foundation as their Discipling for Development team is discipling two village churches through a process of becoming better stewards of all God has given them, and learning to overcome the barriers they face in their communities.



I also appreciate my relationships with my Rwandan colleagues who have used the Discipling for Development lifestyle to change the culture of their denomination out of dependency and a poverty mentality into a culture of stewarding well the resources God has blessed them with. They lead out of a “can-do” mindset, following Holy Spirit’s guidance with a hardy “Yes!”. They are currently planning to send their own, Rwandan missionaries into South Sudan. Their Discipling for Development leaders are working on raising up new leaders to expand their growing whole life discipleship movement. Leaders of other denominations are also asking them to train them.

I am curious and excited to discover what is up ahead on the path as I work with The Navigators in establishing Discipling for Development in Bolivia, the country I grew up in. We will facilitate two Foundations workshops during the last two weeks of this coming August. Out of 80 participants, 65 will come from two development organizations, Food for the Hungry International – Bolivia and Compassion International – Bolivia. Their leaders are impressed with the results our Discipling for Development communities have experienced, and want to learn from us as they seek to improve their own development programs which are focused on supporting the body of Christ and the growth of his kingdom in Bolivia.



Another part of the path I enjoy walking with Evangelical Friends Mission is our Luke 10 Initiative with a goal of 5 new mission fields and 10 new mission households by the end of 2025. I appreciate participating in Luke 10 Think Tanks, Luke 10:2 Prayer Gatherings (Intercession meetings), Future Missionary Retreats, and a trip to Burundi to encourage Rwanda and Burundi yearly meetings in sending out their own missionaries.

All of us are involved in the family of Evangelical Friends Mission, “we are God’s masterpiece, an amazing poem, recreated new in Christ Jesus, that we will fulfill our destiny, walking the paths and doing the good works he prepared for us long ago.” What an amazing gift to walk with all of you along the trail God has prepared for us at this special time in history!



David Thomas

From the EFM Office

Praise God...

- For the EFM Board meetings that took place at Quaker Ridge Camp in Colorado on June 1 and 2. There was much rejoicing over what God has been doing in and through EFM and also decisions made that will help us accomplish the work he is setting before us. It was a really good time together in one of our favorite places.
- For D.K. and Choity Sarkar's time of deputation in the U.S., their presence at the EFM Board meetings, and a safe return to their home in Kolkata.
- For this time of year when EFM staff members can take some time off to rest.

Please Pray...

- For the various regions/yearly meetings in the U.S. that are gathering this month for their annual conferences and business meetings. These are the ones connected to EFM who are meeting (in the order in which they are meeting): Alaska Yearly Meeting, Evangelical Friends Church-Eastern Region, Northwest Yearly Meeting, Indiana Yearly Meeting, Iowa Yearly Meeting, and Evangelical Friends Church Mid America Yearly Meeting. That's a lot of meetings!
- That the same excitement that EFM is experiencing regarding its present and future will also be experienced by all of these regions/yearly meetings who are gathering this summer. May our global vision help to strengthen our local vision and vice versa.

EFM Five-Year Goal:

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

Praise

- For the National Future Missionary Retreat that took place May 29-June 1 at Quaker Ridge Camp in Colorado. It was the biggest retreat we've had so far (26 future missionaries and 24 mentors), and it was great to see a mixture of singles, families, and ethnic backgrounds. It felt like God really moved among us during our time together. We look forward to seeing what happens in the weeks and months to come.
- For the energy that the Luke 10 process is bringing not only to the EFM staff and Board but also to the regions/yearly meetings of North America and to many Friends yearly meetings around the world. There is a lot of planning going on for more Luke 10 Exploration Trips in the coming months. Stay tuned for more details!

Please Pray...

- For the Lord of the harvest to send more workers into the harvest fields.
- For the Luke 10 Think Tank that will take place in Southern California on Saturday, July 15. This think tank is especially for leaders of Friends Southwest, and it will likely add to the number of places in the world that are being explored for the launching of new fields.
- For the Luke 10 Exploration Trip to the Shuar of Ecuador that is currently underway. Right now, there are six Friends on the ground: Four from Northwest Yearly Meeting and two from the yearly meetings in Mexico. Pray for the relationship building that is going on with the Shuar and also for safety and health.
- For all those who participated in last month's National Future Missionary Retreat at Quaker Ridge, Colorado. Ask especially for the ability to clearly discern the next steps the Lord of the harvest wants them to take (and wisdom for those who come alongside to help with the discernment process).
- For several future missionaries who will be getting some field experience in the coming weeks.

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/five-year-goal-pray/> some prayer points and the link for the gathering a few days before the event.

SPECIAL CALL TO PRAYER: It is time for EFC-Congo (CEEACO) to select a new Legal Representative and General Superintendent, among other executive leadership positions. They are having their Yearly Meeting sessions on July 19 and 20 where they plan to decide. Please pray for a sense of God's presence in making a choice that would honor God and the church. Please also pray against the evil one who wishes to create disunity, as EFC-Congo has had ongoing challenges from the last leadership transition.

From David Thomas

EFM Whole Life Discipleship

Praise God... (Thailand)

- For Yosapa and Mana as they follow their plan and teach the next lessons in their two villages and also facilitate the Appreciative Approach lesson with The Way Foundation. It is great to see them working well together, and following their well-laid-out plan.

Please Pray... (Thailand)

- For excellent understanding and application of the Appreciative Approach lesson for Yosapa, Mana, Way Foundation leaders and leaders in the two villages they are mentoring. Pray for grace in learning to see life from a positive point of view, and grace in learning to ask appreciative questions helping people focus on all the resources and wisdom God has given them.

Praise God... (Bolivia)

- For the opportunities ahead of us working with Food for the Hungry-Bolivia and Compassion International-Bolivia, walking alongside them as they seek out more effective ways to work with local churches and communities resulting in these churches owning and doing their own community outreach with their own resources.

Please Pray... (Bolivia)

- For the right people to participate in the two Discipling for Development Foundation's workshops in the last two weeks of August. Pray for those of us preparing to facilitate the workshop, and pray for some new people to join us whom we can train and mentor over the next few years in whole-life discipleship as we mentor and coach our partners in Bolivia. We are looking for people with discipling experience and who also speak Spanish.

From Maria Giron

Serving as the Missions Mobilizer for Hispanic Friends

Praise God...

- For a second Luke 10 Exploration trip back to Ecuador to get closer contact with the Shuar people. For Edwin and me, it was a joyful and intentional trip, since our team included two young ladies, Grace Anderson from NWYM and Jael Ayala from Mexico North YM, and one young man, Jose Olivas from Mexico Central YM, who are exploring their call to be missionaries in the future!
- Our time in Ecuador was productive and we were able to carry out one of the purposes, which was to strengthen our relationships with Shuar leaders and Evangelical Christian leaders.
- For the opportunity to have been part of the Future Missionary Retreat as mentors. What great joy and hope to see young people saying, "Here I am, Lord, send me!". We loved seeing young Hispanics coming to the retreat for the first time.

Please Pray...

- For the Shuar evangelical leaders, they are in great need of discipleship and leadership development. Let us pray that God sends more workers to this field.
- For the young man from Mexico, Jose Olivas, who has a strong call to the Shuar, and is making the decision to return as a missionary to Ecuador for a longer period of time. Jose would be the first missionary sent by Mexico Yearly Meeting to another nation and indigenous culture. We are very excited, Glory to God!
- For the first Future Missionary Retreat of Latin America that will be held in Aguascalientes, Mexico. Edwin and I are directing it. We expect young people from all the Friends churches in Mexico and possibly even representatives from Bolivia. May God move hearts to say with conviction "Here I am Lord, send me".

**From Scott and Andrea Sward
Serving in Cambodia**
Praise God...

- For two young mothers, Sokha and Srey Leak, who recently committed their lives to Christ.

Please Pray...

- That we'd learn to abide more deeply in Christ, in order to bear fruit that remains.
- For the 62 students enrolled in our Monthly Bible School, that they'd grow in their knowledge of God and love for him.
- For Battambang Friends Church, that the Holy Spirit would help them overcome divisions and lead them into greater unity in Christ.

**From Samson and Priscilla Retnaraj
Serving in Nepal**
Praise God...

- The third batch of Discipleship Training in Cha'pur came to a blessed end which had 20 young men and women from the local churches as participants. The last week of the training was an evangelistic outreach in "unreached" areas of Rautahat, during which the trainees and their supervisors encountered many "Sacchai" cult and other false teachers who believe in the "Only God" movement and bravely spoke about the saving power of Jesus' death on the cross for our sin.
- For the successful completion of the Small Business Development Training which had 15 participants from five churches in Rautahat. It was led by Archana Adhikary and Suleman as the main trainers. Two of the trainees were awarded a small start-up grant as their project proposal was chosen as the best in the lot.
- For the full recovery of Arun from all his injuries sustained three months ago. He is slowly regaining the function of his upper right limb which had multiple fractures and was crushed in the accident. It's an absolute miracle!

Please Pray...

- For Sisters Mina and Binda who are playing a significant uniting role among the ladies in the running of the Mahida church with Pastor Ashok. Mina has donated land to build a church in the community. Binda's son attends the Friends Bible College in Kathmandu run by EFCN.
- For the two Vision Seminars that occurred in the last week of June at Simra (Birganj) and Kaalapani (Chitwan). All the participants were members of the local churches and requested our CHE ministry to help in strengthening the church with CHE training.
- For the drought situation in Mudebas and other adjoining areas of the Chepang community living up in the hills of Chitwan. Mudebas church is spearheading an agriculture project and using that as a small business to help their church families. Pastor Dinesh has requested prayers as they struggle this year with shortages of water supply. The local stream and a nearby river have dried up.

**From Pastor Amen Thapa- EFCN
Serving in Nepal**
Praise God...

- For the successful blood drive that took place where the Gospel was shared with many people.
- For the many seminars and public testimonies of baptism that have occurred over the past months.
- For the Kurintar youth camp that took place. The theme was Identity in Christ.

Please Pray...

- For the four new mission fields opening in various districts. Pray also for those whom are struggling with illness.
- For the National Youth Conference, National Women's Conference, and Sunday school training and seminars to be held and also for the speakers/preachers and teachers.
- For the Kathmandu Regional Yearly meetings in Provincial based to be held on September 18-20.

**From Tony and Agi Frei
Serving in Hungary**
Praise God...

- The gypsy conference of Mátészalka was very blessed. I brought five gypsy brothers and sisters there for three days. We received new strength from God.
- We finished another school year again. Our Bible lessons in the primary schools (religious education) were so blessed. We know that we sowed seeds in the hearts of children.
- After many years the leaders of Tolna invited us and our foundation to do handcrafts with the children. It was a local, urban children's day. Some women members from our church participated in this occasion. They were able to get in touch with unbeliever families and gave them testimonies.

Please Pray...

- For our Summertime. We have a lot of programs: children's days, youth camp, etc., so we need God's guidance at all times.
- For Erica. Erica is a new member of our church of Tolna. She is a widow (more than one year) and she is searching for God now. Please, pray for her, that Erica will receive Jesus Christ. She is having major heart surgery next week, so please think of her.
- For our new mission place, Fürged. Fürged is a village next to Ozora. If it is God's will, we can start a new gypsy house group there. Fürge has some opened hearted families.

**From Abe and Diane Bible
Serving in Ukraine**
Praise God...

- Presenting the trauma materials went well and was well received. Months of research were reduced to about 50 pages and translated into Ukrainian. There are already requests for this material from others in Ukraine as we face these issues for years to come and we have very little about counseling on any level and even less on a Christian level. Praise God for this opportunity.
- Many of the Center of Hope leaders are beginning to grasp basic concepts of planning, including how to write a realistic budget. A challenge to them, but a positive step in their development as leaders.
- At least ten people made a public testimony of baptism over the past month. We rejoice as it is the beginning of little "Christ" communities.

Please Pray...

- July will bring another workshop. Attendance was down in June as summer brings other demands. Pray that people will be able to come as they need the fellowship and encouragement of like-minded people as well as training.
- There is a new wave of drafting men for the army. We have a possibility of "losing" our tech guy and Abe's interpreter. These are men in their 40's and 50's. Our prayer (of course) would be that they could continue to work with us. One of our potential leaders was already drafted. Pray that God would give these men the opportunity to serve this way. And if he chooses otherwise, pray that God would give them grace and opportunities to be a light for him wherever they are.
- For the salvation of many in Ukraine. Always more tragedy. Always more suffering. But we have a God who is with us—not far away. How grateful we are that he can use tragedy for his glory!

**From B. and D. A.
Serving in Nepal**
Praise God...

- For new converts being discipled each week so that they can withstand the onslaught of the enemy.

Please Pray...

- Summer has come and it is extremely hot. Even the air blowing is hot. Pray for our pastors and preachers as they travel in this heat to take the gospel.