



**EVANGELICAL FRIENDS MISSION  
LUKE 10 THINK TANK  
SUPPLEMENTAL REPORTS**

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Trip 1 Reports for Gulf Countries, Thailand, Northern India,  
and NE Brazil

# GULF COUNTRIES TRIP 1 SUMMARY

The following is a report that Rusty Savage (EFC-ERC) prepared.



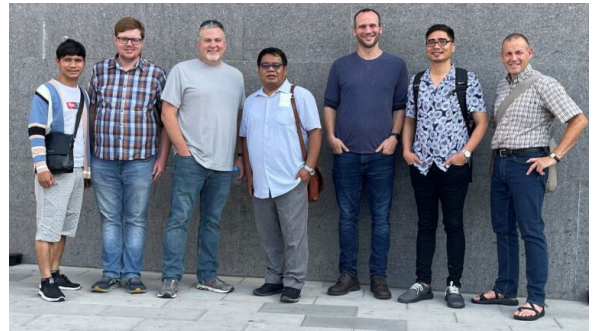
## **Who Was on this Trip?**

The team was made up of: Amen Thapa (EFC-Nepal), Thomas Moore (EFM Short-Term Missionary), Bhakta Tamang (EFC-ER), Mathew Bradbury (EFC-ER) Zach Bohler (EFC-ER), and Rusty Savage (EFC-ER).

## **Where Did We Travel and What is the Need in the Area?**

We visited the city of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates and the city of Doha in Qatar.

Dubai and Doha are home to millions of migrant workers from all over the world. Within these two large cities, immigrants make-up over 90% of the workforce, often laboring in difficult circumstances for very long hours. Most of the workers are separated from their families who remain behind in their home nations.



Among the many ethnic groups who have immigrated to Dubai and Doha in search of economic opportunities is a large population of Nepalese people. Far from home, detached from their families, and often living in difficult conditions, many of these Nepali men and women are searching for community belonging and are uniquely open to hearing the message of the Gospel. In this context, there is a great opportunity to minister to the spiritual, emotional, and relational needs of Nepali migrant workers.

## **Stories and Testimonies**

- Amen Thapa and Mathew Bradbury—the first of our group to arrive in Dubai—were welcomed by Amen’s friend and “disciple,” Roman. He brought Nepalese take out, over which he shared about both his sacrificial partnership in ministry, and the struggles of being away from his wife and children (living in Nepal). Amen shared how Roman has been a strong and faithful brother in first Malaysia and now also in Dubai. Roman is one of over twenty men and women from EFC-Nepal currently living in the UAE.
- Our first night in Dubai, the team met with a home fellowship group of (mostly) Nepali Christians. Made up of young adults, these believers meet each week on the lawn of an apartment complex reading their music and Bibles by flashlight. They welcomed us with tea, food, and warm fellowship. Although they had already put in a very long day of work, these brothers and sisters stayed late into the night to converse and pray with us long after the meeting had ended. Along with the Nepali members, the group also included believers from Uganda, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.



- Pastor Kumar welcomed our team to his small apartment where he hosts one of the many home fellowship groups that make up his church. Kumar planted the very first Nepali-speaking church in Dubai. After training other leaders to take his place, he was sent to plant a second church. His fellowship is especially burdened to reach out to Nepali Christians who have neglected or walked away from their faith since arriving in Dubai.
- From the top of the Burj Khalifa, the world’s tallest building, our team had the opportunity to look out over the massive, ever-expanding skyline of Dubai and pray for the many different peoples who make up this city of 3.5 million people.
- In Doha, the Qatar Nepalese Christian Church (700 members) hosted our team lavishly through a leadership delegation (15+ people) with time, food, and worship. They celebrated 25 years as a church in August and began our time together on Monday by sharing that two people had put their faith in Christ during worship gatherings on Sunday. They have 22 vibrant house churches and a ‘servant leadership team’ of 55.
- Binod, a church deacon in Qatar, who has been working there for 16 years (on annually renewed visas) is working with an Arabic family as their driver. He is informally considered the ‘eldest son’ in the household of 26 (two grandparents, their three sons who are married with children, and their three daughters). Binod verbally witnesses to the loving grace of Jesus, is asked for godly counsel by the grandmother, and prays for them while he lives on their compound – he has favor and is bearing fruit. He says the Nepali church is blessed in Qatar as they work within and reach out to the migrant Nepali community.



## THAILAND TRIP 1 SUMMARY

The following is a report that Scott Calhoun (EFC-ER) prepared.

### **Who Was on this Trip?**

The team was made up of: Ben Kibbe (EFC-ER), Scott Calhoun (EFC-ER), Rusty Savage (EFC-ER Director of Multiplication), Stan Leach (EFM Executive Director), Dan Cammack (EFM Field Director), David Thomas (EFM Missionary, Whole Life Discipleship), Solomon Sangking (The Way Foundation, Thailand), and Charlee Kunakorn (The Way Foundation, Thailand).



### **Where Did We Travel and What is the Need in the Area?**

Our team met in Chiang Mai, Thailand where we were all able to participate in the EFM Worldwide Missionary Gathering before departing for our Luke 10 Exploration Trip destination three hours to the north in Chiang Rai. The city of Chiang Rai is located near the “Golden Triangle” where the borders of Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar meet. Our focus there was on an ethnic minority group known as the Lahu people, who are spread out in each of these nations.





In 2012, EFC-ER sent Ben and Charity Kibbe to Thailand to join a team started by Ben's parents, David and Marilyn Kibbe, and their Lahu ministry partners. In 2016, The Way Foundation was established as an extension of that ministry, focusing on coaching and training Lahu pastors and church planting.

Since that time, led by national workers, Charlee, YawSaPa, and Solomon, The Way Foundation has been praying for and exploring opportunities to expand church planting efforts across the borders of Myanmar and Laos to unreached Lahu villages in those nations. Our Luke 10 team went to Thailand to meet with representatives of The Way Foundation and consider possible opportunities for partnership and collaboration in opening up a new ministry for the Lahu people in Laos and Myanmar.



### Stories and Testimonies

- Our team was welcomed into the home of David and Marilyn Kibbe who have lived and served in Thailand for 30 years. Although David was still recovering from COVID-19, they hosted a gathering for members of The Way Foundation and our Luke 10 Exploration Trip team. We shared a meal and a time of worship together under a beautiful full moon.
- We met a group of church planters from The Way Foundation who are making connections in Lahu villages in northern Thailand with no Christian church at present. The Lahu are divided into several different clans and many of these church planters are ministering to subgroups other than their own.
- Members of our team traveled to three different remote Lahu villages. Ben, Scott, and Rusty spent a night camping in the jungle with several Lahu men from Ja Taw before gathering for worship with the small group of believers there the following morning.
- We heard several testimonies from The Way Foundation leaders, Solomon and Charlee, about contacts they have made with Lahu villages in both Laos and Myanmar. They believe the people in those villages have been very receptive to their efforts. Charlee, Solomon, and their team are deeply committed to expanding ministry outside of Thailand and are anxious to receive coaching and training to help them do it.
- Before leaving, our Luke 10 Team and members of The Way Foundation decided to meet remotely once a month to pray for unreached Lahu people in Laos and Myanmar and continue the conversation about opening new fields in those nations.



## THAILAND TRIP 1 CAN-GO REPORT

Trip Dates: December 4-13, 2022

Written by Scott Calhoun

### C for Champions:

#### Before:

- For over ten years, Ben Kibbe helped establish The Way Foundation in Northern Thailand. This ministry has many areas of discipleship ministry and outreach with a big emphasis on

Church planting. They have the vision now to go into Laos, Myanmar, and China. Ben officially has transitioned from his role as the director/founder of TWF and now lives back in Ohio (he still mentors them from afar). However, TWF is continuing the ministry.

**During:**

- During the trip we discovered that not only TWF staff possesses a vision for church planting but also some of the current Church planters within Thailand.
- Solomon who is over TWF church planting efforts has a vision to plant churches in Laos and has family and other networks within Laos Lahu villages and communities that could be potential sites for future house churches.

**After:**

- Debriefing with the Luke 10 Team we feel that Solomon desires and needs a Church Planting Coach. We would like to develop and find potential candidates to mentor/coach Solomon in this area. This seems to be the next best step in EFM's partnership with TWF and Solomon in the church planting endeavors.

**A for Affirmation:**

**Before:**

- As mentioned before TWF is doing this work already. However, how do we/EFM and the North American Regions want to partner is fuzzy. I do not see us sending "The American" to plant new churches. But partnering with the Lahu people in order to coach/support/aid them in their work.

**During:**

- We sensed that TWF is still going through growing pains in its leadership. With Ben Kibbe handing over leadership TWF is still ironing out roles, gifts, accountability, etc. We do feel that the ministries within Chiang Rai, Thailand are the priority right now simply because it is the need in front of them. Church planting is not fully developed.

**After:**

- We do believe TWF staff, and the local churches and leadership do have the vision to support future church planting efforts within Laos and Myanmar. However, many of them are very consumed with their current ministries in Chiang Rai. I believe TWF needs more coaching and support and new exploratory trips (LUKE 10 type trips) into Laos or Myanmar to affirm their call, location, timing, and strategy. Myanmar is not accessible at this time due to closed borders.

**N for Need:**

**Before:**

- Before this trip, I sensed that Thailand was more open to the Gospel. Laos and Myanmar were much more difficult due to government, geographical, and religious obstacles, Because of that I believed that a "house church" model would work best in Myanmar and Laos.

**During:**

- During my trip, I discovered that I was correct. Myanmar is more open to missions, but it is difficult to cross the border due to civil unrest. Laos is easier to get into, but due to governmental restrictions/control, it is difficult to advance the gospel. For instance, it is challenging even to have mission works disguised as community development because the local government must approve all projects. Therefore, many mission opportunities/church planting efforts are stopped due to Laos government interference and control.

**After:**

- First, I sensed the greatest need to plant churches within Laos. According to the Joshua Project, 76.2% of Laos is considered unreached.
- Secondly, surprisingly the Laos government does allow some Christian Education and Pastoral Training. According to TWF, Laos Christian Education is sorely lacking in producing mature pastors/leaders. TWF has contacts within this school in Vientiane (the capital of Laos), and they have hopes to "re-educate & re-train" graduates from the school and join their church planting team. Since these pastors are from Laos and have been credentialed under the Laos government, they have a greater chance to establish and plant churches.

**G for Gifting:**

The gifting/roles for this church planting effort has already been established through TWF. There are national workers in Northern Thailand who are Lahu. These Lahu missionaries would do most of the planting in Laos/Myanmar. TWF has hired Solomon Sangking as their Multiplication/Church Planting director. Alongside TWF's Director (Charlee) and their missions team, they have been using their connections, gifts, talents, and other resources to take the gospel to Laos and Myanmar. It's not a matter of starting this church planting work. The work has already begun, but we, EFM/EFC-ER, need to decide how to come alongside this church planting movement.

TWF's primary gift is in teaching and discipleship to future pastors and church leadership.

TWF's weakness is in its church planting. Historically there is a mindset of church planting that is very institutional. This affects the strategy and efforts of Church Planting.

**O for Opportunity:****Before:**

- Prior to the trip I really did not know what kind of reception we would receive with the Lahu/Thai people. Ben Kibbe said they were friendly (They were).

**During:**

- Within the TWF the people are truly receptive but also in my opinion are solid believers who are committed to doing ministry within their community of Chiang Rai, Thailand.
- Our team did not travel to Laos, Myanmar, or China during this trip but met with TWF staff to assess the possible partnerships that EFC-ER/EFM could have with TWF.

**After:**

- I was very encouraged to see and meet the TWF staff and hear about their heart to go into new territory to plant churches. We discovered that there had been work done within rural communities in Laos, and their initial contacts have been positive. Solomon is continuing to cultivate these relationships within the communities they have visited. He hopes this will pave the way for future ministry.
- Also, I believe there needs to be more work in exploring how the Government seminary in Vientiane, Laos, could help these small communities continue their discipleship once ministries are established in the Laos villages.
- Charlee's brother is actively church planting in Myanmar. He is with another denomination; however, there could be a potential partnership in the future. He also has WhatsApp teaching and training in the China/Burma border with roughly 13 villages.

## **Is this a CAN GO for EFM at this time?**

**EFM Vision:** I believe that TWF does align with EFM's vision. TWF and Pastor Solomon have intentionally reached the Lahu people within the local Chiang Rai, Thai villages. TWF believes strongly in evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development in order to raise up and send Lahu missionaries within Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, and other regions in SE Asia (*Perhaps China and Vietnam*). In addition, the TWF provides continued guidance and leadership to these church planters.

**EFM Mission:** TWF has a Great Commission mindset and is the anchor for their ministry programs and initiatives.

## **Which of the five criteria do we see the strongest? Which of the five criteria is yet to become convincing?**

**Champion** is the strongest: In my opinion, Solomon Sangking and Charlee Kunakorn of The Way Foundation are the right people for this time, place, and mission. Their leadership and their connections are strong among the Lahu people. Both have friends, relatives, and networks willing to work with them in Laos and Myanmar for future church-planting endeavors. Also, they have already done preliminary work in Laos and plan to renew those connections soon.

**Affirmation** needs to be strengthened: TWF staff and church leaders agree on the need, value, and scriptural mandate to make disciples who make disciples. Many are in favor of moving forward to send missionaries into new territories. This is positive; however, many of the current staff with TWF outside of Solomon are not ready themselves. This may be due to their present ministry in Chiang Rai, Thailand. I believe this could cause TWF to give more attention to reaching, training, and equipping Lahu people within Laos/Myanmar to become church planters. TWF has developed a curriculum (PET) that can equip and train future church leaders; however, there needs to be more clarity on how this material can be utilized. More work needs to be done in this area about how, when, and where TWF education/discipleship material can be implemented.

## **Describe key points or stories in the process and affirmation/confirmation of God's call to Evangelical Friends to go to this particular people or place.**

**Current Ministry:** TWF sees itself as an Evangelical Friends Movement already. Ben Kibbe and his team continue to be supported by EFM/EFC-ER. The church planting efforts are not waiting on EFM to move forward. This is an ongoing church planting work with or without us. However, what is exciting is that they are seeking EFM to join them further in this work. It is a "you can do it" and "we can help" scenario. Now is the time for TWF and EFM to pray to determine how we can best partner and complement this church planting work.

**Church Planting Coach:** As we met with TWF, we discovered that Solomon Sangking (over church planting) desires to be mentored and coached in this role. Solomon sees the benefit of the D4D coaching within TWF Chiang Rai ministries. Our Luke 10 team resonated with this idea and can see this benefit for EFM church planting efforts in Southeast Asia and other locations where EFM uses national workers as missionaries and church planters. We are praying that in time we can implement this Church Planting Coaching system that honor strong relational and culturally sensitive coach.

**Need:** As mentioned before, in the Joshua Project, 76.2% of Laos is considered unreached. Combine that with the Laos government's involvement in their culture — planting churches is sorely lacking yet

highly needed. It is exciting to dream with the TWF team and consider what these mission efforts could look like with all of their connections within Laos.

**National Workers Owning Ministry:** LUKE 10 Initiative aims to send ten new missionary families and launch five new fields by 2025. The great thing about this location is that national workers (not sent from North America) are already doing wonderful ministry in Chiang Rai, Thailand. TWF offers a solid network, resources, training, and accountability. Also, TWF sees itself as a part/or extension of The Evangelical Friends Movement. This work already has excellent support within Chiang Rai, Thailand, and as they expand the church planting efforts into new locations, TWF will offer guidance and support to future missionaries. It's not just our work from North America. It's their work, and they own it! Is this not what we desire to happen in global missions? We must now consider how we position ourselves to help aid in the process of TWF planting new churches.

**D4D Ministry History:** TWF has partnered with D4D ministries (David Thomas) and He can affirm the strength of the team and their foundational strategies for long-term church planting. As the team works towards planting churches beyond Thailand, I believe coaching and mentoring will aid them in this process. Secondly, the partnership of the D4D in their new mission fields/church planting will be exponentially more effective for the Kingdom.

**What steps have you taken since returning from the trip or need to take in further discernment or exploration of this field?**

First, we are grateful for EFM and EFC-ER continuing to support the current work in Chiang Rai, Thailand.

Secondly, the Luke 10 SE Asia Team is continuing our conversations with Solomon Sangking and Charlee Kunakorn via Zoom on an ongoing basis. In these conversations, we hope to refine further what a Church Planting Coach role could look like in Southeast Asia. Also, get updated reports from their work in Laos as well creating a culture of prayer.

Third, we need to identify a Church Planting Coach alongside EFM for Solomon. We also need to develop a Church Planting Coach job description that we believe will guide the coaching, goals, and outcomes.

Fourth, we desire to bring TWF representatives/staff to EFC-ER in order to build relationships and cast a vision for LUKE 10 and missions work in Thailand.

Lastly, I believe there needs to be more investigation or another LUKE 10-type trip(s) in Laos. As they make these trips, I believe Solomon and TWF can present a clearer vision, reason, location, and timing for church planting. In other words, TWF can give its own version of a CAN GO presentation to EFM. I do not think it has to involve a traditional Luke 10 Team going again. Instead, I recommend a small team that involves TWF and possibly the Church Planting Coach. This also could be with Ben Kibbe.

#### **Luke 10 Team Recommendation to EFM**

We are in favor of moving forward in our partnership with TWF's discipleship movement in Laos. This discipleship approach allows them to establish works that will lead TWF and EFM to establish future Laos churches.



Other Suggestions: We would desire for TWF to send their own "LUKE 10" type trips to Laos. As they make these trips, we believe Solomon and TWF can present a clearer vision, reason, location, and timing for church planting.

Also, we recommend EFM needs to identify a Church Planting Coach for Solomon.

## NORTHERN INDIA TRIP 1 SUMMARY

The following is a report that Eric Dale from Indiana Yearly Meeting prepared.

### **Who Was on this Trip?**

The team was made up of: Keith Huffman (IYM), Robin Huffman (IYM), Roy Jones (IYM), Eric Dale (IYM), Arun Massey (EFM National Leader in India), and D.K. and Choity Sarkar (EFM National Leaders in India).

### **Where Did We Travel and What is the Need in the Area?**

Despite centuries of missionary endeavors, the need for the gospel in India remains astounding. According to the Joshua Project, over 90% of India's people (approximately 1.3 billion people) belong to an unreached people group. This represents over 1/3 of the world's approximately 3.3 billion unreached people. In addition, there remain roughly 1,900 people groups in India identified as frontier people groups, with virtually no followers of Jesus, and still requiring pioneering cross-cultural workers.

Our team focused on northern India, which has relatively fewer Christians than southern India. Our team gathered together in Delhi, India, in an old area of the city known as Mehrauli. We had originally planned to travel from Delhi to Uttarakhand, but heightened persecution and monitoring led us to change our plans. In the end, we spent several days in Delhi filled with a rich variety of meetings. Our connections included over a dozen ex-pat workers from various areas of northern India, Indian pastors of Friends churches from Uttarakhand and Delhi, a legal team from the central office of India's Alliance Defending Freedom, and Indian workers for an organization doing discipleship and small business training amongst a variety of groups across India. After a short time in Agra, we concluded our trip by traveling to Trivandrum and joining the conference of Evangelical Friends Church – India, where we were able to connect with Friends leaders and pastors from across India.



## Key Trip Moments

We were amazed by the breadth and the sheer number of connections that God helped make for our team. It was clear to our team that God helped orchestrate not only which connections we made, but even the order of those meetings. That process began even before departure, at the Urbana Missions conference, through connecting to a Western worker operating a language school in Delhi. This language school proved to be a missionary hub, enabling us to connect to an amazing number of people in a short period of time. Our meeting with ADF also had the mark of a divine connection – bringing Arun unknowingly into the office of the organization which had provided him with extensive assistance during previous periods of persecution and initiating a new collaborative relationship with the Sarkars.



We also had the joy of worshipping together with a new Friends church in Delhi. Perhaps most significantly, we spent hours upon hours with leaders of the persecuted church. These individuals had experienced being disowned by their families, shunned from their villages, arrested, and even beaten. Daily they choose to work under the threat of various forms of persecution for the name of Jesus. Yet, rather than discouragement, we witnessed confidence that God was at work, excitement at the growth of the church, reports of miracles, and a sense that the church was coming together in a new way in response to the increased challenges. Many times, we were asked to pray, but never once were we asked to pray persecution would end. Rather, we were asked to pray for continued strength and faithfulness. Let us join together in this type of prayer for India, and workers across the world facing similar challenges. May we be emboldened and encouraged by their stories!



## NORTHERN INDIA TRIP 1 CAN-GO REPORT

Trip Dates: February 20 – March 3, 2023

Written by Eric Dale

### C for Champions:

#### Before:

- Roy and Irene Jones, Keith and Robin Huffman, Eric Fleck
- Morningstar Friends Church
- Wabash Friends Church
- EFCI – Asia, workers within India
- We were not aware of any individuals/families within Evangelical Friends sensing a specific call to India.
- Luke 10 Prayer meeting participants – David Thomas, Dave and Cindy Aufrance, Bhim and Priscilla Rai

#### During:

- IYM churches (Hemlock, Bear Creek, Farmland, Georgetown, Amboy) Hardin's Creek
- Luke 10 prayer group

- Our team lacked any individual sensing a specific call to Northern India, or anyone previously identified as a “future missionary”.
- We met several expat workers living out a call to India. They were at various stages in work there – from 1<sup>st</sup> year exploring/discerning their specific role/call, to medical professionals, to workers there on business visas for the past 4-12 years. They might be considered champions for work in India in general but without EFM connections.
- EFC – India leaders, Global Disciples workers

**After:**

- Same as above – no new champions have been identified post-trip as of this report

**A for Affirmation:**

**Before:**

- Several within IYM felt a conviction that more workers must be sent to India, but we also heard some reservations regarding Western workers due to issues of strategy, safety/sensitivity, and competition for resources. There was an affirmation of the importance of work in India, but hesitation regarding the West sending westerners. This contributed to the later launch of this Luke 10 trip.
- Arun Massey affirmed moving forward with the Luke 10 process on a Zoom meeting with Eric Dale, Keith Huffman, Roy Jones, and Matt Macy. This meeting was instrumental in IYM moving forward with the Luke 10 trip. DK and Choity Sarkar fully joined in the Luke 10 process soon after as team members.
- We also had a Zoom meeting with the Linvilles, listening to their story, perspective, advice, and suggestions.

**During:**

- We invested our time heavily in learning from current workers. We had 4 days of meetings in Dehli with a broad collection of both ex-pat workers and national workers. We connected with a language school in Dehli catering largely to ex-pat workers. Through that connection, we gained access to a large number of Western workers. We had a dinner meeting with over a dozen workers. That was followed by more extended individual meetings with 2 individuals and 1 family. In that group, workers were present almost exclusively on business visas. We had an opportunity to hear their stories, learn about ministry strategies, hear of struggles, and listen to advice. It was noteworthy to the team that despite the considerable commitment, sacrifice, and holistic ministry of these individuals, stories of conversion to following Christ were lacking.
- The individual meetings included a worker with Navigators operating the language school, a family known to the Linvilles in their 1st year on the field and seeking to discern their role and place in India, and an optometrist working with EHA Hospital in Uttarkhand.
- We also met with all EFC-India leaders, pastors Om Prakash and Raj Chand from Uttarkhand, Pastor Stephen Rai, a legal team from ADF (Alliance Defending Freedom) – India, and coordinators working for Global Disciples amongst several groups across India. We also attended a Friends Church in Delhi, meeting briefly with members following the service.
- Amongst nationals, affirmation of sending from the West was lacking. Rather, clear cautions were received. The legal team of ADF even issued explicit guidance/advice not to send from the West. A similar perspective, though less strongly stated, came from the cross-denominational workers we met.

- Invitations and encouragement to come were received during some meetings with Western workers, including a specific invite from an optometrist in Uttarkhand to Eric Dale to come and assist with work there.
- Clear, strong affirmation was received from multiple groups for a focus on same-culture or near-cultural workers (as opposed to Western workers) for reasons of strategy, persecution, and potential adverse effects of Western presence.
- At the same time, the team saw clearly the hearts of some Western workers, and there was recognition of God's call in their lives and their love for the people of India.
- Synthesizing this, during the trip, the team perceived a lack of affirmation for Westerners sending Westerners. Yet at the same time, there was recognition that God may still call some Westerners counter to this general strategy.

**After:**

The lack of affirmation along with the clear counsel against the presence of Western workers significantly impacted our team. Optimism, or even expectation amongst some that Westerners sending Westerners would eventually arise from this trip was replaced by unity in the perception that we should not identify the West sending Westerners as the current primary strategy, focus, or priority within the context of Northern India. It was the perception of the team, however, that we should remain open to the possibility God may call an individual counter to this strategy. If such a person arises within the EFM community, or if Friends in India begins a new work, and sees Westerners as potentially valuable members of a ministry team, these possibilities should be explored further. Also, Eric remains in contact with the optometrist in Uttarkhand and will explore the possibility of a follow-up visit with him.

**N for Need:**

**Before:**

The need within India is clearly compelling. Despite centuries of missionary endeavors, the need for the gospel in India remains astounding. According to the Joshua Project, over 90% of India's people (approximately 1.3 billion people) belong to an unreached people group. This represents over 1/3 of the world's approximately 3.3 billion unreached peoples. In addition, there remain roughly 1900 people groups in India identified as frontier people groups, with virtually no followers of Jesus, and still requiring pioneering cross-cultural workers. Furthermore, India continues to experience rapid population growth and has surpassed China as the most populous nation in the world. Generally speaking, higher percentages of Christians live in the more southern states of India, while the northern states have the lowest percentage of Christians.

**During:**

In addition to the above general need, during the trip, we heard from multiple Indian leaders about the need to reach specifically young, educated, professional class in the urban setting. Many ministries focus on more impoverished populations, while relatively fewer target this group.

**After:**

The needs described above are tremendous. Specifically, our attention was drawn to the urban, young, educated middle class. In contrast, prior to the trip, a people-group focus characterized the thinking of the team.

## G for Gifting:

### Before:

Bhim and Priscilla Rai have shown some interest but later felt led not to pursue it. We were not aware of any individuals within IYM or the current EFM future missionary pool sensing a specific call to India.

### During:

- For a Western worker to remain long-term, we came to understand they would need to obtain a business or medical visa or marry an Indian national (probably not a proper sending strategy!)
- A Western worker would likely need to be either a medical professional or someone with the interest and ability to operate a business. Western workers would likely be more readily accepted/experience less suspicion in an urban setting, as opposed to rural villages. Many young people we encountered were quite excited to take photos with our team (particularly Robin!). ESL to young, educated professionals may be one future possibility.
- The legal team from ADF cautioned us that the presence of Western workers may feed into the current narrative of Christianity as a “foreign” religion, and could be potentially counterproductive for this reason, as well as creating suspicion and unwanted attention from authorities. For example, we were forced to alter our plans and avoid meetings in Uttarkhand and visit an EHA hospital due to fears our presence would bring attention and persecution from authorities in those places. Arrests and termination of services at EHA facilities were happening during our trip, and police were interrogating patients regarding any attempts to “convert” them while they received care.
- Our time in India ended at the EFC- India, All-India Gathering. It seemed noteworthy that we were surrounded by pastors and leaders who themselves were quite gifted in reaching the people around them, and also worked with others similarly gifted.

### After:

- Fruitful ministry would likely require a cross-cultural team including national (same- or near-cultural workers). A Westerner operating a business beneficial to the community, which also provided context for ministry and/or employment for national workers, would be one potential model. While it remains possible to see disciple-making with a Western family only, it is more challenging than at times in the past due to the current restrictive environment and visa restrictions. Western workers are at risk for expulsion from the country for any action categorized as evangelism or “conversion.” It is possible, of course, for the Western worker to disciple a new convert into a partner role. But a partnership approach from the outset involving national workers, similar to that in which Choity is involved in Kolkata in the red light district, would likely lead to more rapid and effective work. It seems significant, however, that association with a Western worker may lead to suspicion or unwanted attention in some contexts, and may actually become a hindrance to ministry efforts.
- A non-Caucasian worker, particularly a worker of Indian descent, may be better able to avoid some of the potential religious and political challenges associated with Caucasian workers.
- The conclusion of the team was that, at the current time, long-term Western workers bring challenges that may make them more of a hindrance, rather than an aid to ministry efforts. This is a generalization with exceptions. Generally speaking, however, Westerners do not, at this time, seem to be the best candidates for pioneer work in Northern India. The role of mobilizing/equipping national workers seems a more viable role at present, and could possibly be accomplished through short-term and/or remote work.



## O for Opportunity:

### Before:

- Some in our team experienced frustration in response to caution not to evangelize or openly pray with people in public. Arun, DK, and Choity shared multiple stories of persecution. They advised the team to alter their itinerary due to heightened persecution and observation by authorities in some regions where the team had planned to visit. The team agreed this change in plans was wise in order to avoid jeopardizing both the safety of workers in those places and their ability to persist in their work.
- We experienced multiple warm connections and invitations from both national and ex-pat workers for meetings/visits.

### During:

- During the trip, Eric received a specific invitation from the optometrist from Uttarkhand to visit and assist in the work. Eric is continuing to explore this possibility. We were also welcomed to send students to the language school in Dehli.
- Our attention during the trip was also drawn to the ministry opportunities with immigrant families, both within India and outside of India. We heard from multiple groups how the resistance of different groups to the gospel decreased when they moved from their home villages to another area. With that move, the threat of persecution from their family and home villages diminished, and they generally became more open to hearing and responding to the gospel. Urban settings, as opposed to more rural village settings, may also offer greater opportunity/decreased societal pressure against sharing and receiving the gospel.
- In addition, during plane travel, the team easily connected with the openness of immigrant families encountered during travel. We were quickly able to engage and exchange contact information with a Sikh from Indianapolis visiting his family in Punjab for a wedding. Robin also spent considerable time in spiritual conversation with a Muslim woman from Bangladesh, exploring the Bible with her. This experience seemed to stand in contrast with the remainder of our trip when caution and restraint dominated our interactions.
- Eric also had an experience (see stories below) that may be an affirmation of a refocus upon immigrant populations.
- As mentioned above, our time in India ended at the EFC- India, All-India Gathering. It seemed noteworthy that we were surrounded by pastors and leaders who themselves were quite gifted in reaching the people around them. To our team, the most significant opportunity currently would seem to be mobilization and equipping of these Indian Friends leaders and pastors.

### After:

- Is there a new work on the hearts of Friends in India? Let us consider this. How can we catalyze that work? What potential role (short-term or remote) might be helpful?
- Should we, at the present time, refocus upon immigrant communities outside of India? Should we refocus Luke 10 on immigrant communities in the US, Canada, the UK, or other English-speaking nations specifically?
- Morningstar Friends is hiring Arun Massey to help plant an Indian church in the Cleveland area. This could become a strategic church plant in regard to sending/supporting closer cultural workers back into Northern India.

## Is this a CAN GO for EFM at this time?

Church-planting work in Northern India would fully align with EFM's mission and vision. In this context, where the threat of persecution is significant, there is constant testing of the heart to seek first the

kingdom. We now have faithful Friends churches in India, but to more fully align with EFM's vision, it seems there is yet work to be done in the areas of sustainability and missions-sending. Strengthening and mobilization of Indian leaders and churches may be a strategic step toward these goals.

**Which of the five criteria do we see the strongest? Which of the five criteria is yet to become convincing?**

Need is the strongest. Affirmation, along with opportunity and gifting (when considering Western workers) are weak at this time.

**Describe key points or stories in the process and affirmation/confirmation of God's call to Evangelical Friends to go to this particular people or place.**

Opposition, and the threat of persecution, is constantly looming over Indian believer. But the Kingdom of God continues to advance. We spent hours upon hours with leaders of the persecuted church. These individuals had experienced being disowned by their families, shunned from their villages, arrests, and even beatings. Daily they choose to work under the threat of various forms of persecution for the name of Jesus. Yet, rather than discouragement, we witnessed confidence that God was at work, excitement at the growth of the church, reports of miracles, and a sense that the church was coming together in a new way in response to the increased challenges. Many times we were asked to pray, but never once were we asked to pray persecution would end. Rather, we were asked to pray for continued strength and faithfulness. There is much to celebrate in the faithfulness of Indian Friends.

Our meeting with the legal team of ADF (Alliance Defending Freedom) – India was an inflection point in the trip. Our meeting with ADF had the mark of a divine connection – bringing Arun unknowingly into the office of the organization which had provided him with extensive assistance during previous periods of persecution, and initiating a new collaborative relationship with the Sarkars. Arun asked in the midst of the meeting, “How did you get us a meeting here?!” The Sarkars were unaware of ADF and were eager to know of their potential assistance to pastors facing legal problems related to anti-conversion laws, made plans to provide ADF training for their pastors, and were quite grateful for the connection. The head of the ADF legal team observed, “Isn't it interesting that it took these friends coming all the way from the US to connect us here in India?”

The ADF legal team was able to provide us with an informed perspective on the state of the church in various places in India, the political climate, contextual challenges, and some expectations regarding the future. They spoke rather strongly regarding Western workers in India at this time, sharing explicit recommendations that we do not send workers at this time. They also shared the expectation that foreign funds into India would be further restricted, and achieving sustainability for existing ministries was critical. We left the meeting unified in a perception that sending to Northern India was not being affirmed, and feeling redirected towards empowering/mobilizing existing Friends.

Our attention was turned to the opportunity with the Indian diaspora. The increased receptivity immigrant communities often have towards the gospel was pointed out to us during the trip. As mentioned above, our team members, most notably Robin, experienced this in a personal way during travel. On the final day of our time in India, Eric experienced an event that also seemed to be God directing us to pay attention to the diaspora populations. Keith and Eric were eating dinner together in the hotel restaurant in Trivandrum. As they walked out of the restaurant, Eric's eyes were drawn to the hotel magazine rack, which held a single, solitary magazine. On the cover was a picture of an Afghan refugee personally known to Eric, who had hosted Eric and his family in her home, and had also come to Eric's home to share a meal and an afternoon. The magazine was over 1 year old. What are the odds of this hotel in Trivandrum having a single-year-old magazine on the shelf that just happens to

have an immigrant on the cover that Eric knows? It seemed that God was saying, quite literally at that moment, "Look at the unreached immigrants all around us."

**What steps have you taken since returning from the trip or need to take in further discernment or exploration of this field?**

- Develop prayer and discernment groups within IYM to explore a possible refocus of Luke 10 upon a specific immigrant group/place.
- Engagement of appropriate IYM committees to begin to explore how God may be leading IYM to reach the Indian population, in Indiana or otherwise.
- Engage in dialogue with Indian church leaders and EFM leadership regarding possibilities for cross-cultural partnerships with a goal of strengthening and mobilizing Indian Friends leaders and churches.
- Within IYM, foster and encourage creative ways of participating in what God is doing in India.

**Luke 10 Team Recommendation to EFM**

It is the recommendation of this team that the Luke 10 process in Northern India be paused. This recommendation stems primarily from the lack of affirmation regarding western sending of Western workers and the barriers faced by Western workers, as outlined above. We would recommend the Luke 10 process be resumed in Northern India in any of the following circumstances:

1. A qualified individual within the EFM community believes they are experiencing a specific call to India. Such a person would likely need to be either interested and able to operate a business or able to obtain a medical service visa. Alternatively, an immigrant from India to the US who sought to return would be a good candidate.
2. EFC-India develops a plan to launch a new work (perhaps in conjunction with EFM), and it is deemed that the presence of a Western worker as part of a cross-cultural team would strengthen the ministry plan.
3. Factors currently leading to the lack of affirmation of Western workers (such as visa restrictions, increased risk for unwanted attention/persecution, etc.) changed in a significant way.
4. In the launch of any new work, special consideration should be given to the demographic of young professionals in an urban setting.

Despite this recommendation, the need remains astounding, as previously described. This is true both within India and amongst the Indian diaspora. Therefore, it is the recommendation of this team that a plan for partnership with Indian Friends might be developed, with the goals of increasing sustainability and cross-cultural missions sent out of Indian Friends churches. The proposed collaboration with Global Disciples may be an important part of this partnership plan. It is the opinion of this team that partnership with existing Indian Friends churches is currently the best strategy for achieving EFM's mission and vision in the context of Northern India.

Secondly, it is the recommendation of this team that the Luke 10 process for Northern India be refocused upon the Indian diaspora in the US, UK, Canada, or other English-speaking nations.

## NORTHEAST BRAZIL TRIP 1 SUMMARY

The following is a report that Cassi Coleman from Rocky Mountain Yearly Meeting prepared.

### **Who Was on this Trip?**

The team was made up of: Patrick Neifert (RMYM), Phil Burgi (RMYM), Cassi Coleman (RMYM), Frank Penna (World Renewal), and Dan Cammack (EFM Field Director).



### **Where Did We Travel?**

We landed in Recife, a large city on the coast, and traveled to Carpina, where the headquarters of World Renewal Brazil (Alcance, Brazil) are located. We were able to travel to twelve churches and ministries in the surrounding areas over the first four days, and we saw how God has been moving and working over the last 30 years with World Renewal! Tele Moraes oversees the work there and the World Renewal Team has a goal to plant 200 churches by 2050. There are many young people, couples, women, and children involved in these ministries!



Our group expanded to include John Snow (World Renewal), Wilson Barbosa (Brazilian missionary from Recife and translator), Roberto Goncalves (teacher at the International School and our photographer), and Ricardo Martin our dependable driver (who accepted Christ on our trip!)



We traveled away from the coast towards the interior about 500 km to Mirandiba (Sertão area). The number of evangelical Christians decreases the farther away from the coast you are. In Mirandiba and Sousa the number of evangelical Christians is less than one percent.

In the final days of our trip, the team traveled to Sousa and met Flavio and Mercia Travassos in Boa Esperanca. They are Brazilian missionaries from the Carpina area and have been serving there since 2020. The ministry here is predominantly with women and children. They also have a Living Stones project here. The men of this area leave to go work for months at a time and do not stay long when they return.



### **What Did We See and What is the Need in the Area?**

- The Living Stones project is an example of how education for children can evangelize and disciple both the children and their parents. The children attend while they are not in school for part of the day and learn reading, writing, math, and Biblical principles through character development.

- The World Renewal ABA (Alcance Brazil Acampamento) camp near Carpina is a great location for summer camp and sports ministries for children and young adults. There is also a recycling business located at the camp that helps allow these ministries to be somewhat self-sustainable.
- The International School in Carpina houses the World Renewal headquarters. The 150+ students learn character development and Biblical principles as they go to school here! There is an immediate need at the International School for teachers and staff.
- The ministries established here could serve as a training ground for church planting for future missionaries! Evangelism, discipleship, and church planting are the main focuses of the ministries in this area!
- Pastor Joel and his wife Angelica are missionaries from São Paulo, Brazil to two different people groups. Mirandiba has approximately 15,000 people and 80% are Quilombola. Quilombos are descendants of former slaves who rejected slavery. There is a great need among these people to establish their own schools, hospitals/clinics, churches, and businesses, as they are generally discriminated against. There is also a need for very basic things such as food and water in many of these areas.
- The team was able to visit a tribal group called the Atikum. We met with three little girls at their home on a mountainside and the Holy Spirit was very evident in that place! Pastor Joel had previously prayed with their father for healing of an untreatable abdominal condition, and he was healed! AMEN! He came to know Jesus and his family are now also believers! We were able to hear the story from the father!
- Overall, the team was received with open arms, lots of hugs, and receptivity to the Gospel. As a team, we felt our times of prayer, good conversation, and simply being present at their ministry sites were a real blessing and provided much encouragement in each place we visited. The need is great, but the workers are few!



## NORTHEAST BRAZIL TRIP 1 CAN-GO REPORT

Trip Dates: March 11-21, 2023

Written by Phil Burgi

### **C for Champion**

Tele Moraes, Frank Penna, Patrick Neifert, Cassi Coleman for the women and children, RMYM could become a champion for this mission field, Rachel Ferguson with World Renewal, Pastor Joel and Angelica in Mirandiba.



### **A for Affirmation**

Living Stones ministries, World Renewal, Pastor Joel, Pastor Flavio, Pastor Bruno, Johnathan (a teacher at the international school) who has targeted Sertão area of Brazil as an unevangelized field, Cleber with VRE (who helps build homes and wells for communities who need them most), Ricardo Martin's our driver's salvation on our trip.

### **N for Compelling Need**

The percentage of evangelical Christians in the Sertão is less than 1%. The Quilombola people number 1,587,000 and are only recorded in Brazil. 55% Christianity and less than 1% evangelical Christianity. They are descendants of slaves and generally are discriminated against and live in extreme poverty in some areas.

The indigenous Indian tribe the Atikum. This group numbers 8,000. 10% Christian and less than 1% evangelical Christian.

### **G for Gifting**

Someone who is resourceful and possibly has basic medical training. Excellent in language learning and speaking, Bible knowledge and teaching, prayer, and intimacy with the Holy Spirit. Someone with a holistic mindset who can identify needs, perseverance, teaching and educational skills, evangelism, and discipleship. Someone who can help people build ownership through human development and creativity.

How many people will it take to begin a pioneer here: 2 or 3 couples. 2 singles. 1 single and 1 family. They do not need to all be from the United States! Brazilians or from other countries as well!

### **O for Opportunity**

YES! There are opportunities to learn Portuguese and the people, teach English or another subject the candidate is knowledgeable in at the International School in Carpina. This could also serve as a time to learn from local leaders about evangelism, outreach, discipleship, church planting and missions work with other missionaries already here. A "missionary training field." There are three Friends churches established in the Carpina area already.

More opportunity is also seen in Mirandiba with the Quilombola people group and the Atikum tribe. There are also opportunities in Sousa (a bigger city.) There is definitely an openness and even invitations to come and join in ministry together!