



# Evangelical Friends Mission

## May 2024 Prayer Letter

www.friendsmission.com  
efm@friendsmission.com  
303.421.8100

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 | Whole-Life Discipleship

Have you ever asked what your ROI, your “return on investment,” will be? As missionaries Debby and I invested twenty years of our lives in Rwanda, and many of you invested prayers and financial support right alongside us. What is our ROI for that twenty-plus-year investment?



I got to visit Rwanda this past January, and I was amazed to see how much has changed in the culture of our Friends churches over time. I remember as a young missionary in the late 1990s and early 2000s how church leaders would come to me asking for help. Some couldn’t pay for their kids’ school fees. Others couldn’t pay for family medical expenses. I remember some of their children dying from things like malaria. Most didn’t own their own homes. Many leaders felt it was the responsibility of the mission and the national church to provide for their needs. This was a weight beyond the resources of our family, the church, or EFM. It was too heavy for me to carry.

On this trip, I noticed how much has changed over the years. With a deep trust in God and a “nitwe tubikora (we will do it)” mentality, Rwandans have taken responsibility for overcoming many of the barriers they faced. Many leaders have bought land and built their own homes. Three pastors showed me the land they bought and thousands of trees they’ve planted for their retirement. I got to talk with our superintendent Aaron Mupenda whose leadership in the last ten years has been instrumental in helping stabilize the church and pastors in particular. Every pastoral family now has quality health insurance. Most have some stable income from the church and also have family businesses to supplement this income. Many leaders are saving together, as well as loaning to each other.



Our Discipling for Development leaders actively demonstrate homes and lives that steward well the resources they have been given. Groups of leaders from the denomination’s executive council down to local savings groups meet together regularly encouraging each other to follow through on their families’ holistic, personal development plans.

Pastor Gerard took us around the countryside within miles of his church of Rugarama, where we toured four new church buildings. Pastor Vincent with his wife Bernadette of Burera Friends invited us into their new home. They have six children, four in high school and two in university. They pay for all of them to study! He is a farmer and an amazing pastor motivating others to follow his example, and stewarding well all God has given them.

What is our ROI (Return on Investment)? From my vantage point, from this recent trip, as my Dad says, “it is the normalness of God’s kingdom,” which is “way beyond all we could ask or imagine (Eph 3:21)!”

As we look forward, what an amazing privilege we now have to invest in future mission fields through our Luke 10 Initiative through prayer, time, and finances! Rwanda is now one of our partner yearly meetings actively planning to send missionaries to South Sudan, and we might have the privilege of partnering with them in this venture! Our ROI from past investments keeps on growing, and the ROI in our current and future Luke 10 Initiatives is full of potential.



*“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!” Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21*

David Thomas

## From the EFM Office

### *Praise God...*

- For progress that the EFM staff is making on a number of projects. We feel blessed to be on this team.
- For the strength of EFM's financial position at the close of the first quarter of the year.
- For the Missionary Care Teams that are being developed for each of our missionary households. The one just formed for David and Tricia Howell is off and running!

### *Please Pray...*

- For Samson and Priscilla Retnaraj as they wind up their deputation and return to Asia.
- For the Brad and Chelsea Carpenter family as they arrive to the US for deputation.
- For the Multinational Missionary Teams Study Group Retreat taking place in Denver, Colorado, April 30-May 2. Missions leaders from several of our regions/yearly meetings are gathering in Denver to continue learning about best practices for teams composed of members from more than one country.
- For the EFM Board meetings taking place at the Quaker Ridge Camp and Conference Center in Colorado on May 30 and 31.

## 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 approval of Fred and Jonelle Liddell and their two children by the EFM Board as missionaries. They are now starting to raise prayer and financial support while based near Sequim, Washington.
- For those who are actively exploring whether God is calling them to serve him as missionaries through EFM. May their number increase!
- That he continues to stir hearts in sister yearly meetings around the world to send missionaries.

### *Please Pray...*

- For the Lord of the harvest to send more workers into the harvest fields.
- For Erik Nilsen, Garry Norton, and Grace Anderson as they continue their apprenticeship through the North County Project in Southern California. They are learning how to be disciples and make disciples of Jesus Christ as he commanded us to be and do.
- For the Multinational Missionary Teams Study Group Retreat mentioned above.
- For the Future Missionary Retreat that will be held at Quaker Ridge Camp and Conference Center in Colorado May 27-30. Pray that those that the Lord of the harvest wants to have there will be there.

**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 at <https://friendsmission.com/five-year-goal-pray/>.

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

### *Praise God...*

- Our Bhutan trip went well. The people of the church were revived. They were following some kind of local belief but now they understand the verses of the Bible.
- Our fiscal year was completed in March 2024, and we could send the accounts to the auditor.
- After the Bhutan trip I was very tired but now feel much better. Praise the Lord.

### *Please Pray...*

- Our founder, Mrs. Surangini Halder, is very sick and bedridden. She is ready to go to the Lord.
- We have reshuffled two of our workers. Pray for their new assignments.
- We are currently raising funds for a projector and appreciate your prayers and support for it.

## From David Thomas EFM Whole-Life Discipleship

### *Please Pray... (Thailand)*

- For Scott Purser and Ronald Mazune as they prepare to travel to Thailand in June. Pray they will be able to help our Lahu D4D leaders to understand the "Problem-Solving Process", to develop a curriculum around it, and to facilitate in such a way that the community members are empowered to work through their problems. Among our JaSoPa village church's priority topics are healthy marriages, financial stewardship, unity in the church, and having a healthy, clean, and trash-free village environment. Pray for them to develop good discipleship curriculum in these areas, resulting in practical steps and holistic transformation!
- For our Thailand Lahu Way Foundation team to be full of grace and unity. Pray for Chalee's leadership as he seeks to guide the foundation. Pray for our D4D team, Yosapa, and Mana to learn to work well together. Also, pray for favor and blessing in the eyes of Achi Po and Jason our translators. Pray for mega grace to be poured out on this team, and for their coaching JaSoPa in the next two years to bear significant fruit!

### *Please Pray... (Bolivia)*

- For our Bolivia Discipling for Development work, pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance as leaders in INELA (Friends) and the UCE denominations choose leaders for our D4D coaches to mentor in the next few years. Pray for leaders who are faithful, available, teachable, and able to teach others as well. Pray for leaders who can work well together as they learn about whole-life discipleship and put it into practice in their lives and in a few pilot churches in their denominations.

## From Samson and Priscilla Retnaraj Serving in Nepal

### *Praise God...*

- The court case that Arun our CHE Trainer had to go through after his motorcycle accident a year ago, has come to an end and he is absolved of all charges. He is slowly but miraculously recovering the function of his right upper limb which was crushed during the accident.
- The blood donation camp was successfully held by Rautahat CLC and many government officials and important persons from Cha'pur attended. Some met Solomon and Asha on the same day and expressed a desire to become a member of their CLC seeing the good work done.
- The youth and women are undergoing CHE and WCL training in Chitwan organized by Gokarna, leader of the CLC. The lessons were taught by Nirmala and Parwati both health workers who trained locally two years ago.

### *Please Pray...*

- RaMaya of Jhurjhure Chitwan has been diagnosed with colon cancer and her condition is deteriorating fast. She did not care for it seriously enough when she first showed symptoms. Her family and Jhurjhure Chitwan church are standing with her during these painful and difficult days, and we ask all to pray.
- Narayan, our CHE Trainer's father in Bardiya, is 92 years old and is extremely weak and now unable to move around. He can barely move out of his bed and has not been eating well. The Tapara fellowship comes around him to pray for him regularly and encourage him during these trying times. Their business has been affected much but the children Roshini and Rhithm continue going to school regularly.
- Prateek is graduating from college in April with psychology as a major. Please pray that he gets the right options to make up his mind about future studies and a job as a counselor.

**From Pastor Amen Thapa- EFC Nepal  
Serving in Nepal**

***Praise God...***

- For the Prayer Movement which included 60, 40, 20, and 10 days of fasting, and for the prayer teams mobilized during the Lent period and holy week in the last three months. This resulted in many getting deliverance from the devil's possession and coming to the Lord.
- For the blood donation camp organized by Evangelical Friends Church Janakpur in Janakpur, Dhanusha on Good Friday in remembrance of Jesus' bloodshed to wash away our sins.
- One famous witchcraft doctor and his whole family accepted Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, and they are regularly attending worship services at Jhapa Friends Church.
- For the healing of a cancer patient, Ayush Chaudhary of Evangelical Friends Church Kathmandu.
- For a newly planted Church in a place called Bhawar of Makwanpur district by Bhandara Evangelical Friends Church. People are getting healed and being witnesses to others in the village. Many souls got saved and 15 of them are ready to make a public testimony of baptism.

***Please Pray...***

- For our new mission fields: Kaski, Jajarkot, Rajbiraj, and Bara districts of Nepal and in Bihar and UP states (Indian borderlines with Nepal) of India.
- For the National Youth Conference and Women's National Conference to be held and also for speakers/preachers and finances.
- For the complete healing of the oldest (a 106-year-old lady) member of Evangelical Friends Church Nepal. Her name is Kanchhi (Rebeca) Shrestha of Kathmandu Friends Church.

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

***Praise God...***

- He gives us great joy every time a soul enters the kingdom of God, and we have regular reports of those from the people who are receiving training in the workshops!
- Our granddaughter who lives in Ukraine is getting married this month to a Godly young Ukrainian man. We rejoice with them and have the joy of actually attending the wedding a couple of hundred miles away instead of thousands! (Our last grandchild's wedding was in Australia!)

***Please Pray...***

- Abe already is laying plans for the academic year starting in September. His initial meetings in September are being advertised widely. Pray as he lays those plans out and gives further guidance and training to people who are running Centers of Hope, or beginning Centers of Hope, or who are interested and want to learn! A broad range! So much wisdom from the Lord is needed!
- Pray that a great harvest will be reaped in this time of trouble, despair, and trauma for so much of the population of Ukraine. We can say that we are seeing hundreds saved, but...in a country of millions. Pray that there will be an overwhelming ingathering—a God thing—not only for our ministry but for all of the churches and church planters who are working diligently here in Ukraine.
- The war is escalating in the East. Ukraine does not have enough ammunition, and you can pray about that. But it isn't about land, property, or politics. It is a matter of religious freedom. Wherever Russia has taken over or is taking over there is severe oppression. Pray that the Lord would have mercy.

**From Erik Nilsen  
Serving as a Disciple-Making Apprentice**

***Praise God...***

- My friend, who is an international graduate student at CSUF, came to celebrate Easter with my family and me at my grandmother's house. Since then, he has been intentionally asking me and his other Christian friends about the meaning of Easter and the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- A childhood friend and I have been having regular Bible dialogues reading through the Gospel of Mark. He has never read the Bible before, and he is intrigued and fascinated by the person of Jesus.
- A family member who grew up in the church, but had renounced organized religion, has made a few comments during last Christmas and Easter implying that she was concerned about people not respecting Jesus. I was surprised that she was concerned about that at all, and I am praying that the Holy Spirit is turning her back to the Lord.

***Please Pray...***

- I am struggling to find enough financial support. I am thankful for the support from family, friends, and church, but I am currently only 62% funded. Please pray that the Lord will provide for me and my needs.

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

***Praise God...***

- The children's presentation of Benjamin (the young son of our youth pastors, Manuel and Kinga) was held in April and attended by many unbelieving friends and relatives. All of whom heard the calling of our Heavenly Father.
- On the last weekend of April, I and some of my gypsy colleagues attended a national Christian gypsy conference. We had many blessings and were able to make new contacts.
- For John Grafton and his youth team who are going to visit us this August. We talked with each other last month. We are looking forward to seeing them.

***Please Pray...***

- For me, for my health. Unfortunately, my sciatica problem has recurred.
- At the beginning of this month, we are going to go to Budapest, for a handicraft party. The leader of the community house invited us again. It's a good chance to invite unbelieving families to the church of Budapest. Please, pray for our serving.
- Our youth group is organizing its fourth summer youth camp. Please pray for them, that everyone can go there again this year.