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AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA

Habakkuk 2:14

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

Evangelism Resources is getting ready to celebrate another year of God’s leading, provision and blessing on our church-planting and discipleship/ leadership-training ministries around the world. We’ve been impressed recently at how God’s Spirit is moving in new places and in new ways that we never could have imagined. The earth is truly being filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, one region after the next.

It is a truism that anytime the kingdom of God advances in territory formerly controlled by the devil, the spiritual warfare is never easy. There is always resistance and there are often casualties. We’ve seen this in Nigeria and India and elsewhere. Prayer is the key to overcoming the opposition, and even then it is a mortal struggle!

Nevertheless, we are seeing advances that were never imagined, and it feels like our world is being filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, even as the waters cover the sea! We hear of dozens being baptized here and there, from among people groups that until recently had never been receptive to the

gospel. We receive photos of large church buildings filled with people where only ten years ago there had been no church. And we’ve received requests for our Portable Bible School courses to be translated into Farsi for Iran, into Arabic for Egypt, into Malay for Malaysia, into Mongolian for Mongolia and north China, and into Russian and other languages.

God is building His Church around the world. In India, for example, many of our partners are pushing forward in their evangelism and discipleship ministries. Despite rising opposition and the threat of persecution, thirteen of our India partners are involved in building projects to house increased ministries that will help fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

Will you please pray with us for our partners around the world as they press on to announce God’s salvation and to make disciples? And we hope you will celebrate with us His continued leading and blessing on ER, as we strive to advance His kingdom, as the waters cover the sea!

- Paul Braun, President

Reflections on Habakkuk 2:14

By Steve Liversedge

The story of Habakkuk begins with his sadness and perhaps disbelief. He cries out to God, “How long, O Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, ‘Violence,’ but you do not save.”

Habakkuk speaks from his heart and God reassures Him with these words: “I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.” Habakkuk may have been baffled that God would use the Babylonians, but in faith he declares, “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

As I contemplate that image, what stands out is the completeness of water covering the sea. It is total; not one smidgin is left bare. This also describes what Christ did on the cross. The work He accomplished there was also complete, offering salvation to the entire population of mankind: “Whosoever will may come.” It is the same with the spreading of the gospel. I envision the tide rising on the unreached lands of our globe, and in fact we are seeing it right before our eyes.

The inexorable advance of His kingdom is taking place in India, where new Schools of Evangelism (SOEs) are set to open in upper Assam, Southern Odisha, Nagaland, and Bihar. Muslims are coming to faith across the Middle East, with small groups popping up all over and needing leadership. The Portable Bible School (PBS) is perfect for training lay leadership for these fledgling churches, and we continue to work on taking the training to that region. The Church is also growing in South Sudan, Sudan, and other Muslim states in the African Sahel, and PBSes are already busily training there. I think of the

old saying, “time and tide wait for no man.” The time is short and the tide is rising.

Kinshasa Conference

In late April we had the incredible opportunity of meeting in Kinshasa—where ER first started the amazing ministry of PBSes back in 1984—with delegates from fifteen nations: Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda. In the first week thirty women from these nations learned to use WIN (the Women’s Impact Network) to start multi-generational disciple-making movements among women. Some of the women have already started their own WIN groups!

Following the WIN Seminar, the Association of International Discipleship Advancement (AIDA) met, with most of the SOE Africa directors present. What a wonderful and powerful time this was! I believe we will soon see SOEs started in Ethiopia and Mali, possibly in Guinea, an SOE restart in Ghana, and recognition of three SOEs already operating in the DRC.

In the second week, 27 delegates from 15 nations were instructed on how to use the new Online PBS Teacher Training Program, now in French, Hindi, and Mandarin, as well as in English. They were encouraged to make it available to disciple makers in hard-to-reach places and to accelerate the harvest until knowledge of the glory of the Lord fills the earth as the waters cover the sea. I anticipate a doubling of the PBSes already at work in many of these countries.

Looking at all these delegates and remembering our warm and blessed fellowship, I can say without reservation that the future of the church in Africa is in good hands. The tide is rising in countries long scorched by the evil one’s presence. I am confident that in God’s timing, the glorious knowledge of our Lord will fill the world, and Africa specifically, as the waters cover the sea. Maranatha!



THREE WEEKS IN BANGLADESH AND INDIA

By Paul Braun

In March I was able to visit our ministry partners in Bangladesh and in five locations in India.



Pastor Prodip Malaker, standing next to Portable Bible School books, leads our two Schools of Evangelism and other ministries in Bangladesh. He is a '90s graduate of the Teacher-Training School of Evangelism that trained many of today's ER leaders in Asia.



I was able to meet with the incoming students of our School of Evangelism in Gopalganj, Bangladesh. The class includes a number of Lutherans, several Assemblies of God, at least a couple of Seventh Day Adventists and four Catholics.



Anjan Singh is based in Kolkata, India and leads our ministries in this city (with 15 million people) and throughout West Bengal. He is constructing a new building to house his School of Evangelism.



We visited this small rural Musahar church in Bihar, India that was planted and is led by one of the Bible Women we support.



The School of Evangelism in Bihar moved from the city of Patna to a newly constructed but unfinished building in a nearby town. The first floor is complete but an additional floor is projected to provide dormitory rooms for the students. (They are now renting living quarters for their students.) This was the 20th graduating class.



This church was paid for by middle-class urban Indians who sacrificially contributed to this village church building. It is called a "Christian Community Center" in order to not antagonize people of the dominant majority religion.



What's a church dedication without a baby dedication? The three-hour service also included foot washings, communion, a joyful offering, prayer for the sick with laying on of hands, lots of singing and two Bible messages.



A Heart that is Willing

By Lisa Fowler

The God of the Bible loves a heart that is willing to go. God Himself was willing to go, after all! He extended the perfect community He had within Himself by becoming a particular man—Jesus of Nazareth.

Serge Andre, our Suriname ministry leader, has a heart that is willing to go. On March 9 he traveled to the interior jungle to meet with Amerindian leaders for two weeks. It was an opportune time for him to share with the church leaders of the Wayana and Trio tribes about Portable Bible Schools (PBSes). Because he was willing to go, PBS translation projects into the Wayana and Trio languages are underway, with plans to launch PBSes in the Wayana villages and among the Trio tribe between October and December of this year. What's more, the Wayana maintain positive contact with nearby tribes and the vision is for the Wayana to then go and make use of their PBS training among these neighbors. Beyond that, translating the PBS into the Sranan Tongo and Dutch languages has begun.

Like the Amerindian groups, the Maroons also live in the interior jungle, and will have greater access to the fullness of the gospel through these efforts. Such is discipleship! Followers

of Jesus, such as Serge, have hearts that are willing to go wherever Jesus leads—to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, among the Wayana and Trio, the Maroons—and to the ends of the earth.

I began this article with the phrase, the God of the Bible loves a heart that is willing to go. I could have also written that the God of the Bible loves a heart that is willing to let go. That is, a heart that is willing to let go of our pride, our plans, our timing, our failures, and our accomplishments. Let us have hearts that are willing as we walk in the footsteps of Jesus, the only one who saves. May He lead each of us in life and ministry all the days of our lives.

“The God of the Bible loves a heart that is willing to go. God Himself was willing to go, after all!”

▼ Students receive diplomas at this year's Suriname SOE graduation



Even in Hard Places

By Drs. Mawo and Janet Abaya

G'ring! G'ring! The phone rings and I press the “Answer” button on my cell phone. The voice that comes through is unfamiliar and I am asked:

“Is this ‘Pastor ___’? I just want to inform you that we got news this evening that ‘Evangelist ___’ has been abducted. The information reaching us is that his father tracked him to a motor park where he boarded a vehicle to return to your school. They connived with the driver to stop in a solitary place, pretending to have a breakdown. Anyway, he was badly beaten and locked up in a room. He managed to escape and is in a safe place. We will locate him in the morning, treat his wounds and get him back to school as soon as he is stronger.”

We had this situation in March with one of our Muslim Background Believers (MBBs). Another MBB student's wife was taken away and returned to him by his family as bait—we have not heard from him since.

Each time we send a message to our students to report for a new school session or to return to school after a break, we do so with our hearts in our hands. We never know who will make it through or not. This is because many of our students are MBBs and are constantly being hunted down by family members and friends for “deserting their religion.” Such is the plight of those who turn to Jesus from their religion. But we praise God for the depth of their faith. God is using these converts to reach communities who would otherwise not be reached. The knowledge of God's love is spreading.

School of Evangelism

Our School of Evangelism (SOE) alumni, active in training local church planters in Portable Bible Schools (PBSes), are bravely entering unknown territories with the gospel. During their SOE training, a fire is kindled in their hearts to reach the lost. And yet, back in the field, they know they cannot do it alone. So they raise their own evangelism teams and equip them in PBSes.

Timothy Yusuf is one such SOE graduate. Every summer he brings back 25 to 30 missionaries working among Muslims in the north. He takes them through six weeks of PBS and sends them back to the field. In March, he visited the local church of one of the PBS graduates he trained. The church has no walls, just stakes in the ground and a roof of corn stalks. The people rejoice that they will see Jesus in heaven and worship Him, not in wall-less grass roofed churches but in indescribable splendor.

Youth Ministry

Our youth are not left out of this endeavor of spreading the gospel. In the last three months, 121 young people were trained in three Great Commission Challenge Camps. Their marching orders were to go and be “Great Commission Christians,” telling their lost family members and friends about Jesus. This is their role in making the knowledge of Christ known to the world—shining each of their candles, lighting one corner of the world at a time.

Pray for us in Nigeria as we seek to spread the knowledge of Christ in a hostile environment.

Memorial Gifts

Contributions were received in memory of:

Mst Sgt David Coggan and PFC Samuel Coggan of the Villages, FL, from Ms. Beverlee Coggan of the Villages, FL.

Contributions were received in honor of:

Mr. Arlin Morgan of Topeka, KS, from Lona Small Joet of Minneapolis, KS.

Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Eisemann of Wilmore, KY, from Mr. and Mrs. Don Roxberry of Wilmore, KY.



Save the Date

2023 Annual Celebration Dinners:

Bellville, OH: June 30

Wilmore, KY: July 15



Report on Audio Bible Project

By Caleb Pfeifer

In last year's Nov-Dec issue of News From the Fields, we shared about a special giving opportunity to provide audio Bibles for oral learners in unreached people group (UPG) communities. The ER family responded to this need by contributing more than \$8,000 by the end of the year! These gifts, combined with other generous donations received throughout 2022, will enable our ministry partners in India to purchase around 1,500 audio Bibles. Each unit will provide believers with the precious gift of God's word. Not only that, but they'll create ample

opportunities for evangelism as neighbors hear the scriptures spoken in their heart language.

Our ministry director in northeastern Jharkhand, India has already distributed 500 solar-powered audio Bibles in the Hindi and Santali languages among 84 villages. These communities are home to people belonging to the Bhujar, Kol, Turi, Musahar, and Santali tribe UPGs, as well as some Muslims. Our director in another city of Jharkhand also ordered 500 units, which his team is delivering to other UPG communities. Finally, we plan to send the remaining funds for this project to our partners in Odisha and Madhya Pradesh, so that they can purchase audio Bibles in their local languages.

We want to say THANK YOU for your generosity and prayers! We trust that God will use these offerings to make an eternal impact in India. Please continue to pray that each audio Bible that is given will provide the receiver with the blessings of God's word for years to come. And as we pray this, may the Lord grow within us a deeper appreciation and thirst for His word!