BRINGING GOD’S BEST TO NORTHERN INDIA

For a new believer in northern India, it’s not uncommon to be baptized at midnight. Not because it’s more meaningful by moonlight, but because the cover of darkness offers more safety in a region where Christians are increasingly facing persecution.

For a new believer here, gaining ultimate freedom in Christ often means losing other freedoms—like drawing water from the community well or walking down the street without fear of being beaten. Amazingly—churches are growing in this place where many of the 400 million people living here are in desperate poverty, Hindu is the predominant religion, and most have never heard of Jesus.

To Langham Scholar Finny Philip, it is a vast mission field.

“God is on the move in the northern part of India, particularly in the rural communities of the north,” he shares. “There is a tremendous growth that is happening.”

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After receiving his Ph.D. in theology on a Langham scholarship, Finny became the principal of Filadelfia Bible College (FBC) in Udaipur, and the missions director for a large church network called Filadelfia Fellowship Churches of India (FFCI). Today, he is actively involved in developing biblical leaders for mission and ministry across northern India. Many of the students who graduate from FBC go on to plant new churches within the FFCI network, serving as pastors and leaders in some of the most remote villages.

Along with seeing tremendous growth in the church, Finny also sees one great challenge. “The first challenge is we don’t have enough people to go out and reach out to these people who are responding to the Gospel,” he says. “We don’t have enough leaders who are qualified enough to take care of the church into a deeper level.”

DEVELOPING BIBLICAL LEADERS

That’s why Filadelfia Bible College has been strategically equipping leaders to study and share the Gospel, giving them a vision for a maturing church in India, and sending them out into the remote villages where they plant new churches and help train networks of pastors. Students like Niwos Thana, who says his studies at FBC have given him a heart for more than just his local church. “When I came here, I had a limited vision,” he says. “I was thinking only about my local congregation. But here I started to know the needs of churches across India.”

After he graduates, Niwos plans to return to the Himalaya region and plant churches. “I wish to share the Gospel with the young generations.”

IMPACTING RURAL VILLAGES

Today, there are more than 1,800 churches that have been planted with the help of trained students and leaders at Filadelfia Bible College and the network of FFCI, as they take the gospel to these remote villages—villages like Paba, where pastor Bhagavana has been preaching in a local church since 1990. Today, more than 1,000 from the surrounding villages worship on Sunday, and students and pastors from Udaipur regularly travel to Paba to train pastors, minister in the village, and teach Sunday School classes.

“The leadership of Filadelfia Fellowship churches come here regularly and they train us,” says pastor Bhagavana. “They equip us with the Word of God, and that helps us disciple our new believers and we get a deeper understanding of the Word of God …This is how our believers keep growing.”

Lalubahi is one of these believers. He and his wife came to faith even in the midst of family tragedy with the loss of their daughter. Like many Christians in the region, they were mocked and persecuted by their community—who told them their daughter’s death was punishment for their new faith in Christ. “We never believed those people because we came to know the living Lord,” he says. “I want to thank the Lord that he has given an increase in our life and we believe in the Lord even though our society condemned us. They mocked us, but . . . the Lord has prospered us, He has blessed us.”

His wife, Elibai, is a leader in the community and responsible for looking after...
Pastors and leaders gathered in Goran, India, to receive training on how to share God’s Word and mature their churches.

100 families. She found that as she visited with these families, she could share her testimony as a way to minister to them, particularly the women, and encourage them to attend church. Often, they would ask her if they should bring animals to sacrifice. Elibai shares, “I told them, you don’t need to sacrifice animals because the Lord Jesus Christ has already sacrificed Himself so that you can be delivered from sins and freed from the clutches of bondage.”

EQUIPPING A GENERATION

As thousands of stories like Lalubahi’s unfold, and as more and more believers crowd into these growing churches across India, pastors and leaders began to notice that many of the children were not educated. Traditionally, the very poor or lower caste members aren’t able to attend school. “We began to think, ‘How can we help our next generation be more literate and be educated so their lives will be more fruitful,’” Finny recalls.

That led to the development of St. Matthew’s School in one of the rural villages, a nursery through 12th grade school that started with 5 students and has grown to 1100 students. With the goal of strengthening the church by providing quality education to Christian children, today there are several campuses throughout India. Students from the Bible college regularly visit to teach classes and minister at the schools, and graduates of St. Matthew’s have gone on to become teachers, doctors, and pastors.

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

While their children are receiving a quality education, many parents continue to struggle. Especially in the more remote villages, Christians represent some of the poorest of the poor. Cast out by their families and communities and shunned in the marketplace, many exist on only 30 rupees, the equivalent of 50 cents, per day. Finny says, “We have seen tremendous results of people being baptized and being disciples. But we still could not see much transformation in their economic life.”

So, in keeping with FBC’s holistic approach to ministry—that ministry happens not just...
within the walls of a church—Finny and several other leaders developed a micro-lending program for believers in the region. Today, nearly 600 families have been able to make use of the small loans to start businesses, lifting themselves out of poverty and giving back to the community. Finny estimates that today, most of these families are living off of closer to $4 per day.

Finny shares the story of Basanti Bai, a homemaker and mother of two small children whose husband is a masonry worker. She received a loan to purchase two small goats, which she uses to provide milk for her children. She will be able to sell the extra milk and any offspring in the marketplace.

**BRINGING GOD’S BEST TO THE LEAST**

The driving principal behind Finny’s vision for developing biblical leaders is, in his own words, “bringing God’s Best for the least.”

“God enabled me to receive the best education, and I want to use it for the least of our country, the least of our society,” he shares. “By investing in my life, Langham has provided me with a perspective about the global church . . . God enabled me to come back to my own country to bring that scholarship for my people.”

Finny’s story is a powerful example of how one trained leader can impact thousands of lives for Christ. It’s why this year Langham is providing scholarships for 75 emerging leaders like Finny from around the world, supporting and caring for them as they pursue their Ph.D’s in theology and prepare to return to their home countries. Thank you for your continued support that equips these leaders to bring God’s best, His Word, to His people. 📚

In his sermon titled “Ten Principles for Christian Generosity,” John Stott reflects on the apostle Paul’s effort to organize a collection of money from churches in Achaia and Macedonia to help the struggling churches of Judea, referred to in Romans 13, 1 Corinthians 16 and 2 Corinthians 8-9. Stott notes that while it may seem odd to devote so much space to what seems like a little ministry housekeeping—it is actually a beautiful picture of God’s grace.

He notes, “ . . . behind the generosity of Macedonia, Paul saw the generosity of God. For grace is another word for generosity. Our gracious God is a generous God, and he is at work within his people to make them generous too.”

Langham recognizes the generous giving of our friends and supporters (like you!) as God’s provision and grace, and we are blessed to be part of His work to equip the next generation of biblical leaders in more than 90 nations.

**Planning a Legacy of Grace**

When you include Langham as part of your planned giving—you play a lasting role in our work of equipping the saints—the pastors and leaders who will shepherd future generations in Christ.

There’s no greater legacy.

To learn more about legacy giving, contact Jack DeGrenier at jack.degrenier@langham.org or 602-538-6763.
It’s by God’s grace and support from our faithful friends and partners that testimonies of transformation, like those you’ve read in these pages, are possible.

In 2014, with your help, the ministry of Langham:

**EQUIPPED FUTURE THEOLOGICAL LEADERS**
- Continued supporting 75 theological students from 23 countries
- Celebrated the graduation of 4 scholars—leaders who will go on to shape their nations with a biblical worldview as they teach in seminaries, start salt and light ministries, and serve at the highest levels in government—and join a fellowship of more than 350 graduated Langham Scholars around the world

**DEVELOPED AND DISTRIBUTED BIBLICAL BOOKS**
- Supplied 11,152 biblical books to 531 colleges across 81 countries to help students grow and mature in Christ
- Distributed 24,446 books to pastors, students and ministry partners in need of study materials
- Supported 15 indigenous publishers, printed 30 local language titles, and provided nearly $178,000 in writer’s grants—bringing God’s Word to His people in their language and context

**TRAINED PASTORS TO PREACH THE BIBLE**
- Held 190 pastor training events in 47 countries in need of solid biblical preaching
- Equipped 10,000+ pastors and lay leaders to teach God’s Word
- Shepherded 500+ preaching groups of 10 to 12 pastors and leaders meeting regularly for ongoing training and mentoring

To view our annual report, visit [www.langham.org/2014_annual_report](http://www.langham.org/2014_annual_report)
Your WINTER 2015 newsletter is enclosed.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
GROWTH WITH DEPTH

Dear friend of Langham,

My heart continues to be moved by stories of God’s Word drawing His people to the Gospel—impacting lives, congregations and entire communities with the hope found in Christ. We are developing more than just programs. By cultivating local, indigenously led grassroots movements for the Gospel—we continue to see believers grow in number and depth.

I had the privilege to witness firsthand this “growth with depth” during a recent visit with Langham Scholar Dr. Finny Philip in the northern part of India—a region where idol worship is prevalent and believers are often living in poverty and under persecution. Here, Finny is equipping pastors and leaders who can shepherd and disciple these vulnerable believers.

Today, in these remote tribes where there used to be just a few Christians, there are now tens of thousands growing deeper in faith. In the words of one: “I have been worshiping many idols … but my search for peace went away when I knew the Lord.”

May you be blessed and encouraged to read more of Finny’s story in these pages—knowing that God is using your prayers and generous support of our ministry to equip leaders like Finny to impact hearts and minds with His Word.

Partnering in Christ,

Benjamin K. Homan,
President, Langham Partnership USA

Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

Colossians 2:6-7