



NEWS FROM THE FIELDS

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Gathering the Neighbors

Reaching out to Muslims in Odisha, India

The November/December issue of News from the Fields has on occasion combined Thanksgiving and Christmas. That's exactly what we're doing this year as we highlight an exciting new outreach in India called "Gathering the Neighbors."

Tradition says that the first Thanksgiving was held by the Pilgrims in 1621—exactly 400 years ago—when they gathered with the Wampanoag Indians to thank God for the successful corn harvest. Sadly, this is

one of the few recorded moments of harmony between America's original inhabitants and the European settlers.

A similar but different kind of gathering of people from different backgrounds is taking place today in Odisha State, India. Over 1,000,000 Muslims live in this state, where ER supports a School of Evangelism (SOE) and many Mobile Schools of Evangelism (MSOEs).

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ER's Odisha ministry leader (far right) with the Muslim outreach team.

Gathering the Neighbors continued from p.1

Over the past year, in response to Covid lockdowns, typhoons, flooding, and the ensuing displacement and hunger, ER has reached out to these people with humanitarian relief. As a result, many grateful Muslims, whom we call "the Neighbors," have started approaching our ministry partner to ask searching questions about Christ and Christianity.

This is where Thanksgiving is wedded to Christmas. Our partner has been meeting with searching Muslims on Zoom weekly and with two Muslim mullahs face-to-face twice a week.

NEWS FLASH

After this article was written, we received news that one of these mullahs has accepted Christ and publicly shared his testimony!

We believe that the outreach of love when they were desperate for food and housing has brought about this desire to know more about the source of that love. This different kind of Thanksgiving has opened the door for the Christmas story to be told – the story that God sent His one and only Son to die on the cross for our sins and to offer salvation to all mankind.

This open door has prompted our partner to design a strategic plan to reach his Muslim neighbors, which he calls "Odisha Al-Bashir,"

or "Servants of the All-Seeing." We are calling it "Gathering the Neighbors." Bridge-building activities, such as musical events and seekers' meetings, will be offered in three local areas. Efforts will be made to find men and women of peace (those open to hearing about the gospel) in all three areas. Christian literature in Hindi and Urdu (the language of Muslims in India) will be made available. A specialist in Islam, a former imam, will be engaged to lead a number of training sessions for workers among Muslims. In addition, three MSOEs will be held among Muslim populations, along with one special MSOE for Muslim women. Funds will also be available for disaster relief.

The total cost for this two-year effort will be about \$41,000. In September, the ER Board of Directors approved our financial involvement in this project, and we are inviting you to join us by your prayers and gifts.

Of course, this outreach is not without risks. Please consider praying every day for our partner and this outreach, and celebrate this Thanksgiving and Christmas in a new way – sharing the bounty God has blessed us with in Christ Jesus and telling His story. God bless you and give you a Happy Thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas!

Steve Liversedge, President

A new Muslim-background believer (MBB) receives baptism in Bangladesh

Update on Bangladesh

Our Bangladesh ministry leader, Shakil K., sent the following report:

Schools of Evangelism (SOEs)

Our two SOEs are going great. We have mostly new believers who are excited to start new churches after their graduation, scheduled for November 27. This year most of our students are Muslim background believers; the second largest student group are from Hindu background.

We provide our SOE students with vocational training so that when they go to the field for church planting they will be able to support themselves. Our goal for next year is to make more training options available to them.

Rohingya Christians in a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh



Mobile Schools of Evangelism (MSOE)

The Rohingya MSOE is going great as well. We have about 25 students right now. We lost more than ten students from last year until now. Several were kidnapped and killed by extremist Muslims. We also lost some from Covid-19, including one student last month. Because of this person's death the United Nations and Bangladesh government became involved because there is no graveyard for Christians in the Rohingya refugee camp.

Church Planting

The government is showing concern because a lot of Muslims are receiving Jesus through our work. Over the last 18 months we planted 38 churches among Muslims. In September we baptized 147 people, with the majority being from Muslim background and rest from Hindu background.

Portable Bible Schools (PBSes)

This year so far we have completed 15 PBSes and are planning to start another 15 PBSes this year.

Edited by Paul Braun

OPPORTUNITIES TO INVEST in God's Kingdom Advances

Do you want to participate in some high-yield Great Commission projects? Here are five especially rewarding opportunities:

- 1. Gathering the Neighbors** – Reaching Muslims in eastern India via conferences, specially designed literature and in-person discipleship, etc.
- 2. Women's Impact Network** – Women discipling women in groups of four, or online during pandemic lockdowns.
- 3. Children's Development Centers** – Teaching reading, basic hygiene and Bible truth and songs to marginalized children who have insufficient access to regular schooling.
- 4. Construction** – Helping several of our partners with urgently-needed worship and training facilities.
- 5. Where most needed** – helping ER train disciples to train disciples.

Note: Evangelism Resources retains the option to reallocate funds when necessary.



Memorial Gifts

Contributions were received from the following:

In memory of Mrs. Linda Dupree of Sag Harbor, New York, from Ms. Jeanna Moritz of Water Mill, New York.

Contributions in memory of Richard Cook of Monticello, Kentucky are still being received and will be reported in our next issue of News from the Fields.

More Giving Opportunities

You can designate ER to receive funds from Amazon Smile and Kroger—and it costs you nothing! When you choose ER on Amazon Smile, we will receive half a percent of all your Smile purchases. Go to www.erinfo.org/donation-types to learn more.

Similarly, if you shop at Kroger (or any affiliate) you can designate ER to receive money at no expense to you. Just search "Kroger Community Rewards" online and fill out their form, indicating ER.



Merry
Christmas!

We pray that each of you will have a blessed Christmas season and New Year. May the Lord fill you with comfort and joy as you celebrate the birth of our Savior and reflect on this year.

- The ER Home Team