

Benjamin Francis

Prayer letter, October 2018

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Benjamin continues to live life in the fast lane and is currently on a trip in Europe, of which I will write more later.

BMS Kolkata has been a centre of BMS activity for many years stretching back to the beginnings of BMS presence in India. Where once this was a centre for mission personnel, now the face of BMS in India is very different with a staff of local people running the centre. Over recent years Ben has been leading the transition of BMS Kolkata from solely being a guest house for folk visiting to engage in mission locally, to now also being a centre for leadership development and mission in the region.

Ben needs real wisdom as he deals with many responsibilities that he carries in leading BMS work in India from the centre in Kolkata. There is a Board of Trustees led by Anjan Singh that oversees the work and they had significant meetings in the summer that included Peter Dunn and Val Stevens from BMS in the UK. All the Trustees are excited about the potential for BMS to engage in mission in new and exciting ways.



BMS Kolkata

One of the initiatives mentioned in the last letter was Street Servants, based loosely on a Street Pastors model. Since we last wrote the Street servants car has started night patrols to look out for vulnerable people on the streets of Kolkata and bring something of the light of Christ to the streets. The street school project that happened under the flyovers has been relocated

to a safer place following another road collapse in the city. It is great to be able to help some of the neediest people on the streets of Kolkata and see lives transformed.



Street Servants car

Ben serves in the leadership of what has become known as a Disciple Making Movement (DMM) in Asia and it has been fantastic to see this impacting people across the region, including some of BMS's historic partners. The picture below shows Ben meeting with BMS personnel Peter and Louise Lynch along with Rev Ashim Baroi (General Secretary of Bangladesh Baptists) in Dhaka earlier in the summer.

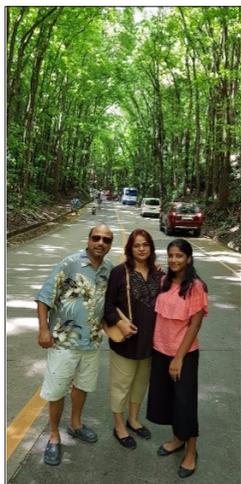
Ben and friends are helping to provide training for the Baptist family in Bangladesh to help them rethink what it means to make disciples who make disciples in their context. Similar relationships are shooting up across Asia including another historic BMS partner, the Thai Karen Baptist Convention in northern Thailand.



Ben, Peter and Louise Lynch, and Rev Ashim Baroi

Currently Ben is travelling in the UK and Eastern Europe seeking to inspire others with the stories of what the Lord is doing in Asia and helping leaders consider the relevance of the DMM approach in their own contexts. This emphasis is in its early days, but there are some encouraging signs of life already with some small discipleship groups beginning to emerge. The approach is to place an emphasis on proactively sharing faith and making disciples who in turn actively

seek to make other disciples. The focus is then on the forming of small groups where discipleship happens with an emphasis upon both God's word and the Holy Spirit.



In all of the busyness Ben has had the blessing of some time away with his wife Gillian and daughter Abigail. With such a busy life, time together is very precious. Gillian and Abigail are also deeply involved with mission. Their home is a place where small discipleship

groups meet, and folk are encouraged in faith and mission. Later this month Gillian and Abigail head to Delhi to encourage mission in that area where new groups are also springing up led by BMS supported partner worker Amrit. Gillian leads a specific ministry that seeks to disciple and empower women, called Women of the Word (WOW). Abigail is still at school

and working hard. She is a gifted public speaker. It is great to see the whole family serving the Lord together and using their different gifts.

Points for prayer:

- **Pray for Ben, Gillian and Abigail**, that the Lord will continue to give them special times together and both bless them and make them a blessing to others
- **Pray for Ben** as he leads the mission of BMS Kolkata. Just as churches in the UK face issues of compliance, so too does BMS in Kolkata. Pray for Ben as he manages a team of about 20 at the centre, for wisdom and love.
- **Street Servants** – Pray for the Lord to bless the ministry of Street Servants as they expand the work into new areas and also put the vehicle on the road to protect vulnerable people.
- **Disciple making movement** – pray that the Lord will continue to bless this work with fruit as lives are transformed by the love of Jesus. Pray for Ben as he provides overall leadership and as he seeks to inspire and train others across the world.
- **Disciple making in Europe** – pray specifically for their to be momentum in the European context where Ben is travelling this autumn, as folk catch the vision and rethink disciple-making in their contexts.

If you would like to support Ben Francis by prayer and committed regular giving, visit www.bmsworldmission.org/partners or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.



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