

Ben Francis

Prayer letter, June 2018

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Life is never dull for Benjamin Francis. He carries two interwoven roles of BMS Team Leader in India and Biglife Asia Director, although the two frequently merge together.

In terms of being BMS Team Leader in Asia, Ben is based at the BMS Mission Centre in Kolkata. The centre provides guest house accommodation for people travelling to Kolkata to work in various mission initiatives. Over recent years Ben has been spearheading the more outward mission focus of BMS in Kolkata and across West Bengal. The most recent development has been in partnership with BMS Mission Workers Stephen and Caroline Diamond in the opening of a coffee shop that is aimed at training people from marginalised communities in basic business skills and discipleship, before encouraging them to move on to self-sufficiency. The picture below was taken of Ben at the opening of 'Travellers Rest'.



A further exciting development at BMS Kolkata over recent years has been Street Servants which was inspired by a visit of Ben's to Street Pastors in Glasgow some years ago. The Street Servants Team work with some of the poorest people in Kolkata who live on the streets. The aim is to provide basic healthcare, simple education, a link to national schools and a Christian presence. It has been really encouraging to see some of the children access state schools in recent months and also to see progress made against trafficking of people. The needs are great, but it is encouraging to see the work grow and develop.



In terms of Biglife Asia, Ben heads up this Disciple Making Movement that originated in West Bengal and is now spreading across Asia and beyond. The emphasis is upon intentional disciple making and encouraging disciples to make disciples in their own contexts and communities. The groups of disciples meet most frequently in small gathering in their homes. The picture below is of a group meeting in Sikkim in the north-east of India between Bhutan and Nepal. Currently Ben and others are rolling out a leadership development programme to give a model of discipleship in the small group meetings. The model is known as three thirds and divides the meeting into three sections looking back, looking up and looking forwards. The looking up is a time of looking to God's word with some simple questions to help unpack the passage together. The looking forwards is where group members share what they are going to do in light of how God has spoken to them in his word. The looking back is at the start of the meeting when people look back at how they have worked out their application of lessons from the previous meeting.



Recently Ben has been travelling in other countries in Asia and it is encouraging to see people responding to the discipleship model. Ben's wife Gillian is a key leader within Biglife and runs the office in Kolkata as well as ministry among women.

On a more personal level, the highlight of the year has been the baptism of Ben's daughter Abigail in Kolkata. It was great to have BMS Director for Mission at the service to share from God's word. Abigail is following in her father's footsteps in making disciples in her school setting. In June Ben, Gillian and Abigail had a much needed holiday to rest and recharge batteries.

Points for prayer:

- Pray for Ben, Gillian and Abigail, that the Lord will continue to refresh them and bless them as a family.
- BMS Kolkata – Pray for Ben as he leads the

team at BMS Kolkata, for wisdom and direction.

- Street Servants – Pray for the Lord to bless Ritesh as he leads Street Servants on a daily basis, reaching out with God's love to people on the margins.
- Biglife – Pray for the Lord to continue to bless the disciple making movement with growth and depth of faith.
- Traveller's Rest – Pray that the Lord will bring the right people to serve with Traveller's Rest and that their lives will be transformed.

If you would like to support Ben 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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