



Testimonies from Around the World

The Middle East

Overview for 2015

Suzanne Gregory, 2016

April 6-17 2015 in Katmandu, Itahari, Dharan, Tumlingtar, Dingla

Goals:

The trip was planned around introducing a local Cleveland church to Mid-East and opportunities to serve. The church pastor and 1 member went with us. We also took FBC staff member Tyler Brinson to be part of what God is doing in Nepal. It gave me an opportunity to see what God has placed on my dad's heart for Nepal. Finally to encourage those serving in the Mid-East both locals as well as IMB team members.

Takeaways:

The people of the Mid-East have a wonderful spirit. They see the world in a different light and make the best of it. Believers make a difficult decision in that in most cases separate themselves from family. We did see whole families that have come to Christ. The church and its members are a light in their communities. The IMB team members have a clear plan and are working it. Their focus is to touch every part of the country with the gospel. The phrase is "NPL - No Place Left". In parallel the Mid-East churches are also going out and reaching areas around their communities and sharing the gospel. New groups of believers are turning up in many areas the gospel had been taken. God is working in the Mid-East country.



Marty Gregory

I'm not an evangelist although sometimes I act like one on short-term mission projects. This usually results in my questioning the effectiveness of the projects. Who will follow up? Was the commitment real or were they just trying to please the gift bearing Blancs? What did we actually "do". Being a task-oriented American it's always nice to have something to "do" on the trip, a tangible take-away. However these projects can at times place a tremendous burden on our ministry hosts - pulling them away from their ministry focus. In fact, I've been on some trips where our on-the-ground ministry partners were literally searching for something for our group to "do". I've returned from trips wondering what purpose my going actually served. What did I do? A thought that can be somewhat frustrating and confusing. Yet I go and will continue to go and take my kids, and other people's kids. In fact, I'm almost compelled to go.

In March of 2016, this desire led me to the Mid-East. Our 4-person team was made up of myself, my 17-year-old daughter Caroline, and Carol & JR Fulbright. Three of the four of us were female and our mission focus was the health and encouragement of women. Prayer and former mission experiences helped me realize that my personal role in missions is not to be on the front lines of ministry "doing" but rather to come along side to encourage and serve those who are called to the front lines. With that in mind, this trip offered a prayer retreat for missionary women, health & hygiene training for national church & community ladies, and encouragement for national pastor's wives.

There is so much to tell from this trip and I simply don't have enough space to detail the 12-hour prayer and pampering retreat the missionary wives attended, or the friendships, and prayer partners that resulted from that retreat. I can't delve into the 700 hand-made feminine hygiene products that our FBC sewing ministry championed or the fact that for one month our community was unified in accomplishing this goal. I won't be able to share with you the interpreted words of the pastor's wife "we've seen the men from First Baptist but wondered where the women were, now that you've come I will pray that women will come back each year". But if you'd like to hear more I'd love to grab a cup of coffee and talk about the first women-lead women-focused mission trip from FBC and the possibility of a return to Nepal.

Suzanne Gregory