ON MISSION IN THE PANDEMIC:

Unexpected Fruit from Hard Soil

EASTWEST MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL
Because East-West seeks to multiply followers of Jesus in the spiritually darkest areas of the world, our work has never been easy. Our missionaries and national partners have often faced persecution, retaliation, and rejection, all for the sake of sharing the good news.

But obstacles have not extinguished the light of the gospel. As you can see from our 2019 ministry numbers in this report, our workers on the front lines have still been able to shine a light in the darkness. The gospel continues to spread, churches have been planted, and more people have come to faith in Jesus.

This year, we are facing a new kind of obstacle: a global pandemic. COVID-19 has disrupted the lives of billions around the world, has led to thousands of deaths, and has struck fear in the hearts of many. Yet East-West missionaries and national partners have shown that, more than ever, they are committed to staying on mission. The mission we’ve pursued since the founding of the ministry in 1993 is the same mission we are pursuing now.

In this report, you will see how God moved through the ministry in 2019 and how missionaries are responding to a changing mission field today.

Thank you for your continued support of East-West. I hope you are encouraged by the growth of God’s Kingdom in the far reaches of the globe!

Sincerely,

Kurt Nelson
President and CEO
Sometimes, God uses a sermon to get people’s attention. Sometimes, He uses a pandemic.

Western Europe, a region teeming with spiritual darkness, has proven to be a harvest field with little interest in the gospel. One national partner with East-West named Ivan* has been faithfully tilling the soil of this mission field for more than two decades. He has attempted multiple evangelistic strategies—prayer walks, street interviews, gospel postcards, classes—with little to no fruit from each effort. Some have come to faith, Ivan said, but “most have either thrown it out the window or put it on the shelf of their minds.”

But things changed when COVID-19 entered Europe.

Governments began to shut down businesses and services as the virus spread from country to country. Busy streets became quiet as people were ordered to stay at home. Thousands became sick, many losing their lives.

Fear, panic, and trepidation began to peer through the veil of contentment many Europeans had.

“But at the same time, there is a huge time of opportunity,” Ivan said. “We are seeing people open to help, and also very receptive to significant spiritual conversations with our neighbors.”

“We believe this is a time of awakening in Europe.”

Soon after lockdowns began, Ivan and his wife started receiving messages from friends in their home country, across Europe, and even outside of Europe. These friends, many of whom were not believers, asked how Ivan and his wife were handling the pandemic.

Story continued on the next page.
"We are fine," Ivan would reply. "I am glad you asked. Let me explain to you why."

These messages opened the door to spiritual conversations with friends who were previously closed off to the gospel. Ivan and his wife prayed with their friends, talked to them about their fears, and explained the hope they have in Jesus. Several friends have professed faith in Christ. Others, though not ready to take a leap of faith, have been exploring the Bible in greater depth.

The lockdown has also freed up time for Ivan to have more intentional one-on-one conversations with the young church leaders he is discipling. By having the chance to ask more personal questions, he has discovered ways to better shepherd these church leaders based on their spiritual needs.

"It took a pandemic to open up new evangelism and discipleship channels in the ministry," he said. "There is a receptivity that I have not seen in 22 years connected and serving in this precious land."

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The fruit sprouting from this once dry mission field is evidence of God’s sovereignty in the midst of chaos and tragedy. Ivan has seen first-hand the urgency of continuing the mission even in a global health crisis.

"Identity changed for security purposes."
Even though we are locked down, God’s work is still going on in the villages where we serve ... It’s great to see our neighbors more open to the gospel than ever before. - NATIONAL PARTNER IN SOUTH ASIA

Let’s not take from the devil’s playbook of stoking fear, but rather infuse the chaos with truth, hope and love that only Jesus embodies. - MISSIONARY IN CENTRAL ASIA

God is tilling very tough soil and barriers are being knocked down ... This is our moment as the church to show the world that there is hope, and His name is Jesus! - MISSIONARY IN THE U.S.

Mission critical is the declaration of God’s glory to the nations, whatever the cost, whatever the risk. That has not changed. - VICE PRESIDENT OF EQUIPPING
East-West works in 59 countries around the world*. 27 of these countries (46%) are on the World Watch List for most persecuted places for Christians. 35 of these countries (59%) are considered unreached by Joshua Project.

We are nearing the end of a three-year “unReached” vision to multiply 1 million disciples by 2020. Here is how we saw the Holy Spirit move in 2019:

- 26.9 million people were exposed to the gospel
- 2.4 million professed faith in Jesus
- 405,671 new disciples were multiplied
- 246,006 local leaders were trained
- 41,255 new churches were planted

Your generosity makes a significant impact on reaching the unreached! On average it costs...

- 6¢ to reach one person with the gospel
- $8 to equip one believer
- $22 to start one new church
- $33 to make one new disciple

*As of March 2020. All other statistics collected from January 1, 2019—December 31, 2019
East-West is supported by the gifts of partners who share our passion for multiplying disciples in the world’s spiritually darkest areas.

We strive to communicate the impact and needs of these projects with integrity. Because you are one of our financial partners, we wanted to share with you our financial highlights from 2019.

ECFA MEMBERSHIP

East-West is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). Membership in the ECFA is your assurance that East-West adheres to the highest standards of financial stewardship and ethical practices. For more information visit ecfa.org.
We would like to thank an anonymous print company for graciously providing their services at no cost to the ministry.

The vision of East-West is to glorify God by multiplying followers of Jesus in the spiritually darkest areas of the world.

We exist to mobilize the Body of Christ to evangelize the lost and equip local believers to multiply disciples and healthy churches among unreached peoples and/or in restricted access communities.

Visit www.eastwest.org/unreached2020 to find out how you can be involved in the ministry of East-West in 2020.

You can also consider making a planned gift in your will. It costs you nothing now and can make a Kingdom impact in the future.