

November 5/6, 2016

2016 Global Outreach: Lincoln Berean in India

Global Outreach Staff Representatives

Good morning. I'm Ryan Harmon, pastor of Global Outreach here at Lincoln Berean Church. It's probably obvious to you by now between me being up here and the faces on your bulletin, you can tell that this weekend, these services are a little different than our typical weekly services. The mission of Lincoln Berean Church is: *To glorify God by seeking to present every person complete in Christ*. Now certainly all of you know that that statement—that mission, that mandate—drives us outward, doesn't it? It drives us to connect and engage with people in our lives, in our city, in our contexts—our neighbors our friends, our family—in order to bring the good news of the gospel of the kingdom of God to them. But when Paul made that admonition in Colossians, he said *every person*, right? So every person certainly expands the scope to the furthest reaches of the world. It makes us think about: how is God moving at the furthest corner of the globe? So for two weekends we take a break from our normal weekly rhythm, a break from our series in 2 Samuel, and we take this time in November to think about and talk about: how is God moving globally? What is God doing around the world? Now grab your bulletins and look on the inside flap and you'll see that we have some details, some statistics listed there. You'll see that Lincoln Berean and the missionaries that we have sent out are engaged in thirty countries around the world. So, typically what we've done on these two weekends in November is we've tried to take a look at all the work and the expanse of the work that's happening in partnership with Lincoln Berean. This year we wanted to do it a little differently. This year we wanted to take a look just at the country of India and the region that it's in South Asia. If you don't know, Lincoln Berean has been very engaged in India and it's become a very important region to us, and so we are very excited this morning to help you learn more about that and also to have you join us in celebrating what God is doing. One note before we begin. Take a look again at this cover and, as you see the faces behind me, as you see the faces on the cover of your bulletin, I want to make one thing really clear. These missionaries, these families, they are *our* missionaries; they are Lincoln Berean missionaries.

Five years ago my wife and I went out and led a team to Spain to try to do a church plant. In the same exact way that we were missionaries of Lincoln Berean Church, these guys and their families are our missionaries. They are fully supported by our church. They are fully engaged in the work of the gospel and they are fully partnered together with us. These are our people, and I want to take it one step further. The leaders of this movement—we consider them to be staff. We think of them as Lincoln Berean staff positioned in other contexts. They are positioned in India but these are our co-pastors, our co-laborers, our peers in the work of the gospel. It's really important you understand that when you see these faces, when you hear these stories. These are our people; these are our missionaries. So this morning as we begin, we have this task. We've been involved in India for twenty years, so how do we possibly catch everyone up on what's happened for twenty years of this partnership with Lincoln Berean? And we thought, you know, probably the best way to do that would be to do like a two-minute video: Lincoln Berean and India in two minutes—twenty years—put on your seatbelts; here we go:

[Video]:

You may not know this but the country of India is a big deal here at Lincoln Berean. You see, the story goes all the way back to 1992 and it all started with a lightbulb—not a figurative lightbulb, but an actual lightbulb. In 1992 Jeff and Cynci Petersen scraped together all the money they could come up with to give to missions' work in India. They came up with \$45 and they used it to buy a

lightbulb that would go into a projector so that people in India could see the Jesus film for maybe the first time. One little lightbulb started it all and since then, so much has happened. So let's get you up to speed in two minutes. In 2002 the Leadership Academy launches to train new pastors and in 2003, the "300 in 3" initiative launches which is this crazy initiative that we're going to take 300 local Indian pastors and train them up to lead a church in three years. The "300 in 3" initiative explodes to reach tens of thousands of people for Christ. Berean churches in India have memberships surpassing 15,000 people and in 2012 the Indian Leadership Building Coalition is launched. This initiative with full Indian leadership has multiplied over the past six years. We're taking pastors to train other pastors so that the movement can spread. Currently we have twenty-one of these guys, as well as eleven interns we are supporting as the church. We also have dozens of lay pastors, gospel movements in eighteen different Indian states, movements that have spread to four different South Asian countries—crazy God-sized stuff and untold sweat and tears and hours on our knees, and there's no possible way to go into it all. So just remember this: Lincoln Berean and India: thousands of lives reached, hundreds of pastors launched, movements spread from country to country. God's done a lot over the past twenty years, and during these two weekends we want to celebrate all that God has done. But rather than having us do that, we thought it would be better to have the people leading the movement in India come and be with us. We wanted you to hear it firsthand from the source.

Clint Kirby:

"Well good morning, my name is Clint Kirby, I'm a missionary in Gdansk, Poland, and this is Biman, one of our brothers from India."

Biman Majumdar:

"Thank you, Clint."

"When some of us think of India, we think of lots of people; we think of traffic—sort of chaos. You were born in India; take us back there. What was it like for you to be born in that country?"

"Sure, Clint. But first of all, let me say that my name is Biman Majumdar. I come from a city called Kolkata, formerly called as Calcutta in India. It's a city of William Carey. It's a city of Mother Theresa. It's the *City of Joy* by Dominique Lapierre, the writer. So I bring greetings to you from my city and my church, and to tell about myself: I grew up in a family, a Hindu family basically. My dad was in the Indian army—so, military. He was serving our country and from childhood my dad used to get transferred every two to three years so my childhood was more like moving from one state to another state, then another state and it continued throughout the time I grew up. So by default, I picked up a lot of language, a lot of culture, a lot of variety of India. If you hear that I moved from city to city or state to state, it might sound like, okay that's inside the country. But it's different because in India, moving from one state to another state, it's like moving to a different country where everything is so different. I would say it's a different country really within one country. So I got to grow up in that kind of diversity which completely shaped and transformed me into the way I am today."

"Now you mentioned languages. I think people here would be interested to learn how many languages you actually speak."

"Barely 11 to 12 languages I speak."

“Awesome, yeah most of us still have issues with our English, [*laughter*] so eleven languages is pretty impressive. Well, you mentioned sort of your upbringing, sort of moving place to place. Talk about your journey to Christ and how the Lord led you to himself.”

“It’s tough to compile the whole story in two minutes but let me try. Life cannot be explained so shortly but well, as I said, I grew up in a Hindu family and from childhood, what typically happens in any Hindu family, we get to know about our gods and goddesses. We get to know about all the rituals, all the practices that the family does as a part of inheritance received from our family before. That’s the same way I received from my family. It was a religious family. Our family has been very pious. Every time, all kinds of festivals, you know, there were rituals that were even taught to us. So I grew up in that kind of religious involvement. But on the other side I would say as an adolescent or teenage, when I started understanding things, I could see that our family had a struggle—my dad struggling with the problem of alcoholism which was a challenge. My dad and mom have been great parents and have been providing all our needs. My dad has been that kind of person too; he’s been very caring, loving but at the same time I could see that he has his own struggle, and those struggles brought a lot of changes and difficulty in my personality because it’s completely a different thing to live your life in such an environment where things are sometimes unpredictable, sometimes abusive. Situations are not good at home, but I would say that as I continued, it brought a lot of embarrassment to my personality and a lot of difficulty. It took me to a point where I developed very poor self-esteem. I was really, really upset about all of these things. I thought that if I was more pious, more religious, things would be good with us. Maybe our family would be fine; we would have blessedness. But none of those things happened. I continued struggling throughout my adolescent years, even to the point where as a teenager I developed a very peculiar personality, you know; I would say in our term, maybe in US terms, I completely developed an inferiority complex. If two people are talking out there, staring at me, I’ll think they are talking bad about me. It completely changed my personality, and I would never think about standing here and talking to so many people. That was my personality; I was a tongue-tied person. Adding to my frustration from different things, relationship failures, I got into substance abuse, which we call drug addiction and in my teenage years I got into a lot of addiction stuff just to come out of the misery and the frustration of the family and thinking that maybe this will help me to forget everything. But my situation continued to deteriorate until one day someone shared about Lord Jesus Christ with me. I was told that Jesus loves me and Jesus came onto this earth to forgive us from all our sins and to offer us a new life, a new hope. He gives eternal life. I didn’t believe that I was a sinner because I thought I’m better than many other people or maybe religious people. So it was tough for me. But as I was led through the Bible, especially the book of Romans, chapter three, God started convicting me about my need for Him. I understood that I needed Jesus so very much and that particular time, I gave my life to Jesus Christ. I won’t say that my problems were solved and everything just became okay, but I would say that God allowed me to undergo a journey where it was victory to victory. It was milestone to milestone. My habits were changed. My situations were changed. I had hope; I had aspiration that I’m on the right track. I felt the relief of being forgiven and living a new life. So that’s my conversion story.”

“Praise God. [*Applause*] I’ve been fortunate to come to India, to come to your city. Now how many people live in Kolkata?”

“Kolkata has 16 million people.”

“Sixteen million! A little bigger than Lincoln [*laughter*]; so take us there. Talk about your heart for the people. Because when we think about 16 million people we think, how do we even start? Where do you even begin? Share a bit about your heart for the big city.”

“Sure, well definitely 16 million is overwhelming! It’s no easy task for me being a local or an Indian, but I would take you to one very important incident of my life. When I was growing in Christ, I was part of discipleship. One of my group leaders was helping me grow in the Lord through Bible study. So one fine day when I was walking through my city, heading toward my college, I just stopped over a flyover bridge, and the bridge was facing towards a railway station which is one of the very busy and very crowded railway stations. People commute all the time for their jobs. And as I was looking at that railway station to the exit gates—let me use this metaphor, ants. I could see that people were coming out as if there were thousands and thousands of ants coming out of the hole and coming out on the city. It was such an overwhelming scenario for me and what gripped me is: none of these people know the gospel. There are thousands and thousands of people like me who are desperately looking for true hope, real hope, real faith, which will actually calm the storm in their hearts. I was very, very disturbed about who will tell them if people like me won’t tell them about Lord Jesus Christ. With all of my disturbance and heaviness, I went to my group leader and I told him about the situation. He calmed me. He calmed the storm and he said to me, ‘Relax and let me tell you, Biman. Maybe God is calling you to share the gospel to your city, but it’s not going to be fixed in just one snap. You’ve got to be faithful wherever God puts you.’ Well, I was in college and it was just an immediate understanding for me that I’ve got to be God’s messenger in my college. I started sharing the gospel with friends, with my peers and very soon, Campus Crusade also started a Bible study in my college, a chapel service, which was not existing before. So I’m super thankful to God that He called me that time and I do see that our city’s flooded with people—people we bump into every day, thousands and thousands of people—they need the gospel; they need hope. They need the life transforming gospel of Jesus Christ and that keeps me motivated.”

“Yeah, tell us about your journey from campus ministry into church planting and a bit about the ministry you’re involved with today.”

“Well, yeah, I served with Campus Crusade for Christ for almost twelve years along with my wife. We got to serve in Kolkata, the city where I’m actually from. We thought for some time I could lead the team there for a couple of years—the Kolkata Campus Crusade team for the university student ministry. After that, the Lord took us for a little period of time to Bangladesh where we served as missionaries. It was almost toward the end of our time there that we got back to Kolkata and I started looking at our city and contemplating praying, ‘What’s our next assignment?’ The Lord very specifically started convicting us about the centrality of church, that the church is that engine that really takes the gospel out. I would say that my city is unique because our people are unique and there is so much diversity. We were convicted that we need a church that will relevantly, sensitively, contextually reach out to our city with the gospel of Jesus Christ in a way that becomes a stepping stone for people to come to church and come to Jesus. That’s the way we started our church, which got started five years back with the name of Navjevan Assembly. It means New Life Assembly, and that’s our rally cry toward restoring life; so that’s the church. I’m one of the pastors who’s pastoring. Apart from that we started another church in New Town, which is the northern part of Kolkata, which is a very unique city. It’s a very new city, full of high rises, full of people—thousands of people, ex-pats, all people migrated from different states and cities for jobs for IT and different corporate firms—and we happen to be there. It’s not easy to reach out there either, but God is using us in and through that ministry out there.”

“One of the joyful things for me the past couple of weeks, spending time with these guys, is getting to talk ministry and it’s been amazing how many similarities we share in the respective church plants in terms of successes and failures and ways we’ve seen God show up. Biman, you shared with me one particular moment with this new church plant where you were sort of wrestling with: should we close the doors, should we keep going?”

“Sure. Yeah, actually it’s so true that as I was sharing, it’s so overwhelming to do it and, as we were proceeding with this new church plant initiative, by the ninth or tenth month I was feeling that maybe this is not the right time and we might have to shut down; we might have to pause or have a restart later because people were not coming. Many people said they will come, but most of the time what we found is nobody is turning up. So we were in that crossway. But as we were seeking the Lord, the Lord showed up and brought a couple of people in our midst and I’m so thankful that He’s in the business of planting churches. God is planting the church and He doesn’t start the church to stop it, so God brought people and even as I’m talking to you right now, just an hour ago, one of our churches—this church that I’m talking about—had their evening worship service. My wife and my team were there and they are just watching us right now, so it’s just neat you know; I just said hello to them. This church God is taking care of so I’m super excited that I get to work with the Lord in this particular thing.”

“How has Lincoln Berean Church impacted your ministry in Kolkata and in India?”

“Yeah, before I explain how Lincoln Berean Church has impacted us. I will say a very big thanks to Lincoln Berean Church for your partnership with our church and ministry out there in Kolkata and India. I will just give you one story maybe. There are many ways Lincoln Berean is partnering with the church out there. You will get to know that through the video and the person next to me, Sushil. But let me tell you one particular story. The last two summers Pastor Jason Harms, the youth pastor, he brought two groups to our city. Now these two groups were supposed to come and share gospel and help us in our ministry, help us get entry into some of the institutions. I just wrote a letter to one of the reputed colleges in our city, in the southern part; the college name is Vivekananda College. I asked them, ‘Can we have an international students’ cultural exchange program in your college?’ Usually they have not done that in the past, but it was a favor of the Lord that they gave us permission. It was a super thing. We had our American students in that particular college—many of them may be in this room—and it was a great thing to have an exchange with them. We had separate programs where we could share the gospel with them. We built friendships with them. There was a great exchange program for a couple of days. It was fantastic. Things were done. It was finished. They all went back to the US. After two weeks, when I went to the college campus, I got to talk with the unit president, the student union president of that college, and he was telling me a few things which really, really impressed me a lot and I was thankful. He told me, ‘Biman, the group that you brought was fantastic. Generally whenever we call any group from outside or if any commercial company comes to our college for campaigning or advertisement, for every hour we take money. Without money we don’t do it. But for you guys, we will not charge a single penny even in the future because your group was great and our principal told us to cooperate with you and let you guys do whatever you want to do in our college. We are happy to have you guys.’ I want to tell you, that’s great, great praise because in the history of that college, these things have never happened and this is possible because people from this church moved through our city and partnered with us in relevant ways to make a difference for God’s kingdom. So I’m thankful to this church and all those people who took that challenge to come, and I do encourage you to do so even more in the days to come. Thank you.”

“Biman, thank you. [applause] thank you for sharing your story. Thank you for your faithfulness.”

“Just one thing—sorry for interruption— but I talked to you about my father and my mom. I want to give a praise to God, and I know that there are people in this church who also prayed for them. Long story short, my dad is a sober man; he’s completely alcohol free. He’s a part of a very famous fellowship called AA, Alcoholics Anonymous, and he’s taking great leadership. He’s sharing with people how to come out of that and my mom and dad get to be a part of our church. They worship the Lord; they participate in family prayer at home. The Lord is transforming lives and we are in that business and it’s a privilege and an honor and I just invite everyone to participate. Thank you.” [applause]

“Thanks, Biman.”

Jeff Petersen:

“Thank you, Biman and Clint. It’s my privilege to be standing here with you this morning with my good friend, Sushil Marandi. For Biman, it’s his first trip to America and for two other of our four leaders that are here. But it’s actually the second time for Sushil to come. He visited us in 2010. He came, and that trip was in the dead of winter so I have been very, very thankful. We were praying a lot about the weather. I keep telling him every day, ‘You don’t know, this is so amazing.’ But literally when he landed in Omaha on his first trip, he told me he went and he got his things and he went walking outside of the airport and he immediately went walking right back into the airport. He’d never felt anything like it. We had just had a major snowstorm and it was brutally cold, and I’m pretty sure he thought I had been exiled to this place for some great sin in my life or something the Lord had done. So we’re glad you’re here and glad the weather’s a little better. You’re enjoying it more this time?”

Sushil Marandi:

“Oh, yes. Yes.”

“Well, Biman shared with you about his story and his perspective and it’s so powerful for us to hear. You know, 16 million people just in the city of Kolkata and 1.3 billion people in the country of India. And the thing we can’t lose sight of is over 96% of those people do not know Jesus and have never even heard a clear presentation of the gospel. It’s pretty staggering for me to drive around Lincoln with these guys. I took them yesterday up 84th street—church row—one after another after another after another. And while they’ve been here, I’ve told them about many of you. ‘This person goes to our church and oh, that person goes to our church, and oh that person’.... One of them literally said to me yesterday, ‘Who doesn’t go to your church?’ We are very, very blessed to be a part of this body and to be a part of this city, and yet to whom much is given, much is required, which is why we’re so passionate to be fully engaged in a place with such tremendous need. But you know, it looks very different in different parts of India and even with our dear friends, their stories are very different. Biman comes from the city. Sushil does not. Tell us a little bit about the world you grew up in.”

“Thank you, Jeff. I grew up in a village. Like Biman said, India is very different; you cannot describe. It is nations within a nation. He grew up going from city to city, learning languages. But that was not me. I grew up in a very small village, spoke just one language, and the maximum distance I had traveled before my university was 30 km north, 8 km south, 10 km east and 12 km west. That was my world before I went to university.”

“Can you imagine? Your entire growing up, let’s say you lived here in Lincoln, and you’d never even come close to getting to Omaha the whole time you grew up. Or, some of you, many of our people live down near Firth. Imagine this—this is even more realistic. Imagine you grew up and for sixteen years you lived in Firth, and you’d never made it to Lincoln. That’s the radius in which Sushil’s world was lived. And in that world which was so isolated, it’s a very different world. Even the very core of the worldview about how the world came into existence is different isn’t it?”

“Um, yeah. It’s a funny story. [*laughter*] It’s what I believed when I was growing up. We believed that the world was full of water—the earth is flat, not round and the earth is full of water—so god decided to bring the earth to the water level. So he asked earthworm to bring the dirt and put it upon the back of a turtle so he can just bring it up. So the earth is carried by this turtle.”

“So, literally, the way that the land came about on earth was a worm was supposed to take dirt from under the water and put it on the back of a turtle.”

“Yes, and when the turtle was too tired to carry this earth, it moves its leg, and that’s how the earth quakes, causing an earthquake. And that’s what we grew up believing.”

“Literally?”

“Literally, yes.”

“Wow. So the earth was formed on the back of a turtle and anytime the turtle shakes its leg, we have an earthquake. Well I’m glad the seismologists will be glad to have that one solved at this point. [*laughter*] You know, it’s pretty incredible because we’re not talking about hundreds of years ago. We’re not talking about that long ago, and while you came to fairly quickly learn those things weren’t true, you did something seven years ago to try to help people in your village understand that wasn’t true. Tell them what you did.”

“Yeah. Actually when I studied about this globe and the earth and everything, I got very excited and I said, ‘Okay, let me explain it to some of my village people.’ That was, of course, several years back, and I just called them and I said, ‘Okay, I have a piece of information for you. This is completely different about creation. The earth is not flat; it’s round—round like football—not American football, Indian football.’ And as a matter of fact, I just told them people are not only on this side of the earth, but also on the other side of the world, the earth, the globe. And they laughed at me. They said, ‘No way.’ One thing: it was very, very difficult for them to understand if people are here, that’s okay, fine. But if people are under here, why are they not falling? [*laughter*] So it’s, ‘No way, no way.’ So seven years back as Jeff mentioned, I said, ‘Okay I’ve got to show these people about this globe.’ So I took my laptop and internet connection and just called them—some of them—and said, ‘Look at this—Google Earth—what is this?’ And they all were just wondering, ‘What is that?’ And they said, ‘Oh, we don’t know.’ I said, ‘This is our globe; this is where we live. When you see something a big thing from a distance, it looks very small. Like we see moon; it looks very small. But it’s not that small; it’s big. Airplane we see, it’s very small, but it’s bigger than that. So this is earth and we are seeing from distance, so I say, Let’s go closer.’ So I just zoomed in, came down, came down, came down. This is India; this is your village, and this is your house. And they were like [*laughter*]; I don’t know, maybe some of them believed it. Maybe others still doubted.”

“Talk about “mindblown”. You are literally talking hundreds of years of learning being presented to someone in a matter of minutes as a result of technology. Now for most of us it’s just absolutely unimaginable. Most of us had no idea that there are people still living on planet earth who believe that the earth is flat, and it would be very, very easy for us to hear about that and to think about people like that and think, “Wow those people are unintelligent.” But let me just assure you, having gotten the privilege of walking together with Sushil for almost thirteen years and friendship and partnership, I can tell you: that is not the case. This is one of the most intelligent men I know. It’s not a lack of intelligence; it’s a lack of opportunity and a lack of information that keep so many people from experiencing all that God wants to do in and through their lives. And yet our God is so big he can reach into a small village like that and begin to impact the life of even one man in such a significant way. Sushil was the first student in the first school to ever take place in his village. Where was that school? Was that in the new building they had erected down the road or where was it?”

“This was under a tree.”

“Under a tree?”

“Under a tree. No blackboard. No table or chair for the teacher. He sat on the root of the tree and we sat on the floor.”

“For all of his elementary school, that’s how he went to school. And he later would become the first person from his community who would ever go to college. And so you grew up in such a different world, and obviously that world shaped you in many ways. And one of the parts of how you were shaped was the relationship you had with your father, just as Biman was shaped by that. Talk a little bit about that relationship.”

“My father was a school teacher and he valued education so he made us study. All of the kids of course in the village would just run around, scream, and play games. We could just hear that, and inside we were studying—myself, my sister and my brother—and we didn’t like that. Sometimes, if we failed to do that, we had harsh punishment, to the point where we hated our father. So this is not a good man; we were very, very afraid of him. As a matter of fact, sometimes I tell people that if my father and a royal Bengal tiger stand side by side and somebody ask me to go hug one of them, I would hug the royal Bengal tiger, not my father. So that was kind of, you know, the imagination about my father.”

“That’s a pretty big statement. Side by side, you’d rather hug a tiger than hug your dad. That’s a hilarious statement and a hilarious story, but it reflects the reality of the fear that a child had related to his own father. How did that affect you in terms of your identity and what you thought about yourself and what you were like as a child and as a young man?”

“I grew up very fearful. I was very afraid of my dad, and I had very low self-esteem. Sometimes I felt like I don’t value, I don’t matter.”

“You felt like, really, you had nothing to offer?”

“That’s right.”

“And yet God had such a different story. One of the things that was very difficult for Sushil, when he grew up in such a strict environment, was he felt so pressed down. So by the time you went to college, you had this amazing opportunity to get away and you went 300 km from home and what did you do with your newfound freedom?”

“Yeah, so with the strict discipline, I just wanted to get rid of that. I wanted freedom. So when I went to university—my father sent me to Ranchi, which is about 300 km from my village. There I got my freedom. No one was there to guide me. I just did whatever I wanted. And that freedom actually led me into captivity. I got into all kinds of habits, including drinking, smoking, and wasting my dad’s money. I’ll never forget this one particular day. Normally my father would send money for thirty days and by twenty days I had finished all the money. For two days I did not have any food and I’m just sitting, hungry, no food for two days. I was trying to find if there was some money somewhere in a box. I found two bars of soap which I had bought for the month and I just went back with that to the shop and said, ‘Okay, take this back and give me some food,’ and when I came home, I had food and I hated myself. I said, ‘I cannot live this way anymore.’ I didn’t like myself.”

“So you had gone to college thinking, “This is it. I’m going to have freedom. I’m going to live it up, do whatever I want,” then got involved in drinking and all kinds of things. And all of a sudden you end up in this place where now you’re so low you literally can’t even stand yourself?”

“Yes.”

“And then something happened in that context where Jesus enters the picture. Tell us about that.”

“A friend of mine, we studied in high school together. He came to stay with me and his life was very different when we were together in high school. But when he came to Ranchi to study with me, his life was completely different. I said, ‘John, what happened to you?’ And he said, ‘Jesus changed my life.’ And of course he shared about Jesus. By then I didn’t believe in God because of the turtle story. I said, ‘Okay, there’s no god.’ That was my belief. And when he shared about Jesus and how He changed his life, I said, ‘Okay, let me try.’ I didn’t know how to pray, so every morning I just got up, kneel down, and pray, ‘Jesus, if you’re God, change my life and I will follow you for the rest of my life.’ September 13, 1988, Jesus changed my life, and from the very next day I was completely a different person. And from there, I started following him and growing in the faith.”

“And you had a chance to go back home and you told your parents about this relationship with Jesus. How did they respond?”

“Of course, you know, I became the first believer. This was in 1988. I became the first believer from my village and I never grew up hearing about the name of Jesus. In fact the first time I ever came in contact with the name Jesus was when I was standard ninth.”

“Ninth grade was the first time you had ever heard the name Jesus, ever in your life?”

“Yeah. So, I was very excited because my life was transformed. I went back home; I told my dad, ‘You know, my life has changed. Jesus has changed my life.’ And he looked at me and he said, ‘So, you have become Christian?’ And then I said, ‘Oh, wait a minute. Maybe, yes, maybe I have become Christian.’”

“You didn’t even know?”

“Yeah, so he said, ‘Either you are following Jesus or you are just going out of my house.’ And then I said, ‘No, I cannot deny Jesus because He has changed my life.’ And I said, ‘Even if you don’t support my study, I will keep coming to you; I’ll respect you; I’ll honor you, but it’s up to you. But I cannot deny Jesus.’ So with that I went back to university and for two months I didn’t have money from my dad and God took care of me. Christmas vacation I just came home and my father let me come in but one thing he could see that my life was different and he started believing something has happened; something supernatural has happened. So from there, you know, slowly he started understanding, and toward the end of his life—last year he passed away—towards the end of his life, he accepted Christ, both my mom and dad; they got baptized.” [applause]

“And now there are about twenty-five believing families in his village as that impact has continued to take place. It’s pretty incredible because Sushil, even in the fact of persecution, said, ‘I cannot stop following Jesus,’ and that led you on a path of giving your life to serving Jesus full time. Talk to us about what you’ve done and why you serve Jesus in this needy place of India.”

“When my life was changed, I could see many other friends—my friends—struggling, and not only my friends, but thousands of young people. I wanted to become a professor but at that point of time I said, ‘No, I think the best thing I can do with my life is to tell people about Jesus, the gospel that can transform their life.’ So, I decided to join Campus Crusade in ’91, worked with Campus Crusade for almost twenty years. That’s where we met, actually. I worked in different roles and capacity and my last assignment was: I was associate national director for East India, and I had seen thousands of young people coming to Christ, including Biman, Sunit, and Samit who will be sharing next week. So I’m happy I made this decision.”

“And this boy from a flat world in a school under a tree has been used of God to impact thousands of lives. About four or five years ago he became our full time team leader, working with us in our church planting movements in India which have now extended to seeing church planting movements initiated in 18 states in India as well as Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and we just opened in the country of Indonesia. And, Sushil, we just want to say thanks. Thanks for sharing your story and thanks for your partnership with us.” [applause]

“Let me also take this moment to say thank you to all of you. I think whatever we are able to see God doing is just because of what you all are doing. Your prayers, your financial help and your contribution has helped us in whatever we are doing in the Lord. We are doing a great partnership and some of you have already come to India—many of you—and me, us, coming to the US is fun, but coming to India is not fun. There’s so much heat with crazy driving and traffic. I don’t know how you manage to come sixty times, now? More than sixty times now? Thank you, Jeff, for doing that. And thank you for coming, those of you who have come, and whatever way you have been involved, I thank you so much.”

“Thank you, brother. You know we really have had a privilege as a church because I don’t know of another church in America that has literally been blessed of God to have the opportunities that we’ve had to work like this. We haven’t sent a single person from this church to live in India and be involved in this ministry full time. It’s been all through our Indian national leaders and brothers and sisters. At the same time, over seventy people have gone to India. We have sent business people, medical personnel, farmers, teachers, students—all kinds of people—who are a part of this work together with us, and we want to show you just a few glimpses of some who went this past summer.

[Video]:

“My wife and I were relatively new to Lincoln and we came to Lincoln Berean, quite candidly, to get lost in the crowd initially. And I could hear God laughing about that as the very first time we came to Lincoln Berean was the global missions’ deal where Jeff and Ryan talked about what was going on. I knew I had to offer up whatever I could do to serve.”

“It’s always an interesting process to get on the plane, to fly sixteen hours, and to touch down to do something that you really don’t know what you’re going to do until you get there.”

“I was familiar with kind of overseas missions and the feel of it, but India’s a very different and special place.”

“India impacts all of your senses almost all the time: From people all around you, noise all the time; the traffic is just, Wow—Frightening!”

“We see animals, like cows walking down the road. Stray dogs. There are people on the side of the roads. You can’t look around without seeing somebody...something...always.”

“There is an individual in India by the name of Clarence who has been an incredible resource in terms of growing the medical community in India to support the church planting efforts. And Clarence was interested and asked for doctors to come and help him and support him in engaging doctors in India. When you visit India, you come to appreciate what you have in the United States. It’s so much different than the care that’s provided here.”

“I went with a team of five other Berean youth, so six total, and two youth pastors, to go over to India and essentially we went to go into colleges and did cultural exchange programs. Through speaking with them, we wanted to get feelers out for what they thought of religion, what they thought of Christianity, what they thought of who Jesus was. The biggest religion is Hinduism and they believe in all gods. All gods are true. You’re true; you’re right; I’m right. But that’s just how it’s going to be, you know; I’m not going to change what I believe.”

“A country of 1.3 billion...1.4 billion...whatever it is, a huge number where under three percent have even heard the gospel message. It’s so overwhelming how there’s nothing we can do. But again, you can walk away thinking about individuals that were warm and open enough to converse with us, to meet with us and you can begin to think, “Wow, we don’t have to think about changing 17 million people; you can think about changing one person at a time.”