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Dear Friends,

I (Al) was on the road most of November, returning the day before Thanksgiving. Let me fill you in on my far-flung adventures:

*\* Chiang Mai, Thailand \** (Oct 31-Nov 6):

Fortunately, the floodwaters didn't affect the main airport outside of Bangkok, so I had no problem reaching my destination of Chiang Mai in northern Thailand. There I met up with one of my colleagues from the States. Our purpose was to gather information about the possibility of working with the Lisu tribe, a people group living mostly in mountainous areas in southern China, Myanmar, Thailand, and India. A large percentage of the Lisu have turned to the Lord, but most of their village church leaders have had little or no training. The need is definitely there, and the next step might be a trip next year to southern China to meet with several of the Lisu church leaders. [Interesting trivia: the Thai word for a turkey is "elephant chicken."]

*\* Darjeeling, India \** (Nov 7-13):

After four hours of harrowing hairpin curves up the mountain, mostly in the dark, I arrived in Darjeeling (elevation: 7000 feet) in northeast India. I didn't sip any Darjeeling tea, but I did see a lot of tea plantations (I'm the fourth from the left in the photo of our team in the midst of the tea, on back), with a stunning view of Mt. Kangchenjunga (elevation: 28,169 feet), only about 860 feet shorter than Everest. There I met with our India team (about 12 in all) to learn more about India and how to minister effectively in this multi-cultural nation. Apparently there is a huge need for the non-formal type of training that we offer--training that is systematic, but doesn't require the church leader to attend a school. [Interesting fact: many village witches practice their craft in cemeteries between the hours of midnight and 3 am. It is said that if someone sees him or her returning home from the cemetery, that person will die (even if it is the witch's son or daughter).]

*\* Siliguri, India \** (Nov 13-16):

Siliguri is down the mountain from Darjeeling, with easy access to Nepal, China, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. There our staff put on a two-day conference on Discipleship & the Church for about 60 church leaders (35 men and 25 women). One of the translators was an Indian girl, Renu, about 23 years old. When she was 15, she suffered severe burns on the left side of her body and was not expected to live. After spending about 18 months in the hospital, she recovered. Today she

says she has so much to do for the Lord that she doesn't think she'll ever have time to get married.

*\*Chennai, India \** (Nov 16-22):

This is the city I visited on my last two trips to India. It now looks like we will begin a project here sometime next year. The first phase will probably involve finding a simple training curriculum, or training some of them to write one. Then after we have at least one course ready to go, we will hold a pastors' conference later in the year for about 50-100 pastors and church leaders in the Chennai area. [Interesting trivia: the Apostle Thomas, who according to tradition first brought the Gospel to India, was supposedly martyred and buried in Chennai.]

*\*Cluj, Romania \** (Nov 23):

It was about 15° F when I arrived in Cluj—about 65 degrees cooler than in Chennai (cooler than usual for Cluj). But feasting on “elephant chicken” the next day more than made up for the frigid temperatures!!!

... and from Mary: It was SO good to get Al back home after such a LONG trip! And yet after just a few days together it was my turn to be traveling... this time to Florida to be with my mom to help her celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday! We truly had a LOT to be thankful for when we gathered with a “few” friends (20, to be exact!) for Thanksgiving... a lot to be thankful for EVERY day!!!

Serving Him with you,

*Al & Mary*

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