

The Indian Thread

eMi² Newsletter, March 2004

“Looking back, what I remember from this trip is the faithfulness of God.”



Get a world map and draw a line between Delhi and Hong Kong. Lying somewhere close to the midpoint is Imphal, Manipur’s capital. Nestled between Bangladesh and Myanmar (Burma), Manipur is one of seven tribal hill states in Northeast India. The people who live there are extremely different in culture, language and appearance from the rest of India. Since they are quite proud of these differences, it is easy to

understand their tendency to differentiate between people and things 'Indian' and those 'Manipuri', though these distinctions do not exist politically. Yet politics were the main problem in planning this trip, over 2700 km (1680 mi) away from the eMi² office in Mussoorie. The Indian Central Government doesn't allow foreigners to visit the locality where the client's headquarters and project site are located, because of low security and tribal insurgent groups, a problem plaguing much of the Northeast. These groups have been known to kidnap and hold foreigners for large ransoms. Even so, we chose to trust that God would make it worthwhile, even if all we could do was meet M--- and the RNBA leadership in the capital...

The RNBA is a group of pastors, doctors, church leaders and laymen of the R--- Naga tribe who run social, evangelistic, and educational programs in the tribal, western hills of Manipur. Four-foot, six-inch-tall M---, who directs the Development & Relief department, is 'running 40 years' old this year and has 3 children. He is always smiling. He has



The leaders of RNBA

worked in the RNBA for over 10 years and speaks 4 or 5 of the tribal languages, plus English, Bengali, and Hindi. Mediating, negotiating, and interpreting, M--- described himself as 'a man in the middle.' It's a role that suits him well.

Since we couldn't go there ourselves, M--- was our eyes, ears, and Total Station (survey equipment) in describing the size and shape of the RNBA property. In the end, compiling his recollections, a hand sketch, a home video of the site, and an aerial photo printed in a calendar, we did our best for our 'pretend' survey - and no one will know the difference... until we go back and do an 'actual' survey, that is. Carving 26 work hours out of three days was difficult when you consider that, because of meetings and other RNBA programs, we usually started our work at 6 or 7 o'clock in the evening. Despite our strange sleeping habits, we completed designs for the office+conference+guest house facility, and the masterplan for the property we didn't see - detailed down to that cute little tiger I drew in the forest...



Zach and Julia hard at work

Looking back, the memories I will take away from this trip do not involve the

Manipuri people or the long train rides or the discussions of Northeast politics, but rather what I remember is the faithfulness of God. The more I lead project trips the more these two sayings seem to be true:

1. Each project trip is different.
2. The Lord honors His servants.

Knowing now how it all turned out and how the Lord worked through us, the steps of faith we made on the way seem small... they didn't at that time. The trick is to just keep taking them...

Matt Coffey
Director, eMi²

eMi² welcomes two new staff members!



Sarah Young, our new staff civil engineer, has been transplanted from Missouri to Mussoorie. Sarah has recently been on staff with the eMi-USA office, but has always had her sights set on India. She hasn't been here long enough to adjust to anything yet, but she's in love with the beauty and variety of the land and people of India, and even of eMi². More than once, she's been surprised to find herself in a meeting where as many as four languages are spoken!

Ivy Ng (you can pronounce her last name as 'mh', if that helps), is an architect from Hong Kong. Having tasted life here in Oaklands for 3 months in 2001, Ivy decided she wanted more. So she came back, joining the eMi² team as staff. How is it? She says again and again, 'It is good to be back!'



Spring interns at eMi²...



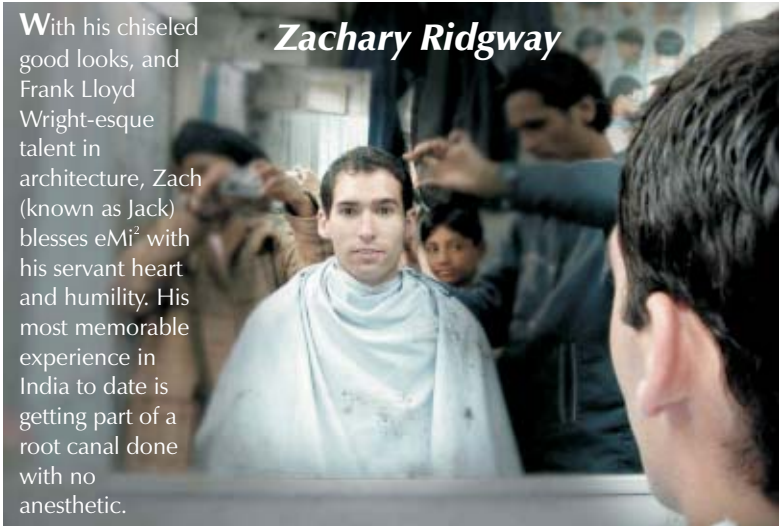
Lauren Grenz

Born in beautiful Colorado and blowing in from windy Laramie, Wyoming, Lauren is the baby of the group with only 22 years under her belt. She's holding her own, though, being one of the few engineers around here. (All these architects are over-running the place!) She likes playing the guitar and going for walks. If you hear laughter, it's probably Lauren and her roommate, since they seem to be laughing at all hours of the day and night.



Julia Wolter

Julia is serving her second semester with eMi using her talents of architecture and demolition. Her current project is redoing the fireplace, chiseling away 30 layers of plaster. She impresses us all (and makes the rest of us look bad) with her German work ethic by showing up to work before the sun is up and staying until it goes down. While in India she has mastered the art of eating with her hands.



Zachary Ridgway

With his chiseled good looks, and Frank Lloyd Wright-esque talent in architecture, Zach (known as Jack) blesses eMi² with his servant heart and humility. His most memorable experience in India to date is getting part of a root canal done with no anesthetic.

Donations to eMi² can be sent to:

**Engineering Ministries International,
130 East Kiowa, Suite 200 Colorado Springs, CO 80903**

Checks are payable to "Engineering Ministries International" with "eMi²" in the memo section.