

AN INTRODUCTION

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Talk is cheap. “What good is it if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose someone is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?” James 2:14-16. Doing something speaks, taking action speaks; louder than any “thoughts and prayers”. Wading into suffering to take real action and make a tangible change in the daily existence of the life of another, SHOUTS the love of Christ. Consider His time on earth; yes, he taught and instructed, but he paired it with healing and feeding. This was how he revealed His identity, and this is how we also must identify ourselves with Him; by taking action.

One significant way the Church can take action is by working to address hunger. With 795 million remaining undernourished (the combined equivalent populations of the US, Canada, and South America!), there is an ongoing race between global population growth and the food production required to feed this growth. A significant challenge, but one which can be met. Through the work of a small army of scientists and agriculturalists across the globe, a deeper understanding of creation is enabling us to produce more and more food, with fewer and fewer resources. But scientific discovery itself will not be enough. Better science and technologies need to be shared and demonstrated with the farmers who can benefit from them, especially in areas of the world where smallholders (small-scale subsistence farmers) eke out a living from agriculture. The process of sharing, teaching, and demonstrating the latest solutions of agricultural science is termed “agricultural **extension**”, a concept not unlike the great commission given to the Church to share, teach, and demonstrate truth and the good news. However, systems of agricultural **extension** are often ineffective in the developing world; this creates an incredible opportunity for the Church.

East Gate Extension (EGX) brings the Church into the gap between the struggles of smallholder farmers and the solutions of science. Through surveys conducted by EGX, we’ve learned there are many Church leaders in the developing world who witness the plight of those forced to merely subsist from fruits of their labor and are looking for ways to take action. However, the Church is often unaware of the science and technical resources readily available to address limitations in agricultural productivity. Meanwhile, agricultural scientists and researchers are continually in search of more effective means of delivering their discoveries and solutions to the smallholders who need them. EGX intends to close this gap. We work to activate underutilized community networks, using the local Church to create linkages for **extension** from



agricultural universities and institutes to smallholder farmers. We assess local agricultural production constraints, identify and establish relationships with the best experts and scientists specializing in the specific needs of each unique agricultural production system, then equip the Church to transfer the latest science-based agricultural advancements through demonstration farms, training, and education.

When man first broke contract with God, scripture says we were banished from paradise out to the east. East Gate Extension is a vision of God allowing man, through the tools of science, to approach that eastern edge of paradise, peer back into perfection from an imperfect world, using what we learn to extend love and relief to the hungry and hurting. By equipping the Church with the best agricultural science, we can extend the answers hidden in creation, and the love extended by its Creator.

Nathan Fortner

The state of global food security and the constant flow of scientific discovery to improve agricultural production, represent an unprecedented opportunity for the Church. The simple truth is that agricultural research is making it possible to feed earth's growing population, but this knowledge is not always effectively delivered to, or accepted by, the farming families who need it most. We have a mandate to feed bodies and souls. Many missionaries and the local Church are perfectly positioned to deliver agricultural solutions to their communities, and potentially to do so more effectively than government, academic, or aid agencies. I don't believe science and government can address global hunger, in the way it ought to be addressed, without the Church. Where possible, we need to work with these groups. Addressing hunger is a powerful tool for living out the Gospel in a practical, tangible way.

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