

Kashmir 2025

By Alia



The tulip gardens in Srinagar My team meeting with Kashmiri's

In October 2024 Angelo and I sat in Delhi on the big Mosque's steps, discussing our shared dream to reach out to Kashmir.

Angelo lives in Delhi, speaks Urdu and has a travel agency - the ideal combination for organising a week-long trip to Kashmir. I live in Pretoria and have access to Unlimited Prayer Frontiers' rich resources for putting together a prayer journey.

God opened a window of opportunity for us to go to Kashmir late March early April 2025. I started advertising the trip and challenging people to join. Nobody responded. God confirmed via a German prophet that we'll have enough people and resources to go. We carried on planning the trip and indeed, by the time we had to fly to Delhi, we had a team of six people and sufficient money for all our expenses. God provided.

God also sent us word after word, confirming that it is indeed His will that we must go, and that it will be a difficult and dangerous trip.

After an introductory day in Delhi (visiting temples of Jainists, Sufi's, Sikh's and Hindus) we flew to Kashmir. The planes were packed with Kashmiri's going home for Eid, and tourists on their way to visit the famous tulip gardens in Srinagar. It was the perfect time to enter the country mostly unnoticed.

As soon as we landed in Srinagar, I became very ill. My body was battling something I had never encountered before. I decided to trust in God, and to walk in faith.

Srinagar looked poor, decayed and grey. It was India with all the Indian problems, dirt, pollution, mangy dogs everywhere, dense traffic and bad roads, but missing the Indian colours, vibrancy and joy. To me, it was an ugly and sad city, with heavily armed soldiers everywhere. It was impossible to miss that we had entered a war zone.

Our dirty and smelly hotel did not improve my first impressions of the city. We went out to visit the tulip gardens. I was feeling terrible, and simply put one foot in front of the other in faith. By the time we reached the gardens I could hardly stand upright. I sank down into the first shady spot I saw and asked the team to explore on their own.

At one stage I woke up, seeing the five concerned youngsters standing around me. For a moment my perspective shifted, and I saw them in the spiritual realm as five very tall, shining knights of Light. It was

beautiful to behold. I relaxed, realising that God equipped them with everything needed to go out and pray. They do not need me - I can stay behind and fight for my life.

The next day, on Eid, I stayed behind in the dingy hotel as they went out to pray in Srinagar. I listened to all the prayers being boomed out from every mosque in the city, a cacophony of lies and deception. For the first time I realised how invasive five daily prayers are. There are no peace and respite from these prayers. They rule every waking hour and wake you up at night - a never-ending cycle of professing lies, over and over.

By God's grace Angelo met his friend Mossel in town. We went to Mossel's house and he and his kind wife Linda invited me to stay behind in their house, while the team went to the mountains. I was deeply thankful for God's provision for me. In dirty, crowded Srinagar, God had led me to the one house of peace where I could recuperate. Indeed, at the house of my kind hosts my kidneys started functioning again, and the blinding, pounding headache lifted somewhat. I drank ginger-saffron tea and slept the days away.

My team lived through many adventures and had good times of prayer. I sat quietly and observed the land, learning what I could about the place.

What I learned: Kashmir is a deeply divided area, with many language groups living separate lives next to each other. The Kashmiri's are described as being selfish people, willing to trample their neighbours for their own gain. Previously they were kind people, living simple and content lives, but the society changed. The young people are not interested in their rich heritage or their past. They desire Western lives and European houses. Kashmiri is only spoken at home. On the streets and in the shops, everybody speaks excellent English. There are no Kashmiri books and the language is not written or read. Children study in Urdu at the schools and all road signs are in English and Hindi.

The Kashmiri people have no say in their daily affairs. All is decided by the Indian government and by the ever-present Indian army and Indian police. The Kashmiri's cannot vote, but have to abide by whatever decisions are made by the Indian-appointed rulers. I heard sad stories about police brutality, about family members being taken by force at night, and never seen again, about Kashmiri children being murdered in cold blood.

I heard about a nation that fears that it will disappear. In this time, Islam appears to be a safe haven - a good father that will look after the threatened Kashmiri's and that will protect them against an Indian take-over. The many missionaries in Kashmir are seen as part of the effort to alienate the Kashmiri's from their own culture, as yet another group of people who are in Kashmir with ulterior motives.

This is what I learned in Kashmir.

In the meantime, my team tried to reach Gurez valley. In the process, they talked with many locals, with many officials and with the police and the army. They experienced the army as being very helpful, and the locals as warm-hearted people, glad to meet foreigners. Yet they could not obtain permission to go to Gurez. In this day and age there still are places that cannot be reached by the word of God.

The last evening in Kashmir we talked with many foreign workers working there. They were glad that I was ill, not because they rejoiced in my suffering; but because I would be better equipped to understand the battlefield they constantly face. They work hard, ceaselessly, and yet there is very little fruit of their labours. They sacrifice much to be there, to seemingly little avail. Yet everyone on my team felt refreshed after meeting the workers. Meeting them were like a draught of clear water in the midst of defiled, dark Kashmir.

What is the truth about Kashmir? India will swallow the country and spit out the Kashmiri's. The violence of Islam is not the answer either. Islam brings no prosperity and no hope. Where Islam rules, people suffer. Jesus Christ? Is the suffering Messiah the answer for Kashmir's problems? He loves the people. He knows them and He cares about them. He is the only contender for Kashmir's hand worthy to be served.

In Kashmir I experienced Jesus as the waiting bridegroom, desiring to clothe his as yet unwilling bride in her bridal finery. We went into a war zone to announce a wedding proposal - Jesus wants to betroth Himself to Kashmir.

Is Kashmir worthy? No, definitely not.

None of us are worthy of Christ. Yet He loves us and He chooses us – glory be to God!

*For your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth. **Isa 54:5***

*As a young man marries a young woman, so will your Builder marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you. **Isa 62:5***

Kashmir 2025 – Celia's Reflections

³⁶When He (Jesus) saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." (Matthew 9:36-38)

We sat on the steps of Jama Masjid (the largest Mosque in India) overlooking Old Delhi as thousands of Moslems were heading to the mosque to break their fast for Ramadan.

In October 2024, on those very steps Angelo and Alia shared their vision with one another to take a group of pioneers on a prayer journey to Kashmir. Within six months the Lord brought this vision to fulfilment – with 6 South Africans on their way to Kashmir and a group of more than 100 people interceding with them.

In preparation for the prayer journey the group received various words and pictures with a general theme of following our Shepherd into areas that are unknown; on untrodden paths - where there are not a lot of workers yet. There were numerous words regarding water and rivers. As a team we felt our mandate was to go pray for the purification and healing of the "waters" – praying for the people to encounter the One who offers living water.

It is amazing to see how the Lord is moving in His body across the world. Angelo and Anni were at a prayer conference in the Middle East where a lady at the conference shared that while she was praying for Pakistan, she saw a picture of many dirty rivers in the country. She saw how a clean fountain started in the mountains of Kashmir. The water flowed into the dirty rivers and purified the water. While she told the vision, a few in the room started smiling. As she finished, they said that while they had a time of intercession for that region, they saw the same exact picture. In this picture though, the water not only started flowing into Pakistan, but also into the dirty rivers of India!

We felt the Lord was sending us out like the 12 Israelites into Canaan, seeing the people of peace as Rahab, knowing that even in the midst of spiritual "giants" in the land we can give a good report like Joshua and Caleb did. (Numbers 13)

The first day in Srinagar, Kashmir, the team went to visit a young lady who works among the nomadic people in the mountains. The time of fellowship and prayer was very encouraging both for her and the team. When she heard that the team felt lead to go towards the boarder of the neighboring country in the north western direction and into areas that tourists/foreigners do not usually go to, she shared about Gurez valley that apparently only recently opened to foreigners. After seeking more guidance from the Lord, we sensed that part of our mandate was to go to pray in this valley for God's light to shine in this land of deep darkness (Isa 9:2).

The next day we were still in the capital where we visited a big fort at a high place overlooking the entire city. Here, having a bird's eye view of the entire city, we asked God to establish His Kingdom. With the region's very complicated history of many religions governing it, we prayed for the eternal Kingdom to be established (Dan 7:13-14). We prayed over the city that is in darkness: *"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you."* (Isaiah 60:1)

Later that afternoon we "coincidentally" bumped into another worker who we were only meant to visit on our return from Gurez Valley. Him and his wife opened their home to Alia who became very ill on arrival in Kashmir to stay there while the rest of the team embarked on a journey towards Gurez valley for the following 3 days. Within a country and area where the spiritual atmosphere is very dark, believers'

homes are evident to be light and a safe haven – the ideal environment for Alia to rest and recover as she spent time with this family in Srinagar and prayed for the team and Kashmir.

There were some words and dreams from intercessors warning us to be vigilant – *wise as serpents and innocent as doves* (Matthew 10:16). One of the team members felt the Lord highlighting military troops during one of our preparation meetings. Little did we know that we would be spending a lot of time connecting with them in our endeavor to get permission to go to Gurez Valley. Apparently, the media ran ahead with the story that Gurez valley was open to foreigners and the local authorities said there is no official documentation or permits they can issue to allow us to enter Gurez Valley. The police and district commissioner tried to help us get permission to go. Even though they could not give us a permit to enter Gurez Valley they allowed us to go to the military check point to see if we can get through (although they did not recommend it). At the check point the military was initially not impressed to see us, however, after Angelo spoke to them in Urdu and explained to them why we came they warmed up towards us. The man in charge called headquarters more than once to hear if we could be given an exception. After a few hours of waiting, praying, trusting, we had no option left but to turn around. 🎵 *Open up you ancient doors; open up you ancient gates. Let the King of glory enter. Let Him take his rightful place.* 🎵 (Psalm 24) As we sang this song at the checkpoint, Ilze spoke the words she felt the Spirit was yearning to pray there. We believe that our prayers at that location will accomplish something that we might not yet see in the physical realm.

On our 3-day expedition to try and enter Gurez Valley we ended up sleeping in Bandipora (2 nights in the town and one night camping next to the lake). We realized it was no coincidence that we spent a lot of time in this town as we can see that the Lord had specific appointments for us. We met various people of peace and spent one day with a family who has 4 daughters. Ilze got the opportunity to share with them why she follows Jesus and we had deep meaningful spiritual conversations. There were other significant connections with people as well and we felt the Lord led us to pray for laborers to come to this town. The literal translation in Urdu of the name of the town meaning “closed completely”. We prayed that the opposite will be true and that this will be a gateway for the good news to many villages in this region.

The Lord highlighted Hebrews 11 to the team before we set off to Gurez Valley. When we were denied access, we were reminded of the many men of faith who simply walked in obedience – many not seeing the promise. Upon return in Srinagar, we attended a gathering of the workers. It was very special when the men leading the gathering read Hebrews 11 and asked each person to reflect on what step of obedience they have taken/are taking in faith. We were encouraged to come alongside other pioneers who are just as excited as we are to see His Kingdom being established in Kashmir.

There are many other testimonies of God’s provision, His detailed guidance, opportunities to share the good news and many more stories of encouragement. The Lord is raising up intercessors to stand in the gap and he is sending out more labourers into the field. May we live a life worthy of the calling we have received. (Ephesians 4:1)

Kashmir 2025 – Angelo's tour reflections

This part of the world has intrigued me even before moving to the sub-continent. This was my third visit, but first with the primary purpose to pray intentionally into the things God showed us during preparation, as well as during the trip. We headed out as a group of 6 having a backing of more than 100 on our prayer group joining in the Spirit. This was a pioneering trip to open the way for others to follow. More than once, we received the passage of the 12 being sent to scout out the land to give report (Numbers 13). We also experienced God wanting to lead us like a Shepherd, following Him step by step. This would mean listening and obeying His voice in the present and not only following good principles.

We asked God to show us where we should go, but rather than receiving a clear place before arriving in the capital of the province, we only knew that we had to move north west and towards the border of the neighboring country. The day we arrived in the capital of Kashmir, God ordained for us to meet with a worker a day earlier than we originally planned. After a visit to the biggest tulip garden in Asia, we went to this worker's house. I told her about the following picture a lady saw a few weeks before at a prayer conference Mary and I attended in the Middle East while having a meeting with about 25 laborers at the conference who work in South Asia.

This lady said that while praying for Pakistan, she saw a picture of many dirty rivers in the country. She saw how a clean fountain started in the mountains of Kashmir. The water flowed into the dirty rivers and purified the water. While she told the vision, a few in the room started smiling. As she finished, they said that while they had a time of intercession for that region, they saw the same exact picture. In this picture though, the water not only started flowing into Pakistan, but also into the dirty rivers of India! After hearing about this picture and our desire to go towards the border of the neighboring country where tourists rarely go, she told us about a valley which has been closed for anyone other than locals for many years. This valley lies in the north west. It has been restricted because it borders the Pakistan and it is often being invaded and attacked. Just a few weeks a news article claimed that it has now been re-opened for foreigners to travel to. After seeking more guidance from the Lord, we sensed that part of our mandate was to go to pray in this valley for God's light to shine in this land of deep darkness (Isa 9:2).

The next day we were still in the capital where we visited a big fort at a high place overlooking the entire city. Here, having a bird's eye view of the entire city, we asked God to establish His Kingdom. With the region's very complicated history of many religions governing it, we prayed for the eternal Kingdom to be established (Dan 7:13-14). It was also in this Fort that I met a "cousin" man who were very interested to hear about our Lord when I mentioned that His message was one of loving God and loving people. This opened the door for a long conversation, exchange of numbers, and I could send him a link to the Scriptures in His language.

Later that day, while walking in the street, a friend and brother from South America, who lives in the city with his European wife and year-old baby, randomly ran into us. It wasn't long before we were in their house drinking some South American hot drink while having lively conversations. We found out the next day how divine appointment with this family really was, when Alia became so sick that night, that she had to stay behind in the capital while the rest of our group continued towards our next destination. She could stay with this family who would take great care of her for the next few days.

Early morning, we set out to the forbidden valley. Our driver stopped at the last town before the pass to get permission from the police to continue our journey. After some time at the police station, they directed us to the District Office. By this time, I've learned that in this culture, people's first answer is often "no". Since I don't like "no" for an answer, I would continue the conversation and often see people reconsider their original response. Unfortunately, the guy we were supposed to talk with, were on holiday since it was Eid, an Islamic holiday. I tried different approaches, and although the guy in front

of me were very friendly, he didn't have authority to grant permission for us to go. After a detour, we ended up staying in the town to hear what our Shepherd's next instructions would be. Surely, he had something for us in this town. After booking into a local hotel with the help of a local friend, we headed out to pray next to a river on the western side of the town. There Celia and Ilze met with ladies who invited us to their house the next day.

The next morning, while on our way to visit this family, we decided to share the story of the woman at the well (John 4) when the opportunity arises. We were welcomed with lots of joy and love. Since these 4 sisters don't have any brothers, Gabriel, Nathan and I didn't stay very long. Before we left to go back to the District Office and give the girls space to have more freedom in how they relate with one another, one of the sisters asked Celia and Ilze why they follow Jesus. Ilze intentionally used the opportunity to share her testimony from her heart and lead to more spiritual conversations.

At the District Office, us guys went to the office which were closed the previous day, hoping that we'd receive a positive answer to our request. The guy who was not there the previous day, was now present. To our disappointment, he called the guy we talked with the day before and was told that we were already refused entry. Kindly the man offered us chai which I accepted to show that we were not yet giving up. Long story short, we were later taken to the highest in command. He discouraged us from going to this area and said that they have not yet received orders on how to give permits to foreigners. I told him that we felt God leading us to this area and we would feel disappointed if we can't get in, he eventually he gave permission to go all the way to the military checkpoint, but he assured us that we were not going to be given access. Having a mandate from God, we booked a taxi for the next morning since the pass was on that day only open for one way traffic from the opposite side on that day, because of the high snow on the road.

By that time, we had learned that the news about the area opening for foreign tourists, were again the media running ahead of the actual facts. Late afternoon we hiked up a hill overlooking the town (which name in Urdu means "completely closed") and asked the Lord of the harvest to send more laborers here.

That night we read Hebrews 11. Verses 13-15 stood out to me:

¹³These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return.

Early the next morning we set out on the pass and arrived at the checkpoint about an hour and a half later. Here we were stopped by the military. Initially they made it clear that they didn't understand why we even bothered to come all this way, but as I explained our situation to them in Urdu, they warmed up towards us. The man in charge called headquarters more than once to hear if we could be given an exception. After a few hours of waiting, praying, trusting, we had no option left but to turn around. We believe that our prayers at that location will accomplish something that we might not yet see in the physical realm.

That night we made many friends as we camped out next to a big lake in the valley. On the bus back to the capital, I could share the Good News with a man who has never heard it before. I also shared the link to the Scriptures with him.

We were glad to hear that many of the workers have their fellowship every Friday night at the family we were staying with. The passage they chose to read together, was Hebrews 11! It was a joy to connect with people laying down their lives to live in this unreached area of the world. One of the men who has

been living there for more than 20 years, were very excited to hear about our expedition. He said that he hopes to attempt entering that region soon.

Upon reflecting on this journey, there are many things God did. I think the most prominent lesson I take, is that success is not always accomplishing what we set out to do. Success is being obedient to the One we follow while leaving the results in His hands. By walking with Him, we got to know Him more deeply and got to meet many people of peace along the way. We got to join Him in building His Kingdom in the Spiritual realm. In all of this, He is glorified!

Maranatha!

Kashmir 2025 – Ilze's tour reflections

Maranatha!

Gurez: on the border of India and Pakistan and has never been open for foreigners, until the day we arrived in Kashmir...

We were at the first of five army checkpoints on our way to Gurez Valley. After many many conversations and thinking of possible ways to let us through, they just could not give us the 'yes'. Initially it felt like we failed to accomplish our task, until I felt a nudging to pray in the Spirit.

For the first time in my life I felt the overwhelming presence of God while praying in the Spirit - it wasn't just babble, it was Him speaking Life. For years and years the Spirit has been yearning to pray specific things right there over Gurez. I just needed to yield. My words are empty and useless without the Spirit. So if someone were to ask me now why we went to Kashmir, my answer would be:

In Joshua 1:3 the Lord promises to give us every place our feet touches. We went to Kashmir out of obedience, to allow the Spirit to pray there in order to win ground for the Kingdom of God - the Kingdom that cannot be shaken.

In faith we went, trusting that the stones are now rolled away for future workers to enter!
