Ministry Impact Report



2010 – 2025
A Celebration of God's Blessing with The Brook Ministries and the Lucas Family in Costa Rica

In The Beginning

In August 2008, The Brook Ministries was incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit ministry over coffee and tea in a small restaurant in McKinney, Texas. Jeff Simpson took the helm as Chairman, with Heather Simpson serving as Treasurer, Angela Lucas as Secretary, and Steve Lucas as President.



Just two short years later, the Lucas family sold their belongings and moved with fifteen suitcases to begin ministry full-time in Costa Rica. A month later they were joined by Steve and Kelly Ezell, who served for nine months side-by-side with the Lucas family.

And now, after over fifteen years in Costa Rica, Steve and Angela Lucas are pleased to present this report as a celebration of God's faithfulness, realized through generous donors, amazing ministry partners, and dynamic local churches.

2010 – Hit the Ground Running

At the heart of our ministry lies a passion for pastoral training. It was the reason The Brook was formed, and it was how things got started in 2010. Our first pastoral training conference was called **"*El Pastor Pacificador*"** (The Peacemaking Pastor). We offered the conference three times that year reaching a total of forty-six couples, each time utilizing guest professors from the Central American Theological Seminary in Guatemala. We were blessed to share the experience with the Ezells, and have the assistance of Jason and Carol Benoit, who travelled to Costa Rica to help with the conferences.

At the first conference were leaders from thirteen different denominations and church associations, representing hundreds of churches throughout Costa Rica. One of those leaders was Luis Rodriguez, the president of the AIBC (*Asociación de Iglesias Bíblicas Costarricenses*, the Association of Costa Rican Bible Churches). From that day forward we would develop a strong relationship with "Don Luis" and the A.I.B.C., eventually training all 130 pastors in the association.



In addition to the conferences, time was spent moving to Costa Rica, purchasing a vehicle, attending Spanish classes, homeschooling our children, buying furniture, finding a church, and setting up a new life. We definitely hit the ground running.

2011 – A Rapid Expansion

We continued the *El Pastor Pacificador* conferences, hosting three more events for another fifty-one pastoral couples, all from the A.I.B.C. In addition, we offered a conference called "**Sustainability in Ministry**" for English-speaking ministry couples. Our guest speakers were authors and veteran ministry leaders Stuart and Jill Briscoe, who shared their decades of wisdom with nine pastoral couples.



While Stuart was in town, he also helped us launch **Atenas New Community**, a mid-week English-speaking Bible study at the *Iglesia Biblica El Cordero de Dios* church in Atenas. The service continues to this day every Wednesday night, with Steve serving as the teaching pastor and Angela providing much-loved delicacies.

But 2011 will be most remembered for our rapid expansion. Building on our foundation of pastoral training, we added another ministry component: **church development**, where our goal was to assist economically distressed churches in expanding their reach through capital investment.

Our first church development project came about when we met Eli and Marta, the leaders *of Iglesia Biblica Hogar de Fe* in Desamparados, Costa Rica. After attending one of our conferences, Marta shared her vision to reach the most disadvantaged women in San Jose by teaching them how to sew clothes. She had the training team ready, the facility, and sixty women signed up to take the class. The only thing she needed was sewing machines.



It was an unlikely beginning, but through our donors we were able to provide twenty-eight standard sewing machines and two industrial machines. The ministry continues to this day training women vocationally while also discipling them in God's Word.

Another important relationship began in 2011, with **Matrix Ministries**, led by our good friend, Ray Young. As our first strategic partner, Matrix Ministries became (and has continued to be) heavily involved in funding many projects and sending short-term mission teams.

Matrix Ministries sent teams and funds for two major projects in 2011. The first was at the ***Hogar de Vida*** Children's Home in Atenas where they helped build a new workshop for the facilities maintenance team. While there they also enjoyed time with the children, beginning what would become regular trips to strengthen the infrastructure and build into the leadership of *Hogar de Vida.*

The second project was the ***Casa de la Cultura*** building for *Iglesia Biblica El Cordero de Dios* in Atenas. Co-sponsored by The Brook Ministries, the *Casa de la Culture* was intended to be a place for teenage students to be able to come for help with homework, counseling, and to take classes in English, music, and computers, among others. It would also serve as a student ministry building for the church. And within a year of opening the building, the student ministry exploded from a handful of students to a regular crowd of over fifty.

2012 – Multi-national, Multi-ethnic

The next year saw The Brook Ministries expand in two exciting directions. The first was to extend our pastoral training ministry to the country of Nicaragua. Working with our new friends Eli and Marta, and their son and fellow pastor, David Mora and his wife, Gabby, we offered the **Purpose Driven Church Conference** over three days in Granada, Nicaragua, for the eight pastoral couples of the newly formed A.I.B.N. (*Asociación de Iglesias Bíblicas Nicaragüenses*, The Association of Nicaraguan Bible Churches).

The second area of expansion was to cross ethnic lines, which we did when we began to offer pastoral and leadership training to the Cabecar people of the *Talamanca Cabecar Indigenous Territory* in Limon Province. Sponsored by partner churches from Arkansas, Journey Church and All Points Church, we committed to a three-year training program utilizing the ***Seminario por Extension A las Naciones***, or S.E.A.N. (an international seminary program that operates in 110 countries and 87 languages and dialects).



Our early ventures to the Cabecar were difficult and involved driving on dangerous and muddy roads and hiking through tough terrain and across rivers deep into the rain forest. But the greater difficulty was cultural, as the Cabecar have their own language and customs. They have spiritual needs that spring from centuries of animism and shamanism, which have led to widespread alcoholism and domestic issues. And though faith is spreading, the cultural ills make ministry among them very challenging.

Meanwhile, church development projects continued in Atenas, with the construction of a Pastor's Office at *Iglesia Biblica El Cordero de Dios*. We also received the initial funding for a new church building for *Iglesia Biblica Unción con Gloria*, in Grecia. We didn't know it at the time, but the project in Grecia would become the largest one of our history and form the foundation of helping Costa Ricans see the need to go on mission trips themselves.

2013 – Building, Building, Building

While leader training entered the second year with the Cabecar, construction on the new church building ramped up in Grecia. Our church partners there located a used cement mixer which we purchased and rebuilt. It has been on loan to a rotation of projects throughout the country ever since.



Matrix Ministries provided teams and funding for two additional projects: a food pantry at *Iglesia Biblica Casa de Adoracion y Alabanza* in Frailes, and the ***Salon de Multiusos*** at *Iglesia Biblica El Cordero de Dios* in Atenas. In addition to the teams from Matrix, a youth group from LifePoint Church (formerly Grace Community Church), and several individual families, made their way to Costa Rica to serve throughout the year.

The Lucas family moved to a new, larger property in Atenas. With guest rooms to spare, and a balcony overlooking a field of mango trees, the new house allowed them to host small mission teams (up to 12 people). Generous donors also made it possible to upgrade from a van that required constant repairs, to a brand new 12-passenger 2014 Hyundai H1.



Unfortunately, not all the news was good this year. Steve and Angela both contracted the painful dengue virus. Though it was short-lived (6 days for Steve, 10 for Angela), the effects lingered for a few months.

Thankfully, however, everyone was well enough to lead a family tour to Israel. The Lucas' were blessed to be joined by many old friends from Texas as they explored the land where Jesus walked. And it was their final family trip before their son, David, left for college in the United States.

2014 – Relationships Deepen

Things got even busier in 2014 with multiple trips by Matrix Ministries to work in Grecia to put a roof over *Iglesia Biblica Unción con Gloria*, then a floor and steps, and a lot more concrete all the way around. In addition, Matrix continued to invest in the ministry of *Hogar de Vida*, and in The Brook Ministries by supplying funding for a new welder and a trailer.

More teams also came from Arkansas to work with the Cabecar in construction (completing the pass-through house in Jobata), women's ministry (teaching quilting and hygiene) and evangelism.

On one trip, the translator had a family emergency that required him to drop out suddenly. Angela volunteered to translate for the team—even though she hadn't packed a thing for the trip. God provided, and the week went off without too much difficulty.

The mission team also had the honor of distributing the newly published Cabecar language New Testament. No one who was there will ever forget the sound of the pages rustling as about sixty Cabecar opened their Bibles for the first time to read 1 Corinthians 11 in their own language, while Pastor Eli led a Communion service. And thanks to our donors, later in the year we were able to sponsor an "Extreme Youth Camp" there for the teenagers.

We travelled to Nicaragua again to host a pastor's training conference for the A.I.B.N., this time teaching John Maxwell's ***21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership***.



Late in the year we were blessed to have Kelly Ezell join us for a few weeks. She came to serve the staff of Hogar de Vida by providing therapeutic massage. Everyone was very glad to see her, and we were blessed to catch up with such a dear woman of God.

2015 – Paying It Forward

Matrix Ministries returned twice this year: once to construct the front offices at the church in Grecia, then again with a small team to pour a driveway and paint a mural at *Hogar de Vida*. They also helped us plan out and begin work on a memorial prayer garden at The Brook which was completed later in the year.

Matrix Ministries also helped fund more construction at *Iglesia Biblica Unción con Gloria* in Grecia, as well as two work projects at *Iglesia Biblica Unción y Fuego* in Siquires (walls to close in their rancho, and a concrete floor and sidewalk). Other funds were donated to support pastoral training with four new Cabecar pastors, under the leadership of Pastor Eli's brother, Mario.

In a beautiful "pay it forward" moment, after funds were secured to replace the roof at *Iglesia Biblica El Cordero de Dios* in Atenas, the men from *Iglesia Biblica Unción con Gloria* in Grecia came to Atenas to do the work as a short-term mission team.



Later, a team from Arkansas joined us once again as we hosted the first Cabecar Pastors Training Conference, on the theme: **Marriage, Family and the Bible**. The week was wet, but the conference was a success, and we were blessed to host three weddings and four baptisms. And though some illness made the rounds, it was short lived.



Thankfully, we also had use of a new ATV, provided through the generosity of our donors. It was a vital tool for the success of the week, making it possible to get supplies to where we needed them deep in the rain forest.

In October, we returned to Nicaragua to host another pastor training conference, this time on **Church and Personal Finances**. The majority of the pastors there were accustomed to receiving less than $200 per month in their churches. So teaching on biblical financial principles was a real need, albeit a tough one for most of the pastors to receive.

The year ended with another "pay it forward" moment when the men from Grecia travelled with us to Texas to volunteer with Matrix Ministries on one of their Fences for Orphans (FFO) projects.



FFO raises money for orphanages and majority world churches by using volunteer labor to construct fences in the Dallas Metroplex. The church from Grecia had been a beneficiary of their generosity, so this trip was their way of giving back to help others.

2016 – The Brook Training Center

After years of using hotels to host our events, we took a leap and built The Brook Training Center. With our landlord's blessing, we remodeled an open area under our terrace to be a beautiful and well-equipped conference room, complete with offices and a full bathroom. It was a major financial investment, but within three years, the cost savings on events paid for the work we did.

Since its construction, The Brook Training Center has been used for most of our pastoral training events and our Wednesday night services. We have also made it available to Christian ministries from all over Costa Rica to use as a central place for their own training and small group events.



After construction was complete, we also built a full industrial kitchen at *Iglesia Biblical Uncion y Fuego* in Siquirres. The church already had a thriving ministry of feeding the poor and needy, and the new kitchen expanded that ministry.

And as before, work continued with Matrix Ministries in Grecia expanding the church, and with the Arkansas churches serving the Cabecar in the jungle. It was a very full year!

2017 – Back to School



The year began with a few short-term missionary groups, including the ninth team from Arkansas who came to paint the roof on the new pass-through house and minister to the indigenous Cabecar tribe. Matrix Ministries also returned with a team who came to build a second floor above the church kitchen in Siquirres.

Back in Atenas, we hosted several events. One conference focused on how to provide counseling services in the church, and another centered around better biblical preaching. As always, our Wednesday night Bible study was offered for English speakers in the community, and it saw significant growth during the year.

The biggest changes, though, were with the Lucas family. Steve and Angela's youngest daughter, Stephanie, got married in a beautiful chapel at Camp Geiger, a US Marine Corps training base in North Carolina near the groom's hometown. Steve and Angela were able to be there, and Steve had the blessing of officiating the wedding of James and Stephanie Bushway.



Thanks to a generous scholarship, Steve was also able to go back to school! He began a three-year Doctor of Educational Ministry program at Dallas Theological Seminary. While week-long intensives in Dallas, Texas, were required for each course, Steve was able to complete the remainder of his coursework in Costa Rica.

2018 – All About the Pastors

The year began with another quick trip back to the United States for Steve and Angela. This time it was to see their son, David, graduate from the U.S. Army Basic Combat Training. Steve returned again a few months later to attend David's Advanced Individual Training as a Human Resource Specialist. Military service has a long history in the Lucas family, so there is much pride in David's service to his country.

Another team from Arkansas came early in the year to teach a leadership conference and lead a women's ministry event. Pastor "Tio" Kevin also officiated at a Cabecar wedding, and the team painted and dedicated a church expansion project. Matrix ministries also returned to continue the work at the church in Siquirres, but they left Steve behind so he could continue his doctoral studies.



Unfortunately, due to rising violence and political protests, we had to cancel our ministry plans in Nicaragua. We did, however, redirect our efforts and hosted a two-day conference with a new ministry partner, SOLIDPastors. Their focus is training and certifying people to provide pastoral coaching. The event itself was a truly interactive workshop with an emphasis on the practical methods used in pastoral coaching.

Another highlight of the year was our ability to raise the funds necessary to build a second story for the land-locked *Iglesia Biblica Hogar de Fe* in Desamparados. With the funding locked-in, we could plan for construction in 2019 and finally help Pastor Eli and Pastora Marta, after they have helped so many others over the years.

2019 – Pastoral Training and Research

In addition to our regular mission teams working with the Cabecar, and local ministries hosting their events at The Brook Training Center, we also planned eight one-day seminars scattered throughout Costa Rica. Our goal was to have every pastor of the AIBC attend, so each one could be interviewed in person as part of Steve's doctoral research. The events were a success, and we were able to interview 100% of the pastors of the association.

While this was happening, we also launched the construction of the second floor at *Hogar de Fe* in Desamparados. A few weeks into construction, we realized that it was the perfect moment to go ahead and add a third floor. Thankfully, the funds needed for the extra steel came in quickly this time, and we were able to get it all done.



Along with all of these, there were numerous other events, two trips to Dallas, a trip to Virgina to see our daughter graduate from Liberty University, and our regular Wednesday night Bible study. All told, it made 2019 our busiest year on record. Only later would we realize that the busyness was a blessing, as the world was about to shut down.

2020 – COVID-19

The year began with excitement and great promise. We had just raised funds for several projects and events, and in February Steve received the much-anticipated notice that his dissertation was approved, and he would be earning his doctoral degree in May. The Brook also had a full schedule of mission trips booked, expecting the usual ministries to join us again to continue to bless the churches of Costa Rica.

And then the world closed, and all of our plans changed. The Covid-19 pandemic caused a wave of uncertainty and loss that no one could imagine.

Our board of directors held an emergency meeting to discuss what might happen. We had real concerns that donations might drop severely, so we prepared for the worst. At the same time, we began to be inundated with requests for financial help from churches all over Costa Rica.

By God's grace—and some very generous donors—our income did not drop. In fact, it increased. In addition to many individual donors who increased their giving, our friends at Matrix Ministries, and Cornerstone Community Bible Church in Houston, and Journey Church in Arkansas, all gave more so that we could help churches provide food for the most needy. There was almost no relief from the government in Costa Rica, but thanks to Brook Ministries donors, we were able to provide financial help to many pastors and churches.

There was, of course, sickness and death, and the fear and uncertainty that everyone shared. And yet there was another special kind of heartache for us when we could not personally attend our son's wedding. David and Allissa were forced to have a small, backyard wedding, officiated by our dear friend Pastor Stephen Chock. Thankfully, we were able to attend via Zoom, but it was not the same. Fortunately, they were surrounded by other loving family and friends.

The seminary graduation was virtual as well, but it marked the end of a challenging three years. And as things began to open up again, life slowly returned to normal. New dates were set for future mission teams, and churches here began to grapple with the reality of people staying home and watching online.



2021 – Getting Back to Normal

Even though there were some limitations on our ability to do ministry because of the lingering effects of the lockdown, we said "YES" to just about every opportunity we could. By the end of the year, we had welcomed four mission teams and had sixteen events at The Brook Training Center. Steve also preached sixty-four times in a variety of churches and Bible studies and provided coaching to several pastors.



One of the mission teams was from Matrix Ministries. They came to help us build up our campus a bit by installing new outdoor stairs, a fire pit, and painting our picnic tables. Our frequent events often have breakout sessions, and the new outdoor areas have been a great investment. We also remodeled two of the guest bathrooms in the house, painted the roof, and installed new gutters.

Unfortunately, because of restrictions on certain types of events, we had to cancel a medical mission trip we had planned with a university from the United States. But even though they could not come down, they allowed us to distribute the $3,000 worth of medicine and supplies they had brought down during the event planning stages. We made sure qualified medical personnel used those supplies to provide free care in many poor communities.

We also continued to support some under-resourced areas with food and financial support. In all, we distributed over $12,000 in goods and cash. It was less than the previous year but still provided much-needed relief.

2022 – Growing and Growing

We experienced tremendous growth this year as we took on new projects and got to know new mission teams. It started with a donation to the ***Escuela de Estudios Pastorales*** (ESEPA) seminary. ESEPA is the best seminary in Costa Rica, and we decided this year to support what they are doing by creating The Raven Scholarship Fund. With this fund, we provide scholarships to men and women studying for vocational ministry. This year, we gave $20,000, trusting God will do great things through ESEPA.



Matrix returned to tear down the old (and dangerous) structure for ***Iglesia Biblica Labrador***, and rebuild it to modern standards,

even raising the roof higher to mitigate the serious heat that affects the area. The full build out would take several years, but the facility was immediately usable for the small congregation.

Cornerstone came back to *Iglesia Biblica Fuente de Amor* with an amazing team to make home visits, host a concert, and provide a children's festival in the park for the entire community in *Barrio Jesus Maria de San Mateo*. Their team along with local volunteers made an impact on a small community that is talked about to this day. The church experienced an immediate 30% growth the following Sunday and kept about half of those new attenders long-term.

Closer to home, Matrix also made an investment in The Brook. Their team worked alongside some local volunteers to build a greenhouse on the property. Since the Covid lockdowns, the idea of food security became a focus here. The greenhouse has been a tremendous source of fresh vegetables and spices, and the attached bodega freed up space in our garage by providing storage for our yard tools and ATV.



Another ministry increased their usage of The Brook Training Center this year. We had previously hosted a few events for ***Academia Ministerial Cristiana***, but this year they increased their number of classes to about six per year, providing training in Bible and theology to leaders and volunteers.

2023 – Full Speed Ahead

For a record setting total of ten weeks, we hosted mission teams and visiting donor families in our home this year. In addition, we had another eleven events at The Brook and preached at seventeen Sunday services and forty-six Wednesday night Bible studies. Ten churches received help through the ministry, including: church construction, furniture, books and curriculum, food, and debt relief. And we funded the Raven Scholarship for another $10,000. We were back to moving full speed ahead!



Matrix returned to San Mateo to intense heat and reunited with old friends to continue the work at *Iglesia Biblica Fuente de Amor* (adding a second story above the children's classrooms) and *Iglesia Biblica Labrador* (painting the new building and installing the electrical system).

We worked with three new partners: **Infinity Church** (Maryland) came to help *Iglesia Biblica Hogar de Fe* with evangelism, women's

ministry and children's ministry; **Grace Baptist Church** (Tennessee), came to do evangelism, visitation, and give *Iglesia Biblica El Cordero de Dios* a much-needed facelift; and we also provided pastoral training in the towns of Sarapiqui, Parrita, and Liberia, working with friends and partners from **Praying Pelican Missions** (Minnesota).



On the home front, our daughter, Stephanie, welcomed her first child, Johnny, to the world (grandchild #7), and our daughter, Flora, welcomed her fifth, little Matthew (grandchild #8).

2024 – Bridging the Gap

Maintaining the momentum from the previous year, we once again funded the Raven Scholarship with another $15,000 to make formal theological education at ESEPA affordable for more pastors. And for non-formal theological education, we hosted a group of about 20 students with *Academia Ministerial Cristiana* for several multi-day training times. Steve also spoke to a group of forty-five leaders from three regional churches on "What God Expects from Those in Ministry." Angela had several speaking opportunities, including a women's retreat in San Mateo where she spoke on "Beautiful Words."

The Brook donated marker boards, fans, tables, and chairs for the new children's addition at *Iglesia Biblica Fuente de Amor* in San Mateo. And for the children in Atenas, we hosted a massive Vacation Bible School for *Iglesia Biblica El Cordero de Dios*. Steve was then invited to speak at *Templo Cristiano y Comedor Mana* in Sarapiqui. Afterwards we were shown the feeding program the church runs for needy children in the neighborhood. Several Brook Ministries donors then stepped up to help fund that program on a monthly basis.

We had several mission teams during the year, including two that arrived for back-to-back projects. The first was a group of sixteen from Grace Baptist Church, serving in Atenas. They were involved in school visits, women's ministry and installing new fans in the church. Immediately after their departure, a group of five from Matrix arrived to continue the work on the church in Labrador. More concrete and steel, and high temperatures, put the team to the test. Yet, as always, they prevailed.



Our personal highlight for the year was being able to see our son, David, graduate from Liberty University, and then later getting to meet his newborn son (and our grandchild #9), Cillian Roy Lucas.

Our ministry highlight came late in the year when we hosted the team from ***Re-Forma Global*** for a massive event in Jaco, Costa Rica. The goal of *Re-Forma* is to establish standards for pastoral training among non-formal ministries. We were blessed to have the leaders of about half of the ministries in Costa Rica who do work similar to what we do.



2025 – Sarge, Service, and Sabbatical

The year began on a big note. Not only did we contribute another $15,000 to the Raven Scholarship Fund, but we added an additional $5,000 this year to provide ESEPA students with access to digital library resources. But the joy of that exciting start was met with sadness when we had to say goodbye to our dog Sarge. He rescued us a few months after we arrived in Costa Rica in 2010 and kept watch over our family and friends ever since. He is missed.

Another team from Matrix arrived in March and got the work going on a new addition and remodel of the parsonage at *Iglesia Biblica Fuente de Amor*. The entire house was upgraded, and a new bedroom and laundry room were added on, creating additional Sunday School space below. Later in the year, Matrix returned to build a new office for the pastor. After many years, the construction at both churches in San Mateo is complete.

The remainder of the year was filled with a multitude of pastor training events, youth and children activity days, and visits to churches throughout Costa Rica. But Steve and Angela were also blessed by the board of directors with time off for a Sabbatical, which they took in Spain, walking the ancient pilgrim trail of the Camino de Santiago. The two months travelling restored their souls, and they returned committed to continuing their walk and work for the Lord.

