

MISSION™ FRONTIERS

A MAGAZINE OF FRONTIER VENTURES | missionfrontiers.org ISSUE 46.2 MAR/APR 2024

Seeking Movements among Frontier Peoples

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Passing the Baton

By **SUE PATT**

Frontier Ventures Chief Strategy Officer

Dear Reader,


I hope you do not feel it presumptive of me to begin this way. I have served as a member of Frontier Ventures for more than 40 years, aware of the impact of *Mission Frontiers* through conversations with church leaders, field workers, agency leaders, and students of mission from dozens of different countries around the world. I know our readers come from many demographics, and I feel some acquaintance with you through my own long tenure in mission.

In our last issue, Rick Wood nodded to our presumed interim editor, Darrell Dorr, as Rick wrote his last column as editor. Happily, Rick continues to be involved with *Mission Frontiers* in a variety of roles but has earned the deep breath afforded to him by stepping away from the role of editor. Darrell, however, needs his own deep breath as he heals from the effects of long COVID. Please join me in prayer for his healing. I praise God for a talented and dedicated team of people working behind the words in each article, in each issue of *Mission Frontiers*. So almost by accident, I picked up the honor of introducing you to this issue.

I travelled to the Telos center in Washington state in early July 2023 for the gathering of eclectic leaders, each passionate about the glory of God being made known to all the families of the earth. Each leader brought with him or her their own unique investment of life experience to bring to bear on the question, “What will it take to see movements to Jesus among the 300 largest frontier people groups (FPGs)?” These are unreached people groups with no known movements to Christ, each consisting of more than 1 million people. I sat with brothers and sisters in Christ to listen, pray, and consider this one compelling question from many different angles. It was a rare and precious gift to participate in this gathering in person.

Now I invite you to come along with me by reading through the articles assembled and contributed by some of the very leaders I mentioned above. Not all the topics are included in this issue for a variety of reasons, but you will get a sense of the things we discussed during those long, intense, and thought-provoking days together. There are no easy answers. We cannot expect to create a recipe for completing the task of world evangelization simply because we gather to talk about it. Likewise, we cannot hope to see the task completed without investing serious thought, prayer, and discernment to the many changing factors at play in the world today, looking for opportunities that only God can reveal, as we ask him to lead us. That is the spirit in which the gathering was bathed. It’s one of hope, anticipation, optimism, and persistent gazing into the face of our heavenly father, the giver of life.

To be sure, the progress of the gospel over the past 50 years is astounding! We are witnessing remarkable growth because of the focus on unreached peoples fueled by prayer. Now considering the challenges facing kingdom advance in the 300 largest FPGs, we have great reason to hope that, fueled by prayer, even greater progress of the gospel will be realized, not for our measures of “success” but for the glory of the Lamb alone. May it be!

Perhaps you will find new inspiration in an element of your connection to the mission enterprise, however God has positioned you. Thank you for your passion for God’s glory being made known to all the families of the earth. We all rub shoulders at the throne of grace, asking God to bring his kingdom. 



EDITORIAL



Seeking Movements a



Among Frontier Peoples

Needed: A Strategy for the 300 Largest Frontier People Groups

By **R. W. LEWIS**

R. W. Lewis has lived among and worked on behalf of frontier people groups for over 40 years.

In July 2023, some 70 mission leaders from multiple organizations (plus another 40 online) met at the Telos Center in Washington state to discern God's plans for starting movements to Christ within frontier people groups (FPGs), beginning with the nearly 300 FPGs that are larger than 1 million people. These largest groups, collectively 1.6 billion in population, represent 20% of humanity and 80% of the total population in FPGs. This article is a condensation of R. W. Lewis' kick-off talk for the consultation.

God's Telos: All the Families

God has promised to bless all the families and peoples of the earth. Jesus said that his gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all peoples, and then the end, the *telos*, will come. Telos Fellowship (telosfellowship.org) was named after this verse. *Telos* not only means the end; it points to the plan, fruition, or accomplishment of all things. After listing all the families on the earth, God

promised Abraham, "through you (and your family), all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Gen 12:3).

Today, some people call the meaning of this covenant into question, saying that there is too much emphasis on the people groups and family lines. When the covenant is repeated throughout the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, with every *ethne* before the throne in Revelation, God did not say all the countries, cities, or places. He said all the families (i.e., every language, tribe, and *ethne*/nation).

Family-based people groups matter to God. After 400 years in Egypt and in the wilderness years that follow, God never says, "You are all going to be Israelites now. No one is going to be from this tribe or that tribe anymore." No, God has them camp by family lines and later gave them land based on family heritage. Throughout the Bible, God strengthens and blesses the world's families.

If we forget what God promises, we overlook many families and peoples. In this way, we undermine rather than bless families. We hurt families when we encourage people coming to Christ to leave their families and communities, to join new Christian communities rather than bless their own people. As one Hindu background believer wrote, the offense is not the cross but the community.

A People Group Focus Sparked Great Progress of the Gospel

Great progress in spreading the gospel came simply by focusing on overlooked people groups. The first two eras of Protestant missions focused on geographic areas, such as coastal and inland areas. The third era, starting with Cameron Townsend and Wycliffe Bible Translators (1934), focused on overlooked people groups. This began when somebody asked Townsend, "Why can't God speak my language?"

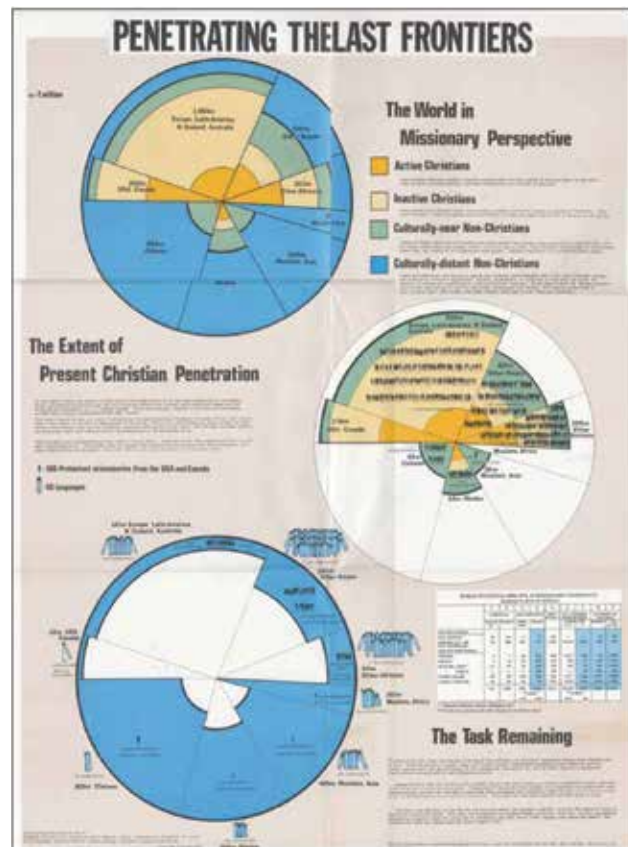
We need to realize we have just lived through the greatest expansion of Christ's kingdom in history!

In 1969, Ralph Winter wrote *The 25 Unbelievable Years (1945–1969)*, which highlighted an explosion of the gospel during that period. Since then, we've seen even more amazing things. In 1974, Winter gave a talk on the state of world evangelization at the Lausanne

International Congress on World Evangelization. Most mission agencies at that time thought that the mission task was nearly complete. They even had “missionary go home” seminars and campaigns.

Winter was shocked that the data in 1974 showed that 60% of the world’s population was in people groups that still had no indigenous church. How could all these agencies be wrong?

The truth is this: Many churches and missionaries could see only what was around them, and everywhere they looked, there were churches and seminaries. Today, over 80% of Christians live in countries that are at least 50% Christian, according to Todd Johnson with the Center for the Study of Global Christianity. Christians looked around and concluded, “The job is done!” Well, the job wasn’t done. So Winter set out to prove it, because almost nobody believed him.



Numbers on a page mean nothing. So, Winter drew a pie chart (above), taking an example from Florence Nightingale, to depict the world in geographic sections. Each section shows the percentage of active Christians,

inactive Christians, non-believers in the same people groups as the Christians, and non-believers in distinct people groups other than the Christians.

When people saw this pie chart, they suddenly started to realize, “It’s true. Our mission agency isn’t in those areas!” But Winter’s own mission agency, the Presbyterian Church, did not accept his findings. The number of their US missionaries working globally decreased from over 2,000 in 1959 to less than 100 in the 1980s. Other agencies also refused to accept the data or thought Global South churches should reach the remaining 60% of humanity, and so curtailed their own programs.

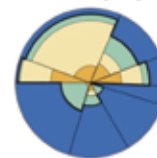
Focusing on Unreached People Groups Brought Even Greater Progress

In 1980, 4.3 billion people inhabited the world. Sixty percent of the world’s population lived in frontier people groups. FPGs are the least reached of all unreached people groups (UPGs) with Christian populations less than 0.1% and no known movements to Jesus. As of 2023, the world has 8 billion people, but only 25% of them still live in FPGs—a decrease from 60% to just 25%. That’s incredible progress!

The Greatest Progress of the Gospel in history

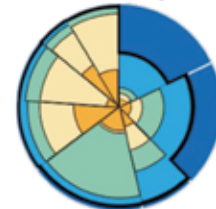
The World’s population:

1980
4.3 Billion people



60% of the World’s Population lived in Frontier People Groups

2023
8 Billion People



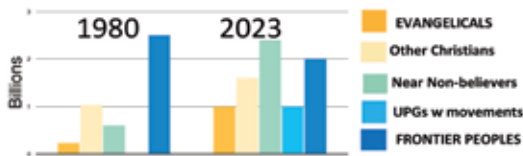
Only 25% of the world’s population lives in Frontier People Groups.

By identifying which UPGs now have self-sustaining movements to Christ, we can see how much progress was made. More importantly, by separating UPGs with no known movements to Christ, we can reveal the remaining frontier mission task—going to frontier people groups. The light blue color shows the UPGs that have movements and the dark blue color shows FPGs.

FPGs are a subset of UPGs that have no progress of the gospel. They have no indigenous churches, no known movements to Christ, nor believing communities with whom to partner. Pioneering is necessary since partnership is not possible. They are the least reached of the unreached peoples. FPGs have been unresponsive to gospel witnesses for many centuries and/or had few or no witnesses going to them. In most cases, FPGs are both resistant and neglected. If they have heard of Jesus, they consider him to be only a god of the Christians—a foreign god, not their god. 97% of the FPGs are Muslim or Hindu.

In 1980 there was 1 evangelical for every 10 people in a Frontier People Group.

Today there is 1 evangelical for every 2 people in a Frontier People Group.



SINCE 1980, EVANGELICALS have increased by 400% (250 M to 1 B)
But the population of FRONTIER PEOPLE GROUPS has decreased by 20% (from 2.5 B to 2 B).

Where are these remaining Frontier People Groups?

Notice the bar chart. Since 1980, evangelicals have increased by 400% from 250 million to 1 billion people. At the same time, the population of FPGs has decreased by 20% (from 2.5 billion to only 2 billion). Proportionately, in 1980, there was one evangelical for every 10 people in an FPG. Now, there is one evangelical for every two people in an FPG.

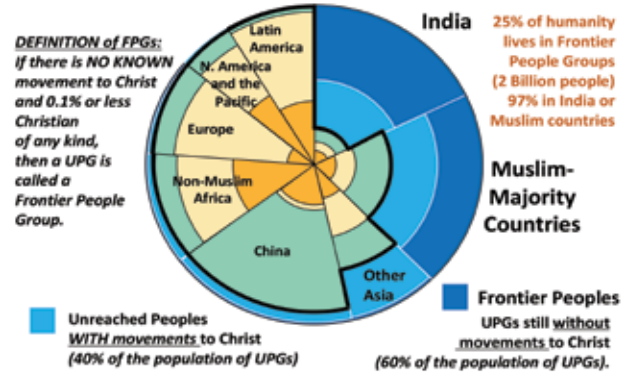
A group is removed from the FPG list when a confirmed indigenous movement of Jesus emerges among them. They remain a UPG until they reach the 2% evangelical threshold, meaning two out of every 100 people in the group are evangelicals. That's a lot of Christians! As a result, people groups will stay unreached for quite a long time after they already have movements to Christ within them.

Strategic Considerations to Reach frontier people groups

The pie chart represents the world today. Committed believers in Christ are shown in dark yellow. Nominal

Christians are presented in light yellow. Almost half of the world's non-believers live in reached people groups (displayed in green). These "reached groups" also have 97% of the mission force! *These non-believers can easily be reached by those around them.*

Location of the Frontier People Groups (2023):

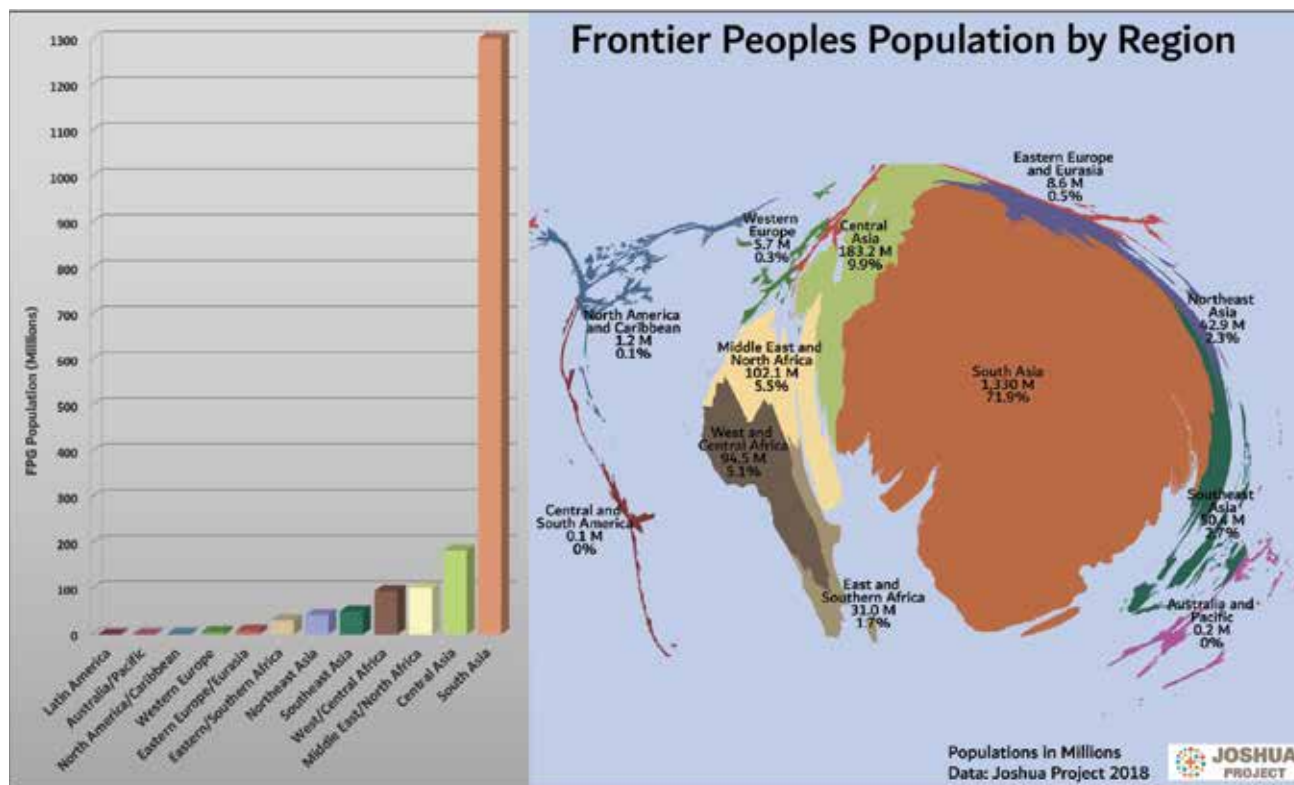


By contrast, the other half of non-believers live in UPGs, having less than 2% evangelicals but only 3% of the world's mission force. However, praise God because nearly 40% of these UPGs now have movements to Christ within them (shown in light blue). This means that 20% of all the world's non-believers live in these UPGs *with* movements.

The other 60% of the UPGs have no known movements to Christ and are called the frontier people groups (shown in dark blue). 30% of all the non-believers live in the FPGs.

Amazing Facts about FPGs

- 97% of the FPGs (by population) live in either India or Muslim-majority countries (shown in dark blue), including Pakistan and Bangladesh. 70% of FPGs are in South Asia; 50% are in India alone.
- Over half of FPGs are Muslim groups. That's 1 billion people. Nearly half are Hindu groups. Less than 3 percent of them are Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains, ethnic tribal groups, etc.
- Almost half of the entire population of the FPGs are in just the 31–35 largest FPGs (each over 10 million in size). A prayer guide for these groups is available at Go31.org and a prayer app at blessfrontierpeoples.org. Also, see joshuaproject.net/frontier.



- 80% of the population of all FPGs are in the fewer-than-300 groups with over a million people. These groups are mapped and sorted by country, language, religion, etc. at joshuaproject.net/frontier/interactive. You can click on a circle or name to see a group's complete profile and sort lists by multiple categories (FPG Muslim groups in India that speak Tamil, etc.).

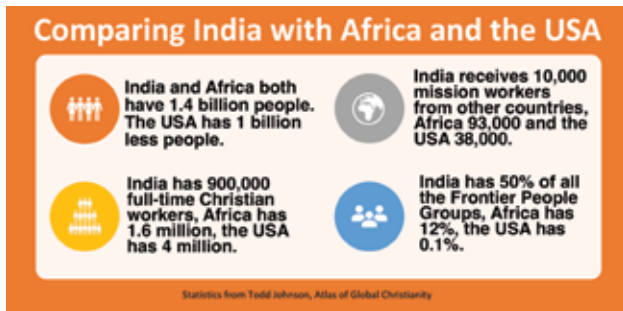
Why Does India Have Half of the Remaining FPGs?

India has sometimes been called the “graveyard of missionaries.” Still, India has consistently received a tiny fraction of the outreach that other countries receive. Why? Because people view it as a country when, in fact, it's more like a continent, with thousands of distinct language groups and multiple states larger than most countries. In India, barely 2–3% of the population is Christian, and those Christians tend to be in specific areas, people groups, and languages.

Compare India with Africa and the USA:

- 1) India has as many people as the entire continent of Africa (1.4 billion) and over 1 billion more people than the United States.
- 2) India receives 10,000 missionaries from other countries. Africa receives 93,000 mission workers! And with 1 billion fewer people, the United States receives 38,000 mission workers. In fact, the United States receives more foreign missionaries than any single country in the world!
- 3) India has 50% of all FPGs. Africa has 12%, mostly in the north. The United States has 0.1% of FPGs.
- 4) India has 900,000 full-time Christian workers. That seems a lot. But Africa has twice as many (1.68 million) and the United States has more than four times as many: 4 million full-time Christian workers (with one billion fewer people).
- 5) India is unique among the world's countries in that most of its people groups are not localized but are spread throughout the country, defined by their roles or jobs in society. Traditionally, outcastes (Dalits) do the dirty jobs. Other Backward Castes do the manual labor (600 million), and the upper castes do business, military, and non-manual labor. Brahmins have priestly and leadership roles.
- 6) Unfortunately, Christianity is associated with the outcastes of Indian society, making Christians another Dalit caste in others' eyes. Virtually all

mission workers sent to India, and national Indian missionaries as well, work with outcaste groups that are at least partially Christian already.



Strategy Proposal: Focus on the 300 Largest FPGs

What will happen by focusing on starting self-propagating indigenous movements to Christ in the largest 300 FPGs (80% of the FPG population)? We'll see a significant trickle-down effect as they influence the smaller groups associated with them. The Yadavs, for example, are a group of 40 million people, but eight other Yadav groups are larger than a million. This pattern is true throughout the whole list of FPGs. Each large FPG has related smaller groups.

Eight Proposed Keys to Breakthrough in FPGs

The 2023 consultation proposed eight things necessary for breakthroughs in these FPGs, which increasingly require new means of access and sustainability for local or global workers. They include:

- 1) prayer by the global prayer networks and adoptions for the 300 largest FPGs
- 2) the use of media technology and the internet
- 3) mobilization of local and global laborers

- 4) disciple making movement methodology and existing movement leaders crossing cultures
- 5) blessing the families and the communities
- 6) entrepreneurship
- 7) blessing the Jesus movements God is raising up within resistant communities that are avoiding association with Christendom
- 8) using diaspora communities as bridges back to the mega-sized FPGs

The consultation hoped that bringing leaders together from each of these key areas would develop synergy, propelling focus on the 300 largest FPGs. The consultation participants were asked to consider what new structures or training might be needed to catalyze breakthroughs in these large groups. Task forces on prayer, movements, technology, and structures were formed. These topics are highlighted in other articles in this issue of *Mission Frontiers*.

Conclusion

We are closer than ever before to taking the good news to all the peoples of the earth. However, we face new challenges as the world rapidly changes due to the internet and increasing political surveillance and control. A great blessing today is that the global Church, having spread to over half of the world, is excited to participate in blessing the world's families, bringing the last people groups to God's feast.

We are like Jonathan and his armor-bearer, simply going up to see what God might do. We're not many. We're not great. We're not smart, but God will help us. And so, we might as well go up and see what God will do. 🏰



Strategic Prayer Fuels PIONEER Mission Work!

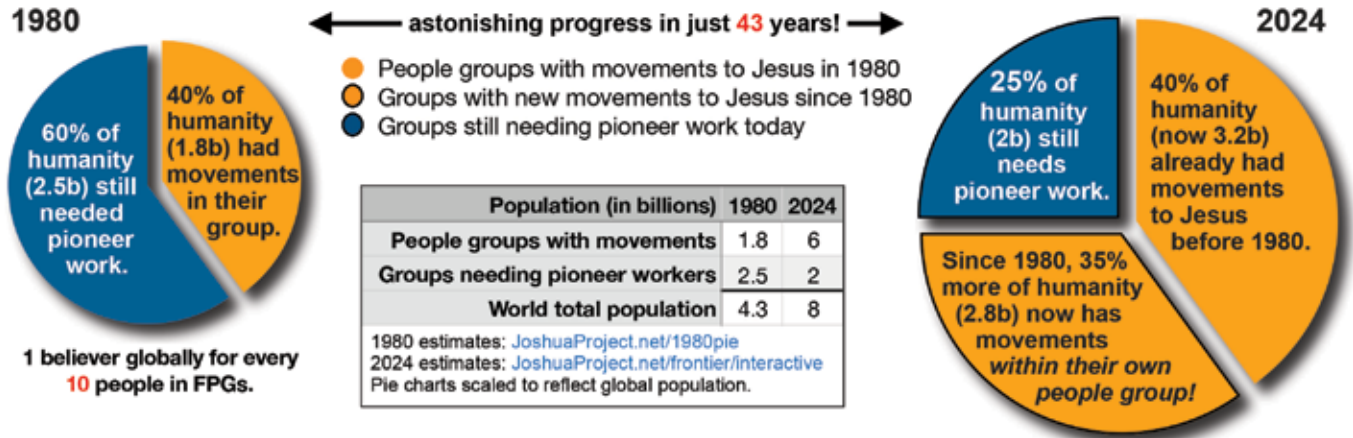
In the late 1970s, a new awareness began igniting global prayer:

60% of humanity still needed PIONEER mission work!

God answered, and today just **25% of humanity** still needs **PIONEER** work.

This remaining 25% is in Frontier People Groups (FPGs)—with **NO** movements to Jesus.

Will YOU enlist others to join you in praying for this overlooked 25%?

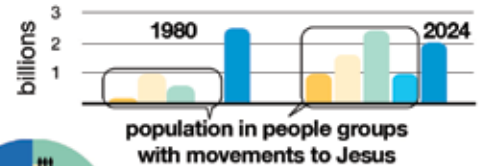


1 believer globally for every 10 people in FPGs.

1 believer for every 2 people now in FPGs!



Will you give an hour each week to pray with others for this neglected 25% of humanity?
 Connect and learn: Go31.org/pray



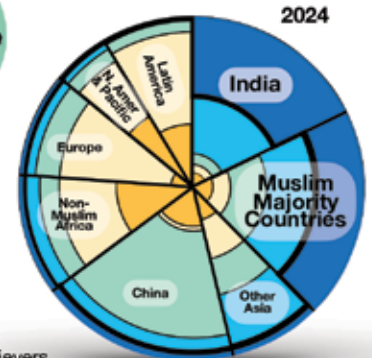
How are missionaries currently distributed among the world's non-believers?

- In "reached" peoples, 96% of missionaries work among 45% of the world's non-believers—along with large church movements, 98% of believers (■) and 99% of other Christians (■).
- In unreached, non-frontier peoples, 3% of missionaries work among the 20% of all non-believers with small movements to Jesus—and up to 1 in 50 believers and 1 in 20 other Christians.
- In FPGs, 1% of missionaries work among the 35% of non-believers with no sustained movements to Jesus, and virtually no believers or other Christians in their people group (less than 1 in 1,000).

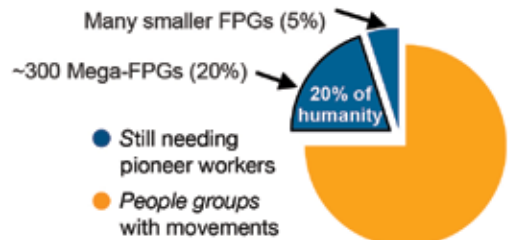
	H = Humanity	NBs = non-believers	Ms = Missionaries
"Reached" Peoples	60%	45%	96%
Unreached, not Frontier	15%	20%	3%
Frontier People Groups	25%	35%	1%

A Strategic Prayer Focus:

- 97% of the global FPG population is in India and Muslim-majority countries.
- 80% (20% of humanity) is in fewer than 300 Mega-FPGs (each over 1 million). These often consist of smaller peoples and influence other, neighboring peoples.
- 70% of Mega-FPGs (and all FPGs) are in South Asia, and 50% are in India alone.
- Make a difference:
 - Learn more: JoshuaProject.net/frontier/interactive
 - Pray (with others, and alone) for workers to start movements: Go31.org/pray
 - Spread this awareness in your network: Go31.org/free
 - Go or Send, as the Holy Spirit leads you!



- 1b Believers
- 1.6b Other Christians
- 2.4b Non-believers (NB) in "reached" peoples
- 1b NB in peoples with 0.1%–2% believers
- 2b NB needing pioneer work, in frontier peoples



If you want to know what God is preparing to do, look what He is stirring prayer for! — Carol Davis

Will our generation finally complete the initial PIONEER work among ALL peoples?

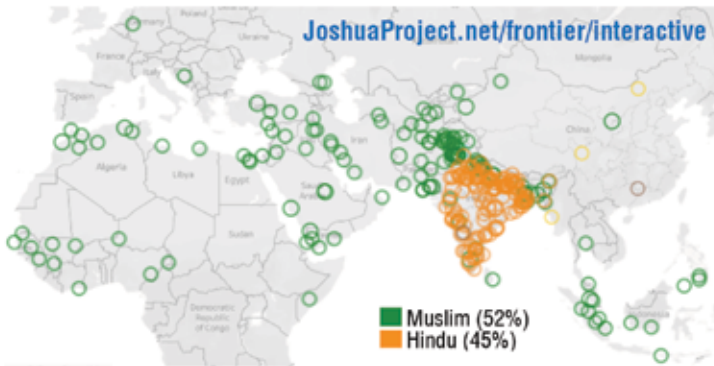
From Pentecost to the present, God’s kingdom has been advancing like the rising ocean tide. As past waves recede, new ones gather strength toward the fulfillment of God’s 4,000-year-old promise—to bless all of earth’s family-lines through Jesus (Gen 12:3; 18:18, 22:18, Gal 3:8, Heb 6:17, etc.).

Day by day and year by year, God is drawing us—His children—into deeper intimacy with Himself, greater unity with one another, and increasing fruitfulness in His unchanging purpose. He also continues entrusting us with new technologies to accelerate **pioneer** work among every FPG.

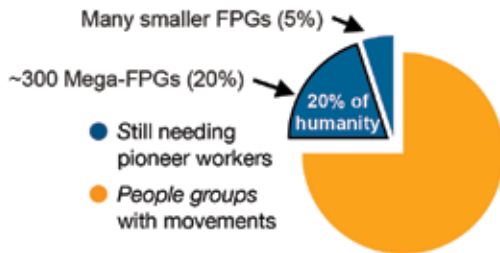
In 1980 the remaining **pioneer** work was spread across a variety of religious blocs spread, across the 10/40 Window and around the world.

Today ...

- 97% are Muslim or Hindu, in India and Muslim-majority countries.



- 80% of the global FPG population is in fewer than 300 **Mega-FPGs**—each over one million in population.

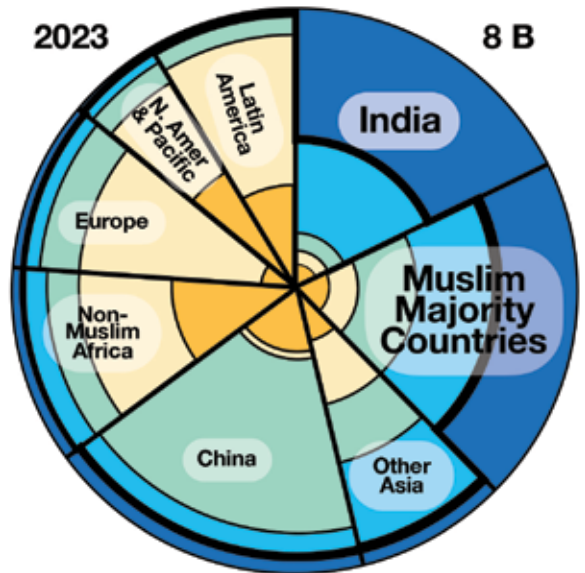
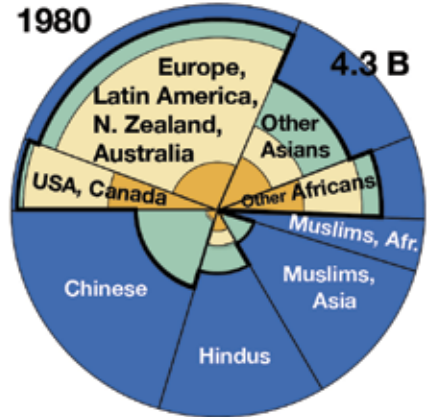


- New movements to Jesus among these few hundred **Mega-FPGs** can unlock many smaller **FPGs**.
- Recent **pioneer** work has multiplied believers close to these **Mega-FPGs** (culturally and physically).

As a foundation for all God wants to do through our generation, we are equipping others to multiply awareness and prayer, using the technologies God has made available, in 2024 we are launching 24/7 collaborative prayer over Zoom for each **Mega-FPG**. Already we have two hours hosted each week, for:

- 135 million Muslim Shaikh in Bangladesh—every Friday at 9am Pacific time.
- 1.5 million Muslim Alawite in Syria—every Tuesday at 6am Pacific time.

To learn more, sign up at Go31.org/pray



Join the global prayer movement to complete the pioneer mission task:
Go31.org/pray



Wholistic Disciple Making

Multiplying Churches and Transforming Communities

Charlotte D. has served for over 25 years in Central and South Asia with Medical Ambassadors, Partners International, and Global CHE Network. She currently trains and coaches in IDMM. For more information, contact idmmglobal@gmail.com. All Scripture references are from the ESV.

Over 85% of frontier people groups live in South and Central Asia. Not only are there fewer than 1% believers in most of these areas but we also see significant poverty. Key poverty indicators include malnutrition, child mortality, years of schooling, school attendance, cooking, fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing, and assets. When people suffer, they often feel helpless and lack hope. In addition, oppressive governments, war, persecution, and disasters, such as floods and earthquakes, may lead to people migrating to different locations and becoming refugees or internally displaced peoples (IDPs).

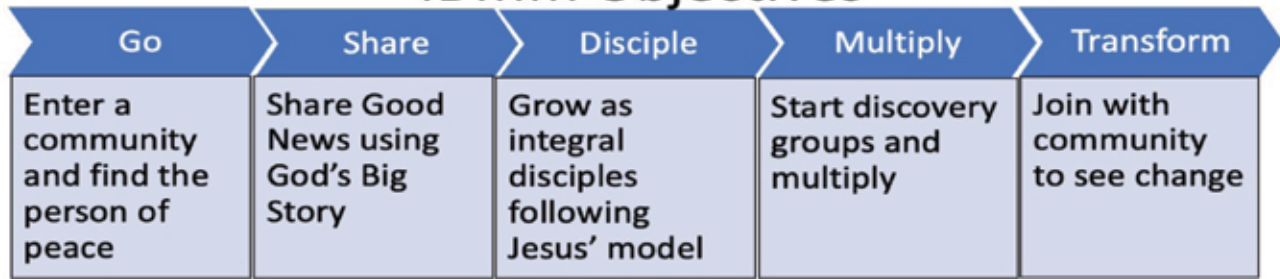
In the Gospels, we see the heart of Jesus for the needs around him: “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he

said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest’ (Matt 9:36–38).

As disciple makers, we cannot ignore the physical, emotional, and social needs of those we want to reach. As disciples obey God’s commands, they will see a restored relationship with God, improved physical health, stronger relationships with others, and emotional healing. This is Integral Discipleship. “Integral” here means wholistic.

In recent years, a ministry called Integral Disciple Making Movement (IDMM) was launched and is growing on multiple continents. IDMM brings the best of Community Health Evangelism (CHE) and disciple making movements (DMM) together into

IDMM Objectives



a now-proven church planting and community transformation strategy. Combining CHE and DMM effectively communicates the message of God's transformative love in a culturally relevant way. R.W. Lewis explains the opportunity, "It is not enough merely to identify people groups who don't yet understand God's love. We need to help their communities see Jesus as a messenger of peace with God—not a threat to their families—a healer of diseases and relationships, a deliverer from evil."¹

One of the biggest challenges in frontier missions is to share the good news of Jesus Christ intentionally in a way that effectively resonates with hearers. Jesus sent his disciples to minister not only spiritually but also physically and emotionally. As we pray earnestly, God works in the spiritual and physical realms, giving us his authority just as he gave it to his disciples when he sent them out.

When we enter a community, we talk with people about their history, problems, and strengths. They may be successful farmers. They may have enmity with neighboring groups. Their worldview might not allow them to seek medical care for women or send their girls to school. We pray for "persons of peace," influential men and women who want change in their community. Working with the person of peace and other community members, the IDMM team seeks to bless families in practical ways. Women learn how to sew together. Men learn about new agricultural methods. Bored youth gather to play sports. Affinity groups meet to build friendships around common interests. We see God's heart for families and communities in his command to Abraham: "I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors

you I will curse, and in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 12:3).

We desire to see families following Jesus, staying in the community as salt and light to their neighbors. God's blessing on families will extend to their health, vocations, and engagement as leaders in their communities.

There are five key objectives for IDMM:

- 1) **GO**—Disciples are challenged to go into communities, praying for people and finding the person of peace. They pray, as Jesus prayed, that key felt needs (what a person perceives is necessary or important) are met.

BLESS (an acronym) helps us to remember these needs.

B—Belonging Needs—We all desire to see restored relationships with family, friends, and other community members.

L—Livelihood Needs—Every person needs shelter, food, physical health, and finances for the needs of the family.

E—Emotional Needs—Everyone needs peace in their relationships and emotional health within themselves.

S—Safety Needs—All communities periodically face natural and social crises, whether economic, political, or religious. Vulnerable members experience stress, suffering, and even death.

S—Spiritual Needs—Every person is separated from God because of sin and needs to find the way, the truth, and the life that is in Jesus.

¹ Lewis, RW, "Family-Blessing Advocates: Blessing Families by Filling the Gaps," in *Mission Frontiers* 44, no. 6 (2022): 24.



- 2) **SHARE**—Ministry workers and volunteers are equipped to share God’s big story from creation to consummation with the person of peace.

They share four fundamental relationships in life (i.e., with God, others, themselves, and their environment). In the beginning, all was in harmony (shalom), but sin brought brokenness into all four relationships. As the person of peace expresses a desire to see restoration in all these areas, they are invited to study the Word of God in a discovery group with others from their family or community.²



Sarah grew up in a Muslim home. A friend invited her to a sewing club, where she enjoyed learning

² Anderson, Cynthia and Martine Fritsch. 2022, “4 Principles of Integral Mission and DMMs.” www.dmmsfrontiermissions.com/4-principles-of-integral-mission-and-dmms/

new skills. The club also served as a discovery group. She especially loved the stories from the Injeel (New Testament). She and her friends created dramas from the stories. Sarah’s friend, Esther, had a peace and joy that Sarah did not have. One day, Esther shared God’s big story with Sarah. Sarah was touched to hear about a loving God who wanted good, not evil, for her life. She heard that Jesus was sent to live and die for her sins and brokenness. Sarah believed in Jesus and was encouraged to start her own group.

- 3) **DISCIPLE**—New believers are encouraged to grow as integral (whole) disciples, restoring health in all areas of their lives.

Jesus poured into his disciples, teaching them about prayer, servant leadership, family, and work relationships. What they learned, they modeled and taught others. We see examples in God’s Word of disciples with different vocations. In Acts, churches started in homes and in communities with no known believers.

We continue to learn from these models today. In a discovery group, each person grows in their faith in God. Sharing their journey of obedience with others is very important for discipleship. They also grow in healthy physical and social behavior, building skills that will help them earn a living. The leader asks three simple questions as they learn from Scripture together:


- 1) What do I learn about God?
 - 2) What do I learn about myself and people in the story?
 - 3) What will I do?
- 4) **MULTIPLY**—Disciples are encouraged to start new groups following the model they experience. The local hub leader equips the discovery group leaders with suggested Scriptures to study and relevant health or social lessons based on felt needs.
- 5) **TRANSFORM**—Discovery groups and churches become agents of transformation in their community.

As discovery groups lovingly reach out to neighbors and take ownership of community problems, transformation begins to happen in the community. Families send their boys and girls to school, where they learn new livelihood skills. Health issues are prevented before they spread through the community. Simple picture books and dramas are powerful ways to share how to prevent diseases.

Brother David was trained in IDMM in India and prayed earnestly for his village. God led him to Amar, a Sikh, and a discovery group began in Amar's home. Amar's family and friends listened to God's Word and discussed what they learned about God and themselves. They blessed their neighbors with acts

of love. Amar and others took steps of faith to follow Jesus in obedience. Within six months, the village had four discovery groups. During the pandemic, the discovery groups distributed food to families. Believers gathered for worship, fellowship, prayer, and communion. This church continues with over 25 regular attendees.

Integral Disciple Making Movement (IDMM) is biblically based, simple, and sustainable.

The IDMM training is facilitated by trained leaders over three days. As local churches and ministry organizations embrace IDMM to make disciples, plant churches, and foster transformation in unreached areas, we expect to see thriving families, churches, and villages. 



Devout Hindus:

Anti-Church but Not Necessarily Anti-Christ

By H. L. RICHARD

H. L. Richard is an independent researcher focused on the Hindu-Christian encounter. He has published numerous books and articles seeking understanding regarding the inadequacy of Christian witness among serious Hinduism.

A highly esteemed Roman Catholic missionary to India, R. H. Lesser wrote a paper on “Hinduism and the Western Missionary” for *The St. Thomas Christian Encyclopedia of India*. In it, he says, “The strange but tragic truth is that though Christianity has been in India for nearly 2,000 years, though there are Christians in every corner of India, yet Christians and Hindus have never really met.”¹

Obviously, in the standard sense, Christians and Hindus are always meeting, so in what way does Lesser suggest they have never met? We meet on the surface but never penetrate below the facades and talking points of our respective camps. Are we gathering to seek a new set of talking points? Or can we determine to engage the hearts of those who seem resistant to historic Christianity?

My research on these matters has led me to many striking individuals who have wrestled with these situations. A missionary who compels attention and deeper probing is an obscure British Methodist, Benjamin Robinson, who served in south India in the 1880s. Robinson, reflecting on the *advaita* Vedanta system of Hindu thought, wrote this,

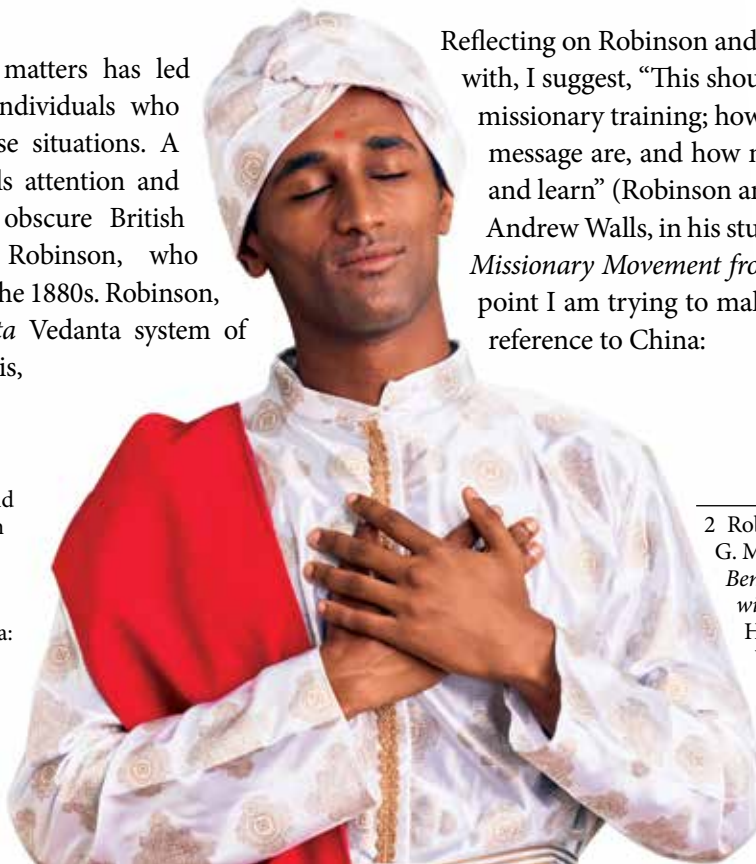
As a record of thinking it amazes one the more one studies it. There our axioms are questioned, our certainties are illusion. But when the spreading influence of that system of thought touches us more nearly, and when we have learned enough to feel its force in India, we shall find that conflict with it will compel the reconsideration of all our own schemes and systems.²

This helps explain Lesser’s remark. We need to be touched “more nearly” by Hindu life and thought. It is too easy to dismiss Hinduism as full of error and superstition, never feeling the truths that resonate so deeply with Hindus. As we begin to feel what Hindus feel about Christianity, we increasingly see the need to consider just what is truly good news to Hindus and reconsider our “schemes and systems.”

Reflecting on Robinson and the issues he struggled with, I suggest, “This should be the first lesson in missionary training; how alien both we and our message are, and how much we need to listen and learn” (Robinson and Richard 2020, xxiii). Andrew Walls, in his study of the history of *The Missionary Movement from the West*, makes the point I am trying to make in a different way in reference to China:

1 Lesser, R. H. “Hinduism and the Western Missionary,” in *The St. Thomas Christian Encyclopedia of India*, Vol. 3. ed. George Menachery (Thrissur City, Kerala, India: The St. Thomas Christian Encyclopedia of India, 2010), 50.

2 Robinson, Richard, and Arthur G. McPhee. *Cultural Gaps: Benjamin Robinson’s Experience with Hindu Traditions*. ed. H.L. Richard (Littleton, CO: William Carey Publishing, 2020), 42.



... not only must the missionary get into China and Chinese; China and Chinese must get into the missionary. This involves penetration to the heart of the central traditions of China, the consciousness at the core of the nation formed by centuries of reflection, influencing millions of people who are never aware of the source of that influence.³

My recent work on R. C. Das of Banaras also pointed in this direction. In a paper outlining his life and thought, one of my conclusions was that “We are ignorant, ill-equipped, unaware even of how far we are from ready to engage the Hindu world.”⁴ Hindus and Christians have never really met. One could blame Hindus, but this is not their problem; they do not claim to have good news that we need to understand. They do not have any reason *not* to ignore Christianity.

So why title this article “Devout Hindus: Anti-Church but Not Necessarily Anti-Christ”? I’ll conclude this article by defining my terms. Especially when dealing with India and Hindu issues, all terms must be defined.

“Hindu” or “Hinduism” is notoriously difficult to define. For this article, I primarily focus on forward (“high”) caste Hindus. Still, we need a working definition to grasp this slippery concept. So, I submit the following as one of the best definitions of Hinduism I’ve come across:

It is now a matter of heated debate as to whether or not there is such a thing as “Hinduism.” On the one side is an academic analysis that suggests that what is known as Hinduism is more a collection of loosely related traditions, communities, and partly shared customs and concepts that, only through the Western Enlightenment creation of the category of “religion” and the vested, unifying interests of upper-caste Hindu informants, led to the construction of “Hinduism.” On the other side is a range of views from vehement, ideological assertions of an ancient and single Hinduism through to an instinctive contemporary fellow feeling amongst Hindus that they belong to the

same “religion.”⁵

My emphasis is on serious Hindus, or “religious” Hindus, but the best term to carry these meanings is “devout” Hindus, those who are devoted to their traditions and particularly to a particular god or guru. This is the path of *bhakti* or devotion, by far the dominant expression of living Hindu traditions (contra foci on philosophy, texts, or political machinations).

“Anti-church” in this context refers to the institutions of classical Christianity (e.g., denominations, church buildings, Christian schools, hospitals, seminaries, Bible colleges, etc.), which carry a stench of colonialism and foreignness. By no means are all Hindus opposed to all forms of expression of Christianity or church, but they are most strongly suspicious towards (if not outright hostile towards) conversion agendas that are a core aspect of the heritage of many groups.

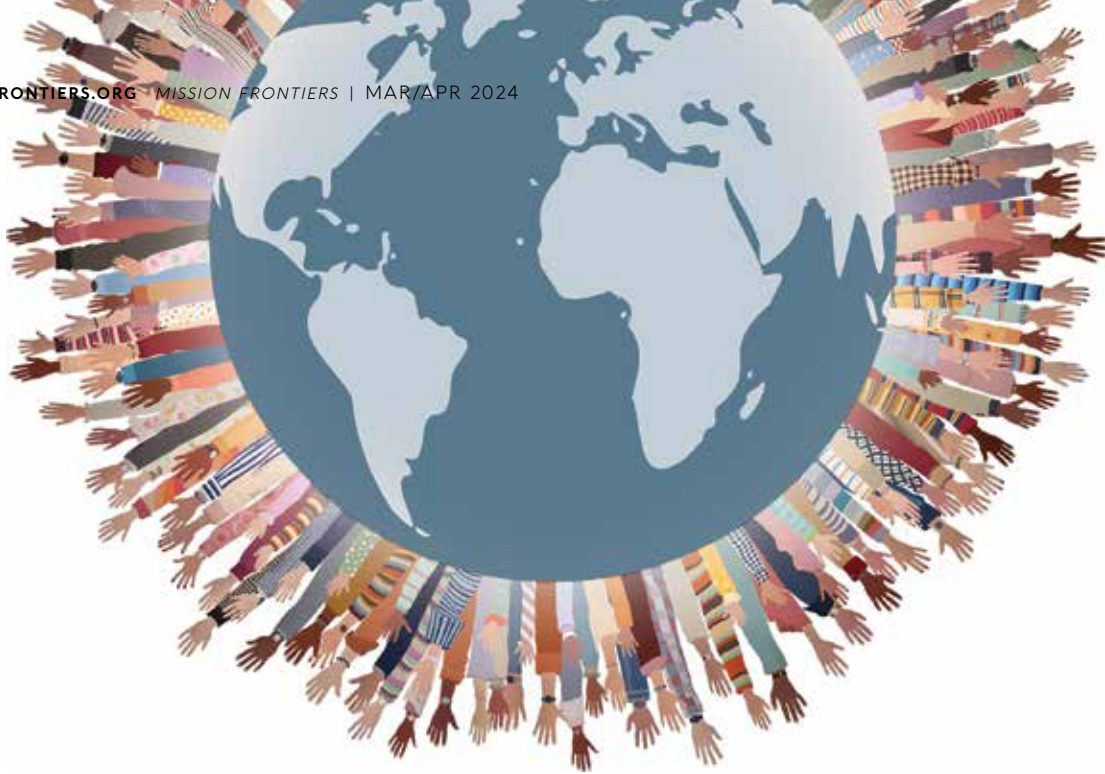
“Anti-Christ” is generally a highly pejorative term for extreme opposition to Jesus and the Bible. In broad terms, Hindus are more opposed to evangelism and conversion than they are to Jesus. Still, given that many are slow to respond positively, an underlying hesitancy is clearly very strong among Hindu peoples. Like Lesser, we could say that this resistance is primarily due to never really meeting Christians or never really hearing the gospel or never really encountering Christ. The trappings of Christianity disguise the glory of Christ.

I wish there was a simple solution to the problems outlined, but I know none. I can only advise that we slow down, listen carefully, reflect deeply, and expect multiple expressions of good news and church to develop as Hindus and gospel messengers finally begin to meet. ❏

3 Walls, Andrew. *The Missionary Movement from the West: A Biography from Birth to Old Age*. ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2023), 131.

4 H. L. Richards, “The Life and Thought of R. C. Das: His Theology of Interreligious (Hindu-Christian) Relations,” *IJFM* 39, no. 2–4 (Summer-Winter 2022): 133.

5 Ram-Prasad, Chakravarti. “Hindu Perspectives on Islam,” in *Religions View Religions: Explorations in Pursuit of Understanding*. ed. Jerald D. Gort, Henry Jansen, and Hendrik M. Vroom (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006), 178.



Adopt a People Movement

Bringing Back the King of Kings!

*What is God's way of supernaturally bringing about mission breakthrough?
Having people adopt a frontier people group in prayer.*

By **JOHN ROBB**

John Robb is the founder and former Chairman for the International Prayer Council and International Prayer Connect, a network of prayer ministries and networks around the world (ipcprayer.org). He is the Coordinator for the Unreached Peoples Task Force and Chairman of Transformation Prayer Foundation (transformationprayerfoundation.org). John is a former field missionary and leads consultations and seminars in more than 80 countries.

An increasing number of us in mission movement believe we may well be in the run-up to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ! He told us to watch for the signs to know when that will be. Perhaps the most important sign is that the *ethne*, the ethnic people groups, mentioned in Matthew 24:14; 28:19 are now within the possibility of being reached with the gospel. We might even see this happen by 2033, as several world mission leaders now predict. What a time to be alive and serve the returning King of Kings!

In the meantime, we need to greatly multiply and expand both prayer and mission efforts to ignite

movements for Christ among every one of the frontier people groups (FPGs), those most unreached groups with less than one person per thousand who follow Jesus. Of the several thousand unreached people groups (UPGs), there are 293 FPGs, each over 1 million in size, totaling about 1.6 billion people. These FPGs are called “frontier” because they are the least reached of the UPGs. Joshua Project maintains the list of all FPGs. They are the most strategic people groups to reach first because, as they respond to the gospel, movements for Christ developing in them will likely overflow to smaller FPGs around them. The powerful momentum of disciple making, church planting movements will be unleashed.

The prayer and mission movements need your help! We are seeking to get churches, prayer groups, youth, and children's ministries worldwide, through denominations and networks, to systematically adopt each one of these 293 and ultimately all the remaining UPGs. Jesus commanded that we pray to the Lord of the harvest to send workers into his harvest field (Matt 9:37–38). When driving the money changers out of the temple, he also exclaimed “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations (*ethne*)” (Mark 11:17).

Prayer is therefore the first order of business in reaching the unreached. It is God's powerful, supernatural way that carries out his global mission, even in the most resistant and unreached places and peoples! When each of these 293 groups are adopted for ongoing, focused prayer by multiple ministry entities, we expect an explosive, synergistic leap forward in seeing the *ethne* reached in this decade.

Tools and Tips

Here are just a few resources and suggestions to use and share with others.

- A brief video, *Understanding the Remaining Mission Task*, provides a helpful overview of our progress in completing this all-important mission of the Lord.¹
- Prayer cards for each of these largest FPGs are available at Joshua Project.² They can be enlarged to be placed on church walls, prayer group's meeting place, or given as bookmarks to remind people of the people group they've adopted. Joshua Project has many wonderful resources to help them find out more about their people group. Also, adopting entities can always do their own research and seek to network with others who have the same FPG as their focus.
- A new web platform called GetInvolved.com enables the formation of digital prayer communities to connect those with the same FPG in ongoing prayer.

- A new phone app is now available to help individuals pray for one of these largest 300 FPGs each day with a picture, profile, maps, etc.³ Try it yourself and share it with others.

We would deeply appreciate your help in mobilizing churches, prayer groups, youth, and children's ministries to meet this challenge to pray.

Through experience, we've found that it is usually best to assign just one FPG to a single ministry or believer. Include a prayer card with your request so that all these 293 FPGs will then be covered in prayer by one or more churches or ministries. Children and youth can also be assigned one to keep in their prayers. As they do, God may even call them to go as missionaries to their people group! Participants are asked to pray for the coming year and then either renew that commitment or shift to another people group.

Please also ask each adopting church or ministry to register their commitments to adopt particular FPGs (or other UPGs) so we can track what is happening.⁴ The AIMS mission agency helps to track adoptions, connect them with field teams, where possible, and communicate how their prayers are answered. They can assist you with adoption, research, prayer, and connecting with field workers seeking to reach FPGs and other UPGs.

Testimony from My Life

I'll close with an amazing testimony about the power of praying for an FPG. At the beginning of the 1990s, I asked two churches in my hometown to adopt a Central Asian people group with only two known Jesus followers. All the rest, as far as we knew, were Muslims.

The Adopt a People Clearinghouse (associated with the U.S. Center for World Mission at that time) had just printed a beautiful prayer card about this almost completely unreached people. Using that card, believers from both churches began to pray, and we began to see God's wonders. Psalm 77:14 says, “You are the God who performs miracles; You display your power among the peoples.” That is exactly what we began to witness!

1 “Understanding the Remaining Mission Task.” www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYwcmPoByhg

2 www.joshuaproject.net/frontier/4

3 FPG of the Day. Online: play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.frontierpeoplegroups.frontier

4 Register your commitment at aims.org/adoption-registration.html

Shortly after believers began to pray, our hometown and the two Central Asian believers' capital city began a sister-city program that enabled the exchange of musicians, composers, and other cultural programs. The symphony orchestra of that country then decided to do a concert the night before their independence celebration from the Soviet Union. They chose to perform the music of my grandfather, who was our university's Dean of Fine Arts and a well-known local composer. He had recently passed away and my parents could not go, so I attended the concert in that Central Asian nation.

The conductor asked me to say some words about my grandfather, so I told them about his search for God through his composing. We also read Psalm 23, his favorite psalm. The conductor, the musicians, and the audience, including some government officials, were all Muslims. Yet, they loved my grandfather's music and Psalm 23, since they came from a pastoral culture! I also found out that my remarks were included with the concert on national radio! In addition, a non-residential missionary had come with me. Through that experience, he was given an open door and office to bring in university lecturers and agricultural development experts who all followed Jesus. They eventually led hundreds to Christ. Thanks be to the Lord!

The favor God gave in answer to the prayers of ordinary believers was so amazing! After the concert, the conductor asked if I could return the following year for another such concert of my grandfather's

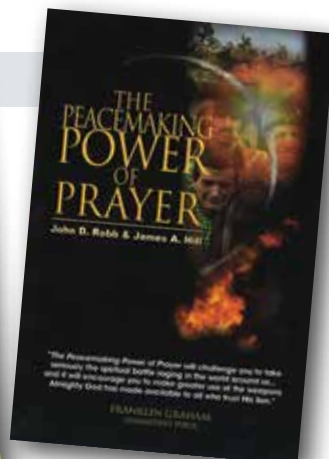
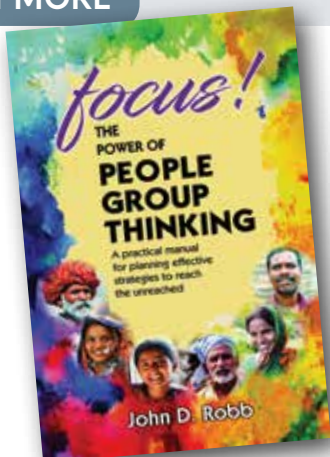
music. I did. As we sat in the audience before the orchestra played, the conductor said, "Now, can we have John Robb come up to the mic and tell us about God?" Talk about always being ready to share at a moment's notice!

I did my best to follow up on what was said the year before. Again, they seemed to be so open and receptive for nominal Muslims. "What is This Glory?", a song performed during that concert, was my granddad's touching Christmas piece about the shepherds welcoming the birth of Jesus. It has been said that you can preach to Muslims, and they might kill you, but you can sing to them, and they will love you! That is what happened, apparently, since I'm still alive and can recount this wonderful God-story to you!

What an illustration of the power of focused prayer to bring about breakthroughs among UPGs! That must be why Jesus stressed that prayer is essential for mission breakthrough in Matthew 9:37–38. God owns the harvest and guides the reaping process. However, what he really wants is our prayer, through which he sends the workers he specially chooses and gifts. Here lies the mystery and potency of prayer for the still plentiful number of people groups who have never heard the gospel. That is why the most strategic thing we can do (as instructed by the master missiologist himself) is to pray and get others to do the same.

In the run-up to his return, let us obey his command to pray so that all FPGs will have breakthrough movements for Christ among them! 🙏

LEARN MORE



John Robb is the author of *Focus: The Power of People Group Thinking*, a practical manual in 20 languages used by missionaries for reaching unreached people groups with the gospel. He also co-authored *The Peacemaking Power of Prayer* about prayer initiatives God used to dramatically change nations. Both books have been digitized and are now available **FREE of charge**. Please contact John at johndrobb3@gmail.com if you would like to receive them.



Testimony of a Viable, Indigenous Church Planting Movement

By R. REKEDAL SMITH

R. R. Smith and her family (rls@safetypost.net) serve with Beyond, a mission organization wholly dedicated to seeing Acts-like movements birthed among the world's unreached peoples. All Scripture references used are from the AMP.

Ralph Winter once said,

The essential missionary task is to establish a viable, indigenous church planting movement that carries the potential to renew whole extended families and transform whole societies. It is *viable* in that it can grow on its own, *indigenous* meaning that it is not seen as foreign, and a *church planting movement* that continues to reproduce intergenerational fellowships... able to evangelize the rest of the people group.¹

A *viable, indigenous church planting movement*. In India? My husband, Steve, and I didn't believe it was possible. Until it happened.

Steve and I first moved to India in 2001. Over the years, we were involved in many good, Christian activities,

¹ Winter, Ralph, and Bruce Koch. "Finishing the Task," in *Perspectives* (Pasadena; William Carey Publishing, 2009), 517, 524.

but by 2011, we had not established anything close to an indigenous church planting movement. We knew of two Hindu families who'd begun following Jesus through our work, but neither had multiplied other disciples for Christ. What a discouraging summary of 10 years of prayer and work! We weren't alone. Other expat workers were equally unfruitful. We all had explanations for our fruitlessness:

- The [spiritual] ground here is really hard. Hindus aren't interested.
- The gospel message isn't contextualized enough for Hindus to accept.
- The only available Bible translation is out of date.
- Jesus said that few find the narrow way that leads to life (Matt 7:14), so we shouldn't expect many to be saved.

In 2011, our sending agency, Beyond, conducted a two-week disciple making training with one purpose—to spend time looking at nothing but Scripture.

No manuals. No quotes from famous authors. No missional theses. Just a deep dive into what the Word of God has to say about reaching and discipling the lost and about church planting strategies.

During the training, my husband and I were forced to admit that we knew more about what our favorite authors and fellow missionaries had to say about evangelism and outreach than what was in the Word. We knew what our contemporaries claimed about the “right” way to reach Hindus, but we’d never seriously studied the Bible to see what *it* had to say.

I was raised in the church, decided to be a missionary in junior high, and graduated from Bible college. Yet, no one ever advised me simply to follow the strategies that Jesus both modeled and taught concerning outreach and disciple making. Did Jesus even make strategic choices? Didn’t he just kind of walk around with the chosen few, sharing stories that no one really understood until the time came for him to redeem the world? Did he ever *purposefully* reach out to lost people? How sad that I could quote strategies from Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael, and Paul, but not from Jesus.

After the training, Steve and I compared the Bible with our missional strategies and outreach tools, determined to let go of assumptions and approaches that weren’t in Scripture. “Our” strategies hadn’t been fruitful anyway, so we had nothing to lose by letting them go.

For outreach, we began to apply literally Luke 10:1–12. Again, nothing else had worked. Why not try *going* as Jesus had done and taught his disciples to do? So, as obvious as it sounds, this meant we had to actually *go*. In Luke 10, Jesus’ disciples only *went*.

They didn’t go-then-invite, which was, of course, our standard practice. Whether VBS programs for children, medical drives, literacy programs, or skills training, none of these activities are bad in and of themselves. But, when Jesus sent out the 12, he told them simply to go humbly and with prayer. They were even instructed to leave everything at home. Talk about the opposite of our outreach strategies! More than just *going*, they went with a sense of

neediness to lost people, as sheep among wolves (Luke 10:3). Had Steve and I ever gone to the lost like that? We had to admit it. We hadn’t.

Jesus’ strategies are so rich, but I’ll touch on just one more here. In Luke 10:5–7, Jesus instructed his disciples to enter a house and stay in it. The Greek word for house, *oikos*, refers to a household or community. In other words, one-on-one outreach was not included in Jesus’ strategy. His disciples were to meet with families or existing relationship groups.

During the training, my husband and I were forced to admit that we knew more about what our favorite authors and fellow missionaries had to say about evangelism and outreach than what was in the Word.

Reach out to an entire household? This was definitely not standard practice for our outreach efforts. Sure, Steve and I prayed for our relatives back home also to follow Jesus. After all, the Philippian jailer *and his whole household* were saved (Acts 16:31–34), but we’d never considered targeting *oikos* as strategic for reaching the lost. A search of the Scriptures shows that the Philippian jailer’s family isn’t an anomaly. Whole households are saved from Genesis to Revelation, including but not limited to Rahab and her whole family, the Samaritan woman and her village, Cornelius and his family, as well as Lydia and hers. Likewise, see Joshua 2:18; 6:22–23; John 4:39–42; Acts 10:27–33; 16:15.

Besides literally applying Luke 10, we looked for others who also wanted to see more fruit from among the lost. The Lord led us to a small group of Christian Indians who were willing to try these *new* things (which were really old). Truthfully, this story is their story.

God has worked much more through the Christian Indians than us to complete this essential missionary task. In six months, that group of 15 Christians started 65 Bible studies in Hindu households (*oikos*). Many of those households received baptism, even knowing persecution might result. Also, many became co-laborers in the harvest. Thus, there were now two

generations of disciples *going* and starting new Bible studies. Multiplication had begun.

That was 12 years ago. There are now over 300,000 churches planting churches and three million baptized followers of Jesus across 16 states in India (over half the country). Disciples of Jesus come from all walks of life: Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and even Christian (important in a country of self-designated “name Christians”). There are well over 250 caste groups represented in this indigenous, viable church planting movement. As many might expect, there are Dalit and Tribal households, but there also are Brahmin, Rajput, Jat, Thakur, even Baniya, and many others.

How are so many caste groups being touched by the good news? Some households become followers because someone from their own caste reaches out. Others become followers due to outreach across caste or religious lines. In caste-striated, religiously divided India, doesn't reaching across caste or religious lines cut a person off from his or her family? It certainly can and does when individuals act in isolation. Thus, we praise God for including *oikos* in his outreach strategy!

The only way this movement has grown across 16 states in 12 years is because households are actively engaged in the essential missionary task of establishing a *viable, indigenous movement* that renews *whole extended families* (and whole villages, in some cases).

When an *oikos* is disciplined together, they support and encourage each other. They spur each other on to love and good deeds (Heb 10:24), applying God's Word to their lives in practical ways, even difficult verses like love your enemies (Matt 5:43–48), and that, in Jesus, there is neither Jew nor Greek...slave nor free...male nor female [but] all are one... (Gal 3:28). They learn to obey together, even in opposition to accepted cultural practices. This is not just an assumption.

With around 300,000 house churches, there are countless other examples to recall. The only way this movement has grown across 16 states in 12

years is because households are actively engaged in the essential missionary task of establishing a *viable, indigenous movement* that renews *whole extended families* (and whole villages, in some cases). Rejoice with us! God is building his Church! In fact, indigenous movements are happening on every continent today, with over 40 in South Asia alone. Hallelujah!

Lord, I'm sorry that for so long I blamed the lost for being lost. Thank you for appointing us for fruitfulness (John 15:16). Forgive us for being content with little. Jesus, you are worth the worship of all nations, including those who have yet to hear. May we, your people, be willing to stop, start, or change whatever needs stopping, starting, or changing to see your great harvest brought in so that the end can come (Matt 24:14).



Steve and I wish we had more space to brag about our Indian co-laborers.² God has done and is doing great things through them! They face intense opposition. Some have had their homes burned to the ground. Many have been beaten and/or imprisoned. Others have been killed for following Jesus. In response, the churches are caring for widows and orphans. They visit those who are imprisoned and pray for their persecutors. Meanwhile, they continue to multiply and do not shrink back. We are honored to know them. ❏

² Our book *Dear Mom and Dad: An Adventure in Obedience* talks more about our journey. All proceeds go toward buying Bibles for the churches who continue to multiply, even today.



The Best Hope for Reaching frontier people groups

By **STAN PARKS**

Stan Parks, PhD serves the 24:14 Coalition (2414now.net) with Beyond (beyond.org). He is a coach for various church planting movements globally, and he and his wife Kay have served among the unreached since 1994.

In Matthew 28:19, Jesus commanded us to make disciples of all nations (i.e., *ethne*)—whole populations united by culture, traditions, geography, and languages. What does it mean to disciple an entire people group?

Today, we see an unprecedented move of the Holy Spirit around the world where God starts and sustains church planting movements (CPMs). These movements involve multiplication: disciples making disciples and leaders developing leaders, resulting in indigenous churches planting churches. These churches begin to spread rapidly through a people group or population segment. Although these new disciples and churches have typical human failures and weaknesses, God uses them to begin transforming their communities. They become new manifestations of Christ's Body living out kingdom values.

Consider that out of 7,000+ unreached people groups (UPGs), almost 5,000 are frontier people groups (FPGs are UPGs with less than 0.1% Christian). Exponential multiplication is clearly the only way to reach the billions of people in these groups.

Thankfully, these UPGs and FPGs are not isolated communities needing 7,000 or 5,000 separate gospel efforts. These groups are interrelated through language, culture, geography, religion, and kinship. The Joshua Project identifies 269 people clusters containing all 17,286 people groups globally. The 123 still-unreached clusters contain 7,250 UPGs. Reaching one or more UPGs in a cluster can create leverage to reach the remaining UPGs.

For example, the Bhojpuri CPM leaders were not willing to limit their efforts to the 100+ million Bhojpuri speakers. God has used them to impact millions of others by catalyzing CPMs in eight neighboring language groups and five major cities in North India.¹ All over the world, we see not only disciples making disciples and churches birthing churches but also *movements catalyzing movements*.

As researchers study the amazing work of God in 1,965 currently known CPMs with 114+ million disciples,² they have discovered a critical truth. Not only are movements the fastest way God's kingdom is growing in our day; they are also the source from which

¹ Parks, Stan and Dave Coles, *24:14—A Testimony to All Peoples*. Self-Published, 185–88.

As these movements launch into new groups, we recognize they are having a greater impact on the FPGs than we realized. Research from the 24:14 coalition of movements shows the following information.

most *new* movements are springing up. Only about 10% of existing movements were started by a catalyst(s) from a far-distant culture who found an inside catalyst(s) to plant the first churches.³ The vast majority of current movements (approximately 90% of them) were started by believers from other near-culture movements. Some used the term “hot coals” to describe this spread as a metaphor for embers from an existing fire being used to start fires in a new location.

Some have asked, “How can we motivate these CPM disciples to reach FPGs?” In reality, they are far more motivated (and sacrificial and effective) than are many Westerners. Our role as the global Body of Christ should be to learn from them and serve them as they lead the way in reaching FPGs.

These CPMs around the world have been so catalytic that the currently listed 1,965 movements are reported by only 40 movement “families.”⁴ For example, “Family 1” has started multiplying churches in 768+ languages. “Family 2” is multiplying churches in 157 of the 320 UPGs in their region with plans to begin reaching the remaining 163 UPGs in the next few years. “Family 3” is impacting 73+ UPGs with efforts to reach an additional 50+. “Family 4” started 12 years ago and serves 400+ UPGs with 4+ generations of churches, another 130 with some fruit, and an additional 400 UPGs they need to reach.

Category	frontier people groups (FPGs)	#	Population
		4974	1.985 billion
1	FPGs where there is a CPM in the same country among people speaking the FPG’s language	1042	607 million
2	FPGs where there is a CPM in another country among people speaking the FPG’s language	1819	1.064 billion
3	FPGs where there are no known CPMs anywhere among people speaking the FPG’s language	2113	314 million

This information creates a clear strategic delineation.

For category #1, we need to ask the movement leaders how best to assist them, either in beginning work or expanding already existing work. Category #2 is typically more challenging, so we need to ask how we can work together to bring “hot coals” to ignite responses among FPGs in a different country.

For category #3, we can inform movement leaders and disciples of the need and see if any respond to go to a new group and then help them as much as possible. If that does not happen, our best approach would be to work with both movement leaders and outside movement catalysts to mold new catalysts from anywhere in the world. We then work together to help them catalyze pioneering efforts into the gaps. CPMs are well positioned to reach the FPGs for several reasons:

1. Bible as foundation

Disciples in CPMs take Scripture very seriously. Everyone is expected to obey God’s Word. God is the foremost teacher (John 6:44–45).

² Cf. “Global Movement Statistics.” Online: 2414now.net/resources.

³ See the Jan/Feb 2023 issue of *Mission Frontiers*. Online: missionfrontiers.org/issue/archive/cascading-gospel-movements-starting-movements

⁴ A “movement family” is a group of movements that are connected relationally.

Disciples know they are accountable for obeying the Word. This emphasis helps to avoid importing outside biases and traditions into the new work. The Holy Spirit uses Scripture to guide new disciples into all truth. The good news bears fruit in ways natural to each culture yet rooted in the Bible.

2. Prayer

A church planting movement is always preceded by a prayer movement. CPMs are also marked by prayer, being “prayer movements” in and of themselves. New disciples know what it means to live in darkness. They also know that God is the only one who can break the bondage. So, these disciples realize the need to pray and to multiply prayer in others.

3. Ordinary people

One striking aspect of CPMs is the role of the “ordinary person.” CPM DNA can be passed from an existing movement to a new movement. God’s work is not restricted to trained professionals. Instead, the Holy Spirit uses ordinary people to share the gospel, cast out demons, heal the sick, and multiply disciples and churches. Brand new believers are powerfully bringing the gospel to new places. They are ordinary people filled with the Spirit of an extraordinary God.

4. Groups not individuals


In Acts, we see households and even some whole communities turn to the Lord. Likewise, we are seeing the same dynamic in today’s movements. Most of these movements are happening among UPGs, who tend to be much more communal than Westerners. In these cultures, decisions are made by the families and/or clans. Collective responses to Christ can make a rapid impact in reaching new families and clans.

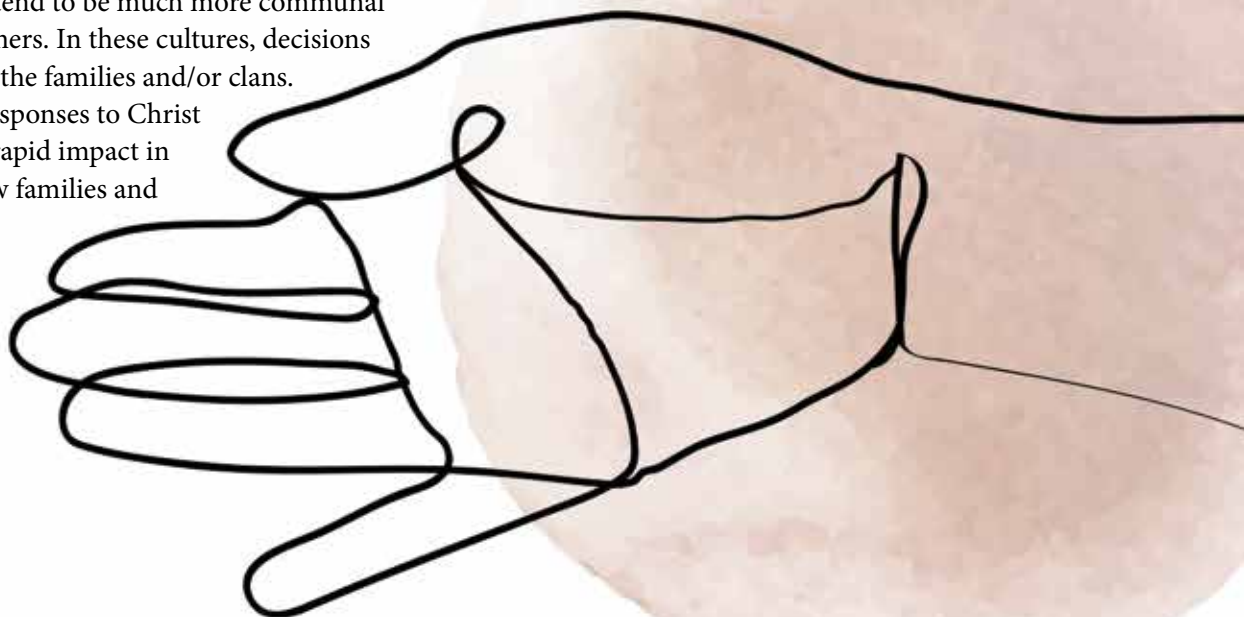
5. Empowering others

Leaders in CPMs are focused on reproducing new leaders, not the number of their own personal followers. They seek to empower people to reach others, training new leaders and delegating responsibilities. Just as Jesus said his disciples would do greater things than he did, healthy movement leaders equip their spiritual children and grandchildren to surpass them.

6. Business for kingdom advance

House churches are led by volunteers rather than professional clergy. Everyone is a minister and church offerings go to help the poor and share the gospel. Major funding is not needed because the churches do not have special church buildings or staff. However, they sometimes do need funds to take the gospel to new areas. Sometimes funds have come from the outside as the global Body of Christ helps the movements reach into new people groups and places. However, receiving outside funds is increasingly challenging in many unreached countries due to growing government surveillance and restrictions. In recent years, many movements have started kingdom-focused businesses that can fund ongoing pioneer efforts.

Clearly, movements with hundreds or thousands of churches yield many of the best laborers to spark similar movements among FPGs. As a global body, we should prioritize resourcing and serving CPM disciples. They are the best hope to reach the millions of people in the remaining FPGs. 



Understanding Christward Movements in India

By DR. ANON

Dr. Anon (pseudonym) was involved for 12 years in urban church planting in South Asia, planting six churches in two cities. Later, he taught at two prominent seminaries in India for many years. He now heads a center focusing on urban missiology. This article is derived from a presentation given at the Telos Consultation in 2023.

It is becoming clear that spontaneous, Christward movements are emerging and impacting India. The first witness to Christ arrived nearly 2,000 years ago. Protestant expansion in this region can be classified into four eras, spanning three centuries.

History of Christward Movements

The first era is roughly 1706–1947, from the first entry to independence from colonial oversight. This is the era of foreign witness. The second period (1947–1970) was a post-independence, stabilizing era. From 1970 to 2000, we saw a third era with tremendous growth of indigenous, spontaneous mission movements.

The first two eras formed ministry strategies and approaches based on the assumptions and attitudes of Western workers. Almost all of them were based in urban centers and exclusively focused on urban and upper-caste people. Sadly, even after investing much time and effort, the results were very meager. Therefore, in the later part of the 1850s, a significant paradigm change took place, which enabled Protestants to move from the urban, upper castes to a rural, outcaste, and tribal focus. Mass movements during that era began mostly among Dalits and tribal communities. The next six to seven decades were the era of mass movements.¹ The number of Christians and churches mushroomed throughout the country, especially among outcastes. The period from 1920–1947 was a stabilizing period with a decrease in mass movements to Christ.

¹ A large listing of these is found in Waskom Pickett, *The Mass Movements in India* (Lucknow, India: Lucknow, 1933).

The caste structure has four major segments. The Brahmin are priests. Kshatriyas are the warrior caste. Vaishya represents the business caste. The Shudras are peasants and artisans, often designated as “Other Backward Castes” (OBCs). Finally, the outcastes (“Dalits”) and tribal groups are considered lower and outside the caste system.

The Forgotten Middle Castes

To this day, the majority of Christian missionaries and churches still focus consciously and deliberately on the outcastes. However, if you count all outcastes together, they are not more than one-fifth of the population. So, about 80% of the population is still untouched by the gospel in any significant way. In fact, there seems to be no evidence that the gospel was preached to the Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras at all, except in a few exceptional cases. God has blessed the church in India by bringing many Dalits and tribal people to himself, and we are thankful for that.

In the third era (1970s to 2000), an interesting phenomenon emerged. Today, there are some 250 indigenous missionary societies in the IMA (Indian Mission Association). These societies have mostly started in South India and now send workers to the north, making them cross-cultural workers (as the languages and cultures are very different). Between 50,000 to 70,000 national cross-cultural missionaries are at work.

Since 2001, we’ve witnessed many Christward movements emerging in South Asia. Christianity constitutes 2.3% of India’s population, roughly 20 to

30 million people across the country. Yet, 80% of them are in South India and 15% in Northeast India. The major urban centers also have sizable Christian populations. Chennai is more than 10% Christian; Mumbai is 7% and Bangalore is 6.7% Christian. Furthermore, strong pockets of Christians are seen in South Gujarat, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, and Bihar. Still, most areas of India have little to no gospel witness.

Many readers may not be aware of several demographic features of the Indian church. For example, we have the original Syrian Orthodox Marthoma Christians. We also have Anglo-Indian Christians (i.e., mixed race between the British and the Indians). While Christians from the upper caste are very few, they definitely exist. Some Christians have dual identities. In the government record, they remain Hindus (or whatever caste they belong to), but in Christian records, they are still Christian. There are also anonymous Christians, secret followers of Christ, or non-baptized believers. In addition, new groups have emerged that do not call themselves “Christians.” Accordingly, when the census records the number of Christians, they overlook such people.

Christward movements often have surfaced in history. So, they are not new. But these indigenous expressions of faith are bringing huge numbers of people to Christ. Christward movements are initiated by the Holy Spirit. He draws people to Jesus Christ and makes them his followers, without detaching them from their socioreligious context. The Spirit enables followers to worship, fellowship, and witness within their own contextual setting.

A Closer Look

Let’s look at three major movements (not named for security purposes). Most people found in these movements (50–65%) are OBCs. They are agitated with Hinduism but have not found a way out of it.

These movements are providing an avenue for them to become Christ’s followers. Some come from middle castes. Very few belong to forward castes. Others are Dalits.

What factors contribute to people turning to Christ in these movements? The first includes personal encounters with Jesus Christ through healing, miracles, power encounters, signs, and wonders. We talked with them and asked, “What brought you to Christ?” and “Why do you follow him?” They say they had a personal encounter with Jesus. Secondly, people are influenced by family and clan. Many turned to Christ along with their family or extended family, either together or in different phases. Most Indians are very family-bound and want to retain that family culture. This manifests in house



churches, where family members, individuals, and relatives also make personal commitments to Jesus. It's spreading almost like fire. If one person in the family follows Christ, it significantly impacts other family members. After coming to faith, they are forming faith communities with their own families, extended families, clans, and, sometimes, neighborhoods and friends. This is an important observation. Why are they not joining churches? Why do they not become part of the Christian culture? They consciously make a decision not to do so. Instead, they're found in different kinds of gatherings, some consisting of hundreds of people who worship together. They continue to impact their kin, clan, caste, and neighborhood because they remain where they are, often triggering a chain movement amongst their extended community. Homogeneity and heterogeneity are simultaneously at work. Many Christ followers have mixed ethnicity and are easily accepted. Traditional Christians keep castes and talk about it. However, in these movements, we see higher caste Jats, Yadavs, and outcaste Chamar coming together. That's unheard of! Normally, upper caste, middle class, or even lower caste people would never touch an outcaste. But they rejoice in doing that. So, we see mixed ethnicity with little discrimination. Uniting in Christ, they demonstrate his love.

There are fewer identity crises for those coming to faith. This is extremely noteworthy. People who become followers of Christ often struggle with their identity. Yet, these Jesus movements exert no pressure to change one's social or religious identity, nor even to take an exclusively Christian identity. How can they retain their religious identity? Most of them do not identify as "Christians." The word "Christian" is not part of their communal life. They don't even call themselves Isai or Masih, words used in North India. They identify as devotees of Christ: Jesus' truth gatherers, members of Jesus' royal court, and followers of Jesus' path.

A major reason why these movements spread rapidly is because of the authentic witness. They are spontaneous, vibrant, and contextual, impacting people's own family, neighbors, and caste. They are urban or semi-urban movements, taking place in the peripheries of cities. Therefore, the movements are spreading on the periphery of different castes. Prayers

for healing and experiencing miracles are a central phenomenon. Also, people are encouraged to share their life testimony and encounters with Christ.


These movements are not initiated by any Christian church or mission organization. They are spontaneous and natural movements to Christ. No one has forced them to become Christians. There are reasons people do not want to join traditional churches. The Christians in those churches largely (70–80%) come from Dalit backgrounds, creating a social stigma. Many of those [caste level] people do not want to be identified with those churches. So they are beginning to have their *own* spontaneous and natural movements to Christ.

Ongoing Challenges

What are the challenges? The first is the danger of syncretism. How do you believe yet remain in your own social, religious, and cultural context? By modifying expressions and meanings of religion and culture? Several forms, like bhajans and worship, have been adopted by these communities. Also, movement leaders wrestle with how to balance dual identities. What does it mean to be followers of Christ? How long can they retain that dual identity?

Of course, there is always a danger of nominalism and stagnation. No movement is an exception. In addition, superficial teaching and a lack of biblical instruction can be a real problem. Lack of proper leadership training is another challenge. And then there is the risk of a personality cult. Many of these movements are centered on a person. Sometimes, leaders lack a vision beyond their own movement.

Conclusion

In India's changing context, the church is facing increasing pressure to align with the country's social culture and religious ethos. Traditional ways of propagating faith and converting people to Christianity are viewed with suspicion. In such a context, Jesus movements are providing a fresh avenue for people to believe, worship, and follow Christ. Therefore, the emergence of Christward movements is a strategic way for India's frontier people groups to know Christ. 

Entrepreneurial Strategies for Reaching Frontier Peoples

By **BOB GOLDMANN**

Bob Goldman leads the PSALM Business initiative, which encourages cross-cultural workers to share the good news in hard places using a profitable biblical approach to small business. He can be reached at bob@psalmbusiness.com.

Business startups are an excellent way for cross-cultural workers to share the good news among frontier peoples. However, some entrepreneurial strategies are *more effective* than others.

Four questions can help us evaluate which entrepreneurial strategies to pursue:

1 What challenges need to be overcome in sending cross-cultural workers to reach frontier peoples?

Three challenges are particularly relevant when considering whether to use entrepreneurial strategies to reach frontier peoples. First, creative entry strategies are needed. Frontier peoples are often located in hard-to-reach countries, cities, and regions. Therefore, cross-cultural workers need creative entry strategies so they can gain access to specific locations.

Second, respectable residency identities are needed. Countries with frontier peoples are usually reluctant to allow foreigners to remain long-term unless they have a solid reason for granting residency visas. Therefore, cross-cultural workers need stable and respectable residency identities so they will be permitted to remain long enough among frontier peoples to make disciples and contribute to emerging movements.

Third, model biblical values. Local believers need to feed their families and withstand crises and persecution as they spread the good news and work to transform their communities. This means that biblical work values are important for new believers and emerging movements. Therefore, cross-cultural workers should model biblical work values in their residency identities.



Biblical Work Values

As we go and make disciples, we should teach others to obey everything God has commanded us (Matt 28:18–20), which includes God's commands about work. Believers should exemplify the following biblical work values.

1. Believers should **work** (Acts 20:33–35; Eph 4:28; 1 Thess 4:10–12; 2 Thess 3:6–13).
2. Believers should **bless** others (Ps 82:3–4; Matt 25:31–46; 2 Cor 9:1–15; James 1:27).
3. Believers should **pay taxes** (Matt 22:15–22; Mark 12:13–17; Luke 20:20–26; Rom 13:1, 5–7; 1 Pet 2:13–17).
4. Believers should **tithe** (Exod 34:26; Deut 14:27–29; Prov 3:9–10).
5. Believers should **apply God's wisdom** at work (Deut 4:5–6; Ps 19:7–14; Col 1:9–10).
6. Believers should **share the good news** from work (Rom 1:14–17; 2 Cor 5:16–20; Eph 6:19–20; Col 4:3–6; 1 Pet 3:15–16).

We must always model what we teach. “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1; Acts 20:33–35; 2 Cor 12:14–16; 1 Thess 2:7–12; 2 Thess 3:7–10). If these six biblical work values are *modeled* and *taught* by cross-cultural pioneers sharing the good news among frontier peoples, they are more likely to be *caught* by new believers and emerging movements.

2 Why do we need business strategies to reach frontier peoples?

First, pioneering into other countries requires solid identities that allow workers to answer basic questions such as “What do you do?” and “Why are you here?” Cross-cultural workers need clear, simple, respectable answers to these questions in order to gain residency and have effective ministry.

Second, residency visa options in many countries are changing. Tourist visas aren't viable long-term options for residency. Employment visas are less

popular with local governments because they allow foreigners to take jobs that locals could potentially have. Small businesses, on the other hand, are increasingly attractive to local governments since they can provide jobs for locals and strengthen the local economy. A general pattern in other countries is this: If you *create* jobs for locals, you'll be more welcome. If you *take* jobs from locals, you'll be less welcome.

Small business can provide pioneers with creative entry strategies, respectable residency identities, and the ability to model biblical work values.

3 Why do we need to compare business strategies.

Which business approach should we choose as we consider how to reach frontier peoples? The term “Business as Mission” (BAM) has become so broad that it encompasses a wide variety of approaches. Why do many react negatively to the idea of using BAM to pioneer in hard places? Perhaps it's because they've seen too many poor examples.

When we advocate the use of entrepreneurial strategies for reaching frontier peoples, we should advocate *against* some BAM models and *in favor of* other BAM models. Some establish an empty business structure as a ministry platform to gain residency and start discipling, without pursuing a genuine small business that seeks customers, employees, and profitability. Fake business is flawed for several reasons. Authorities can tell from business tax returns if a business lacks income or some employees are working for free. Also, communities can tell by watching if a business lacks customers and employees. Running a fake business models the wrong behaviors to observers and believers. Profitable businesses are preferable to fake ones.

Furthermore, profitable secular business is also flawed. Some establish a profitable secular business that seeks customers, employees, and profitability but without a willingness to risk the business by being openly biblical and without creating opportunities for spiritual conversations. Purely secular (for profit only) business creates a disconnect between business values

and biblical values, reinforcing the “sacred-secular” divide. It makes spiritual conversations at work feel awkward. Finally, secular businesses model the wrong behaviors to observers and believers.

As a result, a biblically oriented business is preferable to secular business. Running a profitable biblical business is preferable. Some people establish a profitable biblical business that seeks customers, employees, and profitability, combined with a willingness to risk the business by being biblical and openly spiritual as well as with a willingness to keep the business small enough to leave time for discipling.

Here are a few benefits. First, profitable business models integrity and authenticity, because a legitimate business has customers, employees, and profits. Second, biblical businesses make biblical values and spiritual conversations at work feel natural. Also, profitable biblical business (1) shows that doing good deeds and sharing the good news can be integrated in a successful business and (2) models the right behaviors to observers and believers. As James 2:18 says, “I will show you my faith by my deeds.”

When one missions leader heard these contrasting approaches, he responded: “You’re right. I’m not really anti-BAM. I’m anti-*bad*-BAM.” More missions leaders would endorse entrepreneurial strategies for reaching frontier peoples if they understood that we recommend *profitable biblical businesses* rather than *fake businesses* or *secular businesses*.


4 How do we pursue a business startup that can be both profitable and biblical?

Four guidelines will help cross-cultural workers pursue profitable biblical business.

- a. Start *small* and profitable. It should be acceptable for a business to be small as long as it seeks to be profitable. To be clear, “small and profitable” is an attitude rather than a target size. Moreover, smaller startups work better in remote locations and unstable situations. They require less initial funding, which is easier for many to achieve and a simpler model for locals to imitate.

- b. Prioritize *simple* processes. Complicated processes, tasks, forms, and procedures tend to create problems in business. Simpler processes are usually less expensive, less likely to lead to mistakes, and easier to teach to others. Simplicity in business can be powerful, but it takes intent and effort to achieve it. Additionally, a simpler business is a better model for others to imitate.
- c. Pursue a *profitable* business. Every business should be profitable enough to serve customers, pay employees and owners, cover the bills, and prepare for crises. Excess profits should result in generosity toward others, not greed or selfishness for the owners. Keep in mind that profitable businesses have the capacity to be both sustainable (surviving crises and downturns) and generous (blessing the needy in families and communities). A sustainable and generous business is a better model for others to imitate.
- d. Be *biblical* in business. This approach will look very different from many examples in the world. A business that seeks to be biblical will value work, do good deeds, and share the good news. This kind of biblical business is a better model for others to imitate.¹

Conclusion

Entrepreneurial strategies can provide cross-cultural workers with creative entry strategies for accessing frontier peoples, respectable residency identities for remaining among frontier peoples, and the ability to model and teach biblical work values to new believers and emerging movements. A profitable biblical approach to small business provides a better identity than fake business or secular business. It also offers a clearer path to sharing the good news among frontier peoples. 

¹ To explore a framework for being biblical in business, see “Be Biblical.” *PSALM Business*. Published 12 Jan 2004. Online: psalmbusiness.com/be-biblical/.

THE FINAL FRONTIER

INDIA'S OTHER BACKWARD CASTES

By **YASHWANT KOLI**

Yashwant Koli is an India strategy demographic analyst. Over the last several decades, he has studied, written about, and engaged both Dalits and OBCs, particularly in north India.

The remaining task of world evangelization cannot be completed without one country in the world and, within it, a large bloc of frontier people groups (FPGs) being reached. That one country is the world's most populous, India, and that bloc is made up of its Other Backwards Castes (OBC). This has become increasingly clear in the last five to 10 years. A deep dive into the latest FPG numbers provides granular specificity into the make-up of the largest OBC FPGs. This article shares some of those data points and their implications for completing the remaining task.

If the 10/40 window is akin to a satellite map, the FPG lens affords us more of a 30,000-foot view. Broadly speaking, when viewed through the filter of the largest (each of 1 million or more) FPGs, 293 groups represent 80 percent of the total FPG population and 20% of the global population (approximately 1.61 billion).

When you look at a world map (see graphic on page 11) depicting the size of each continent/region in proportion to its FPG population, what jumps out? South Asia, with its FPG population of 1.44 billion people, is home to around 70% of the world's largest FPGs, with 51% in India alone. India is clearly the bullseye for anyone seeking to reach FPGs.

INDIA'S OTHER BACKWARD CASTES

Zooming into the world's most populous nation, India has 154 of the world's 293 largest FPGs. Of those, 109 (or 71%) belong to OBCs, whose largest FPGs are:

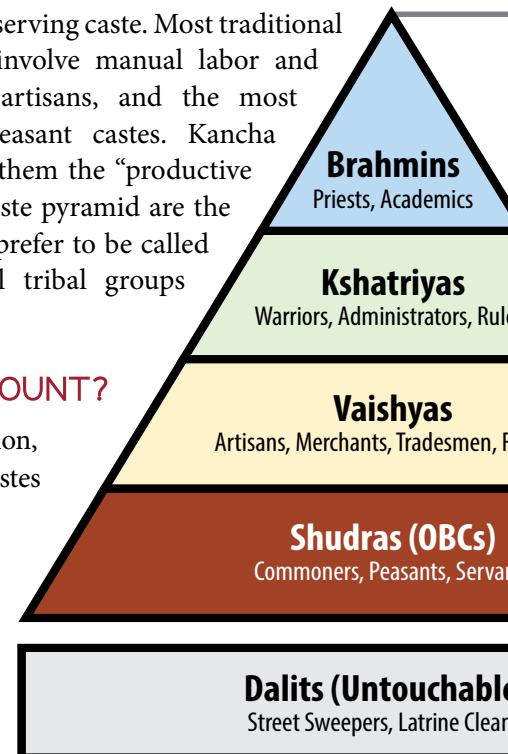
- Hindu (76%)
- Muslim (18%)
- Sikh (3%)
- Ethnic religion (Lingayat) (1%)

So, who are the OBCs? To answer that question, we need to reckon with the fact that the caste system is pervasive throughout India, even among religions like Islam, Sikhism and, yes, even Indian Christianity to some extent. According to the Pew Research Center, "India's caste system is an ancient social hierarchy based on occupation and economic status, with roots in historical Hindu writings. People in India are born into a particular caste and tend to keep many aspects of their social life within its boundaries, including whom they marry and whom they choose to count as their close friends."

Within the original *varna* system, there are three so-called upper caste groups: priestly Brahmins, warrior Kshatriyas, and mercantile Vaishyas. Below these minority "twice-born" castes are Shudra, the largest and lowest serving caste. Most traditional Shudra occupations involve manual labor and include goldsmiths, artisans, and the most numerous pastoral-peasant castes. Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd calls them the "productive castes." Outside the caste pyramid are the "Untouchables," who prefer to be called Dalit, and aboriginal tribal groups called Adivasis.

DO THE OBCS COUNT?

In the Indian constitution, Dalits or Scheduled Castes (SC) and Adivasis or Scheduled Tribes (ST) are designated as Backward Classes. (Under the British, the word "classes"



was used for castes.) It is in relation to them that the Indian constitution refers to the former Hindu Shudra caste groups as “other backward classes” (OBC). These social constructs are mainly for the purposes of government affirmative action policies in education and employment. The OBCs are defined as “socially and educated backward.” Over 80% of Indian Muslims are classified as OBCs.

So, why do OBCs want to be counted in the national census? The 1931 Indian census was the last time all India’s castes were counted. However, since Indian independence in 1947, the decennial census counts only the Dalits (SCs) and Tribals (STs). That’s because their numbers are needed for affirmative action and other policy planning purposes. Though the OBCs now qualify for affirmative action benefits, there has been resistance to them being counted, primarily from the upper-caste-dominated federal ruling parties.

Meanwhile, at the national level, much of the planning for affirmative action programs has been based on extrapolations from the 1931 census data. Based on that, the Hindu OBCs would be 52% of India’s population; today, that would equate to around 730 million. OBCs make up around two-thirds of India’s Hindu population.

Think of it: Today, every sixth person on the planet is an Indian, and every 12th person is an OBC.

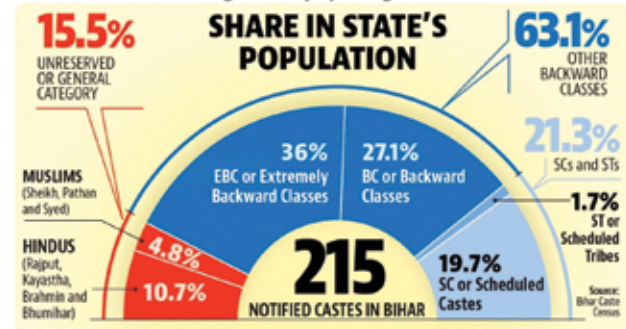
BLESSING THE OBC FAMILIES

In 2023, India’s second-most-populous state, Bihar (131 million) conducted a thorough socioeconomic survey of its citizens by caste. The headline news was that the state’s OBCs, including Muslim OBCs, together account for 63% of its population. This confirms that Bihar is the state with the second-highest percentage of OBCs.

On the heels of the release of the survey data, the state legislature unanimously passed a bill to increase the caste-based affirmative action “reservations” from 50% to 65%. This will apply to state government, higher education, and jobs.

What preliminary results show

This is the first time since independence that all castes have been enumerated across a region in a physical government headcount



However, even with that, Bihar’s Backward Castes will remain poor and underserved for a long time.

This is a task for the church to mobilize workers for the harvest in Bihar and beyond to engage and bless all these OBCs in a holistic way. The challenge in Bihar, as in most of India, is that most Christians, including Christian workers, are from Dalit or tribal backgrounds. They do not naturally cross the caste barriers to engage and reach out to OBCs.

Bihar, the birthplace of Buddhism, has the reputation of being the “graveyard of missionaries.” However, in recent years, seeds sown by Indian workers are beginning to bear fruit among the outcaste Dalits and recently among the OBCs of Bihar.

By looking at the largest bloc of OBCs, we discern the magnitude of the challenge in engaging, reaching, and blessing these groups. The Hindi-speaking Yadavs, traditionally castes involved with all aspects of dairy farming, are estimated to number around 40 million. They are largely concentrated in India’s two largest states, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Joshua Project calculates that the Hindi-speaking Yadavs require around 817 workers (based on a minimum of one worker per 50,000 people). However, as noted earlier, most workers are from Dalit or tribal backgrounds and are not a natural fit for engaging Yadavs.

JOIN WHERE GOD IS ALREADY AT WORK

Still, we have hope. As in Acts, the Holy Spirit is on the move. The point is made in recent accounts. Both involve younger Yadav men from Uttar Pradesh, both

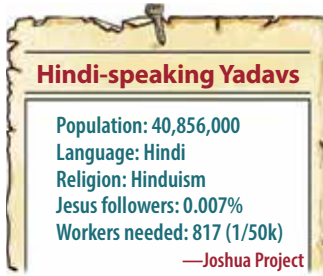
Twice Born Groups

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healed in the name of Jesus. As both shared their testimony and the good news, many other Yadavs, along with their families, began to follow Jesus, gathering to worship and pray together. The numbers continue to grow, in one case to 25,000. Both Yadav men had to build rough extensions to their homes to accommodate these Jesus worshippers. In one instance, persecution has followed; yet, these new believers, with no outside church support, continue to worship.

Meanwhile, urban missiologist Dr. Anon (pseudonym) surveyed recent Christward movements in north India. He shows that the Holy Spirit has moved directly and through the church to draw people to Christ. Most of these movements are led by OBCs and initially attract

largely OBCs through their family, clan, and caste networks. Furthermore, they follow Jesus without renouncing their sociocultural identities. Anon concludes, “the emergence of Christward movements is a strategic way for India’s frontier people groups to know Christ.”¹

The situation today manifests Jesus’ dictum, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few” (Matt 9:37) in the disproportion between workers and the harvest among India’s FPGs. Will we follow in Jesus’ footsteps, joining his Father where he is at work (John 5:17, 19–20), and follow the Spirit’s lead? If so, the Church clearly needs to focus on India’s majority OBCs, drawing them into the circle of the blessed families of the earth. India’s FPGs and the OBCs are the final frontier to be crossed before the remaining task is complete. **✠**

¹ See Anon’s article “Understanding Christward Movements in India” in this issue.



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Entrepreneurship at the Frontiers of Faith

By **PAUL DZUBINSKI**

Paul Dzubinski is the Innovation Catalyst of Frontier Ventures and the Director of the Winter Launch Lab. He started ministries and churches in Europe and is fascinated with all kinds of innovation.

In the ever-evolving landscape of global Christianity, traditional missionary work faces unique challenges, particularly among frontier people groups, who live at the very edges of the Christian world. The life of a full-time missionary in these regions is often fraught with difficulties. Whether looking for persons of peace to catalyze a Jesus movement or trying to make an impact in other ways, cross-cultural workers need to rethink traditional approaches. In nations where missionary work is restricted or unwelcome, the call to spread the gospel becomes even more challenging and complex.

Enter the world of missional entrepreneurship—a visionary alternative that intertwines business acumen with a heart for ministry. This approach involves establishing businesses that both contribute to society and share the gospel. However, the journey of a missional entrepreneur is no less challenging than that of a traditional missionary. In these contexts, success in business and spiritual impact are both hard-fought victories.


The statistics are stark and well-known: Half of all startups fail within five years, and 90% do not survive a decade. These figures are even more daunting in remote frontier regions, where even giants like Microsoft and Walmart have stumbled. How, then, can we help those driven by a love for Jesus in their journey to cultivate commerce and community among frontier people groups?

Frontier Ventures' Winter Launch Lab is offering help for entrepreneurs. Their new initiative, the Catalyzing Entrepreneurship Center (CEC), is poised to improve missional entrepreneurship. The CEC's mission is to simplify the process for Christ-centered entrepreneurs to launch businesses and social ventures in the world's most unreached areas.

The innovative Frontier Markets Ecosystem Ontology developed by the CEC (in partnership with Indigitous) is a tool designed to simplify the complexities of establishing a thriving business in these areas. This tool provides a framework for understanding the diverse elements necessary for a healthy business environment, particularly in regions scarcely touched by the gospel. By applying this tool, entrepreneurs can adapt their strategies to any country, with a special focus on reaching the unreached.

Additionally, the frontier people groups (FPG) Engagement Matrix is another tool offered by the CEC. It provides a bird's-eye view of key aspects that an entrepreneur needs to consider in entering an FPG region. It includes vital resources, clarity for interacting with governmental offices, details on accelerator programs, and ways to gather prayer support for the success of their ventures.

The promise of the CEC is not just in its practical tools but in its vision to marry the entrepreneurial spirit with the missionary heart. The CEC's vision exceeds its practical tools; it seeks to bring together the dynamism of entrepreneurship with the compassionate zeal of mission work to create innovation and faith that reimagine the landscape of ministry. This center for excellence seeks to open a new chapter for those called to serve at the intersection of faith and enterprise.

Please pray for the transformative work of the CEC and consider how you might play a part in this groundbreaking fusion of business and mission. 



Mobilizing Near-Culture Movements to Reach Frontier Peoples

By CYNTHIA ANDERSON

C. Anderson is an experienced field practitioner and leader. The past 27 years, she served in Asia with YWAM Frontier Missions. Anderson trains and coaches both international and indigenous church planters toward the launching of Disciple Making Movements. She blogs weekly about DMM related issues at dmmsfrontiermissions.com. Other articles on member care, language learning, visa stress, etc. are available at missionarylifeline.org. Her 30-day devotional for church-planters, *Faith to Move Mountains*, can be purchased on amazon.com.

It happened a bit by accident. Perhaps it was God's plan, his working behind the scenes. During the COVID pandemic, our online training programs rapidly exploded with new growth. We trained thousands of Global South believers who wanted to learn how to multiply disciples. Thrilled by the growth at first, we were also concerned. Many of these trainees were not from unreached peoples groups (UPGs). "Are we drifting from our focus?" we asked ourselves. Our vision was to see movements among UPGs and unengaged, unreached people groups (UUPGs).

We trained Global South Christians how to be disciples who multiplied disciples in their own people groups.

Yet, God brought us Christians who were hungry to learn how to multiply disciples. As is so often the case, his ways were higher, bigger, deeper, and more profound than my flimsy efforts and plans! Over the following years, we trained Global South Christians in how to be disciples who multiplied disciples in their own people groups. Their hearts were opened to the needs of frontier peoples around them. Today, many of our trainees and alumni are praying for, engaged with, and catalyzing movements among the least-reached people groups in their nations.

Mobilizing near-culture Christians to reach frontier peoples is one of the most effective ways to reach the least reached. Should we intentionally focus more efforts on this task?

Filtering for Movement Potential

I began working with an apostolically gifted woman in West Africa about three years ago. I noticed her right

away from her comments in some videos I saw.¹ She was not only insightful; she also demonstrated sincerity and the capacity to dream big with God.

Filtering for and noticing potential leaders is an important DMM/CPM trainer's task. I kept my eye open for more comments from her. I reviewed her End Vision statement and listened to the Holy Spirit. After she completed a few modules, I felt a strong sense that she was someone with significant potential to launch a movement. I then reached out and offered a coaching call.

Our first call had to happen through an exchange of audio messages. Her internet was too poor to sustain video communication. She spoke with a thick accent and because of my West African upbringing, I was able to understand her well. Immediately, I noticed she was different from many other trainees. She lived in an area

¹ For more information, see my disciple making movement training at www.dmmsfrontiermissions.com/online-training/.



of the country with large numbers of unreached people. However, most of her evangelism and disciple making work was not among them. She primarily worked among animists and backslidden, nominal Christians, people from already-reached groups.

Yet there was something about her that compelled me to invest time, prayer, and to be intentional about regular follow-ups. What did I notice? She had an obvious apostolic gift, a deep life of prayer, and a humble spirit. She also carried a distinct air of confidence flowing from her deep, burning passion for lost people to know Christ.

After finishing the course, this trainee immediately implemented everything she learned. She also began training many others.

Groups started, leaders were equipped, and they began to multiply.

We made an onsite visit to meet her and others there in that nation. We planned to eat together and see what was happening. We met her husband and kids, spent time building relationships, and ate *swallow* along with other local African foods.

I encouraged her to do a bonus course called “How to Invite Muslims to Follow Jesus.” Not long after that, her children participated in a short online course that Disciple Makers Increase (DMI) offers for Global South youth called “Next Steps in Missions.” That simple but engaging course explains more about unreached peoples and why we must reach them.

The groups this sister started continued to multiply into several generations. More and more people came to know Jesus. Organic growth increased. Along with it, these new believers developed a deep commitment to obey the Great Commission, including the part that talks about *all peoples*.

Today, the movement in that nation has grown to 13 generations. In the last six months, over six hundred have become disciples, and scores of new house churches have been started. They’ve also begun to send out apostolic teams to frontier people groups (FPGs) in their nation.

In an onsite training session last year, they were challenged to go to the FPGs around them. Many stood in response to God’s call, saying they were willing to go, even if it cost them their lives. It has. This movement has had five martyrs this year. Others stood and declared, “We will send them!” And they have done that, too.

Many stood in response to God’s call, saying they were willing to go, even if it cost them their lives.

New streams of the movement are now emerging in untouched and very dangerous areas of their land. Unreached people are coming to faith and being disciplined. At least three new movements among frontier peoples have emerged from this first movement, which was *initially* predominant among what we’d classify as a “reached” people group. All this is happening without one dollar of outside money being sent to them. We are praying for many, many more frontier movements to grow from this movement and other near-culture movements we work with.

An Acts 1:8 Strategy to Mobilize

Jesus said, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NIV). I wonder if we could think about this verse as saying something like, “The Holy Spirit is ready to give his power to you. Wait for it. Ask for it. Receive it. When you do, make disciples among your own people group, then go to nearby places where lost people are, then intentionally reach those in your area against whom you have a natural aversion or prejudice. And don’t forget to witness and share my

love with people who are culturally and physically far away from you as well.”

This passage gives us a beautiful strategy for mobilizing frontier workers.

5 Ways to Engage Frontier Peoples Through Movements and Churches

1 Recognize we need the Holy Spirit's power.

Little can be done apart from a manifestation of his power through us. While we immediately train everyone to share their faith, we also must help them to be filled with the Spirit and learn to exercise the Spirit's gifts.

2 All believers must learn to make disciples in their own people group in their own "Jerusalem."

As I consider the Global Church, my heart longs for every congregation to train members to make disciples rather than just show up at an entertaining service. If European and American Christians became disciple makers first among their own people groups, they'd be far more likely to be used by God to reach Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists. Every disciple must learn to make disciples everywhere!

3 Disciples need to learn to reach out to other towns and villages around them.

Casting vision broadly enough is important. As the church or movement begins to send out ordinary people whose jobs or work takes them to nearby towns and areas, new groups can begin there as well. What would it look like if when people had to travel or move for work, we "sent" them to start new movements in those locations, rather than just saying goodbye and we hope you find another church there?

There is great potential in mobilizing near-culture believers to the frontiers. But this process also involves training them first to make disciples at home.

4 Disciples need to learn to share God's love with people from groups they dislike.

Take a moment to think about the makeup of a movement or church you work with. Are there any people groups or classes of people with whom they don't have a natural affinity? Perhaps some barriers have historical wounds. How could you intentionally train disciples to overcome these challenges and build relational bridges of hope?


5 Disciples must be taught to care about and engage all people.

One of the best ways to do this is to begin with prayer. Once you motivate believers to pray for people groups around the world, you're halfway there. God will begin to call people to go. Be intentional about catalyzing kingdom movements that have a heart for all people.

Primed to Reach Frontier Peoples

A colleague recently said to me, "I've been told that movements don't naturally jump over into UUPGs around them." Given the example above, I was surprised to hear this. Emerging movements are primed and ready to reach FPGs! All they need is a little information and some encouragement to do so. Disciples who are learning to reach lost people and start new groups are the best people I know to motivate to reach UPGs and UUPGs, especially if they are culturally or geographically nearby!

Why wouldn't we look to those in Nagaland and Mizoram to impact the Hindus of Assam? Or to those in Christian areas of Pakistan to reach the majority people? One key is to first equip them to be disciple makers in their Jerusalem rather than just church attendees. We must train them to make disciples, not just converts.

There is great potential in mobilizing near-culture believers to the frontiers. But this process also involves training them first to make disciples at home. Are you ready? 

The Importance of Reflective Practice for Missionaries

By GENE DANIELS

Gene Daniels (pseudonym) and his family were church planters in Central Asia for 12 years. Now, he focuses on research and writing about frontier missions. He has a Doctorate in Religious Studies.

When people hear the term “reflection,” they might think of a quiet pond or the solitude of a monastic religious retreat. Some imagine the reflective person as either a monk in a garden or Ralph Waldo Emerson taking long leisurely walks beside Walden Pond. Even if your mind’s eye does not go to those extremes, it is unlikely you first thought of a cross-cultural missionary. Yet when you actually talk to highly successful missionaries, several surprising insights emerge.

Reflective Missionaries

Over the years, I have been involved in several mission research projects, including interviewing successful church planters in the Muslim world. Some were Western expatriates. Some cross-cultural workers came from Africa and Asia, while others were Muslim background believers who planted churches in their own or a nearby culture. One idea that arose time and again was that of reflective practice.

This is a good place for an informal definition. American philosopher Donald Schön¹ introduced a concept called the “reflective practitioner.” He believed learning through reflection involves exploring one’s experience, deliberately considering one’s impact on oneself and others, and then using the insights to inform future actions.

While the term “reflection” was seldom used in the interviews I conducted, successful missionaries often mentioned times when they “thought carefully” about their ministry practices as they planned future activities. They “spent time reviewing” their work. These descriptions sound a lot like reflective practice to me.

Having been a church planter myself and having a daily habit of reading Proverbs, it was natural to think more deeply about the reflective practices I heard about in those interviews. A few proverbs stand out for how they can inform reflective practice for cross-cultural workers.

¹ Schön, D.A. *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

Proverbs 14:15

We will start with Proverbs 14:15, “The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps” (ESV). Here we see a focus on “the simple” (from the Hebrew *peth-ee*). It generally refers to someone naïve or easily persuaded. In this verse, such an individual sharply contrasts with the “prudent person,” someone who takes time to think about their actions, in other words, someone we might call a reflective person.

As much as we may hate to admit it, cross-cultural missionaries too often make poor decisions because of cross-cultural naïveté.

This particular Hebrew word for “the simple” does not necessarily carry negative moral connotations. This person may simply be someone easily tripped up by the guile of others. This is where we see the need for missionaries to be reflective. As much as we may hate to admit it, cross-cultural missionaries too often make poor decisions because of cross-cultural naïveté.

One older single missionary I knew was completely blindsided when he was approached by a young woman’s family who expected him to marry her. She had been his interpreter for several months. In their mind, this level of public, personal interaction with a single man strongly implied matrimonial intent, despite the fact he was 30 years older!

This situation could have been avoided if the missionary carefully thought about the situation before it unfolded. Surely there were indications of something amiss. Unfortunately, even good-hearted, godly missionaries can be “simple-minded” when they follow the path of least resistance.

Proverbs 24:32

Another verse significant for cross-cultural ministry is Proverbs 24:32, “Then I saw and considered it; I looked and received instruction.” When new missionaries first cross large cultural divides, they see many novel things: new modes of transportation, ways of raising children, completely new patterns of living, etc. But are they encouraged to follow up on these observations? Do they take time to consider what they might learn from these experiences?

This kind of cross-cultural reflection can help missionaries in important ways. I distinctly remember the impact caused by my first visit to a Central Asian mosque. The old wooden floors seemed so solid until the men began to pray. Their repeated kneeling in unison shook the building... and reverberated through my body. Reflecting on the tangible sensation caused by their unified action was powerfully instructive. It spoke to me about how hard it must be for them to make an individual decision to follow Christ.

Proverbs 20:5

Another proverb says, “The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out” (Prov 20:5), which highlights another important aspect of mission reflection. Missionaries should be careful and intentional to draw out the wisdom God places in the hearts of the local people. Missionaries need to invest the time and effort to draw up these insights from the deep waters of people’s hearts.

Too often missionaries go to the field with the impression that their primary job is to teach what they know to the local people. Certainly, we do go to teach and make disciples, but this attitude runs into trouble fast. It unwittingly shuts us off from the greatest teachers we’ll ever meet—the very same locals we think need to learn from us.

Too often missionaries go to the field with the impression that their primary job is to teach what they know to the local people.

During our first year on the field, I organized a short-term medical team’s visit to a small village. In the middle of the first day, one local translator came to me to express disapproval of how the clinic was being run. I was hot, harried, frustrated, and not at all in the mood to listen to another complaint.

But later in the evening, I sensed in my spirit that I should hear what the translator had to say. I sought him out and asked him to repeat what he had said earlier. He explained how local Muslims perceived the clinic flow as a form of manipulation since we prayed with them as they waited for medicines. He said that acquiescing to our Christian ritual appeared to be the required payment for the medicines they would receive. He suggested the doctors themselves should take time

to pray for people as part of their medical care, even though it would significantly slow down the patient flow. With some reservations, we tried it the next day, and it was amazing how much more open people were to the gospel. I cringe when I remember how close I came to dismissing this important insight and wisdom.

Proverbs 15:28

Consider also Proverbs 15:28, “The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer.” The key phrase here is “how to answer” (*ānā*). This very common word includes the idea of paying attention. For a reflective missionary, this proverb speaks to the need to listen to others well so that we will know how to answer well.

Missionaries face a plethora of situations requiring thoughtful answers. These range from pleasant conversations with neighbors to interrogation by government officials. Part of being a reflective missionary is developing keen listening skills that help us catch any presuppositions others have so we know what people are actually asking. It’s not just a matter of learning the grammar and words of a new language but also learning the presuppositions behind people’s words. This understanding often requires intentional reflection.

It’s not just a matter of learning the grammar and words of a new language but also learning the presuppositions behind people’s words.

It took a while for my wife and me to understand that when Muslim neighbors in Central Asia asked whether we were Christians, they were not asking if we believed that Jesus died for our sins. Instead, they wanted to know if we were another kind of Russian because that was the only definition of “Christian” they knew.

In cross-cultural ministry, reflection cannot be a wholly self-referenced activity. We must listen carefully to those to whom we are sent since their perspective does not come naturally to us. Otherwise, reflective practices

will lead us to answers rooted in the rationales of our home culture and miss insights that make more sense to the people of our new home.


Proverbs 4:26

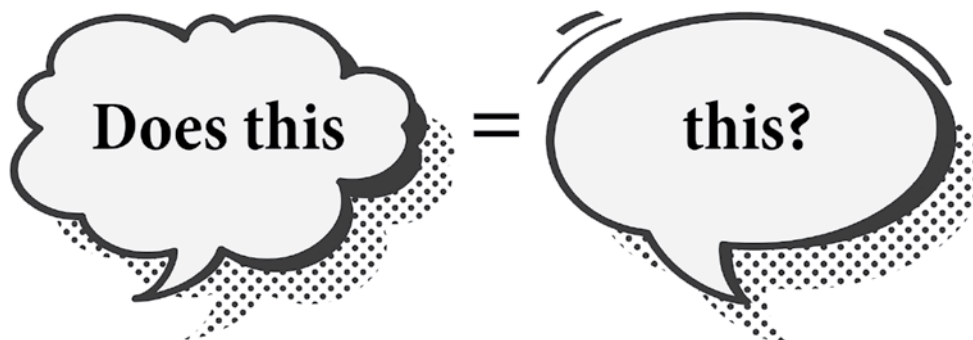
A final text concerning reflective practice is Proverbs 4:26, “Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure.” The word *ponder* (*pālas*) can be translated as “weigh out,” placing something in a balance. To discern a sure and trustworthy path, we need to weigh our options.

There are many components to discerning the will of God. A few include prayer, wise counsel, and fasting. But what about personal reflection? Do we deliberately consider past experiences, both good and bad, as part of the decision-making process? Reflective missionaries not only give thought to their past; they also reflect on their own decision-making processes.

Several years ago, on home assignment, we faced several family-related issues that raised the question of whether to return to the field. We prayed and fasted for clarity. No answers came. Eventually, one of our daughters had a minor traffic accident. It caused me to weigh the likely outcomes more thoughtfully of staying or returning to Asia. That reflection brought clarity and peace that I had not been able to find any other way. The decision to stay in the U.S. brought a multitude of changes to our lives and ministry, all of which were very positive.

Conclusion

Reflective practice is encouraged in many professions, from education to medicine to city planning. It is perhaps even more important for cross-cultural missionaries because of their complicated contexts. So much of their knowledge comes from internal evaluations and comparisons between their home culture, a new culture, and Scripture. However, such knowledge is often buried deeply, and the best way to access that insight is by taking time to reflect. 



Walking Together in the Second Half of Life

By **JAMEY LEWIS**

Jamey Lewis is a facilitator with the Second Half Collaborative or 2HC (2hc.life), an initiative of Frontier Ventures. 2HC is a 10-month cohort led by seasoned facilitators, spiritual directors, and coaches to provide encouragement and help for mission workers in the second half of life. Their goals are vibrant communion with God, authentic community, and sustainable mission.

What motivations initially led you to engage in mission? How have those motivations changed or been clarified?¹ These are questions, among others, that we ask on our application for the Second Half Collaborative (2HC).

Those who have joined 2HC indicate a desire in this season of their lives for these things:

- a deepening and/or simplifying of relationship with God
- discernment in times of family or ministry transition
- friendships with others in similar life circumstances
- help in facing seasons of disorientation

Our 2HC retreats, stations of learning, and interactions provide space for 2HC members to express these longings honestly and listen for what God, their own hearts, and other cohort members are saying.

Beyond the dedicated space that 2HC provides, how can we offer a perspective that brings second half of life flourishing into many more places and spaces of mission? How do we help families, teams, and mission organizations be places that encourage and support global workers who uncover the typical second half of life longings listed above?

We asked these questions of one cohort at our final retreat. Numerous ideas for both postures and practices surfaced. We group some of these responses here in four main categories.

Let what we share provide prompts for your own reflection and action: How might I apply or adapt these ideas in my own family, team, friendship groups, and organizations? What other ideas come to mind?

Give space for unhurry.

- Organize family activities in an unhurried way.
- Celebrate unhurriedness and resist the organizational debt [or burden] that busyness creates.
- Pay attention to patient, loving “unhurry” as we transition from doing one thing to another.

In organizations, make room for spiritual practices, offer spiritual direction, and develop trainings.

- Give people work time for contemplative practices and space to reflect together and alone. In 2HC, these include reflective ways to engage Scripture, retreats of silence, and contemplative prayer.
- Hold silence for a time in meetings after someone has shared.
- Encourage people not to schedule back-to-back meetings.
- Normalize spiritual direction (or spiritual companionship) and coaching. Pay for spiritual direction for staff.
- Ask, “What is this organization’s corporate discernment framework?” and then offer group discernment before planning.
- Use what we learn from a particular 2HC station for speaking or leading a workshop. 2HC offers 10 different stations of learning on themes of

¹ A version of this article originally appeared online: 2hc.life/blog/2nd-half-of-life-friendly-mission-organizations. Reused here with permission.

identity and the inner life, supportive and authentic friendship and community, and sustainable mission. Retreats focus on discernment, gratitude, and blessing.


- Give space for people to pursue these types of programs/intensives, such as 2HC or other programs.

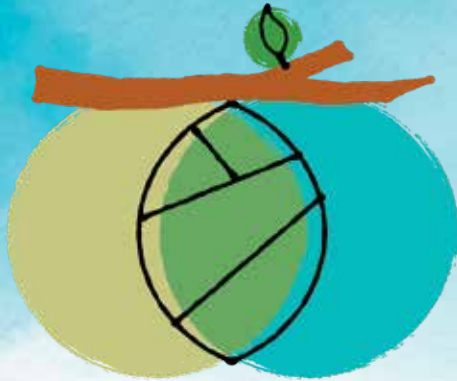
Make space for sharing our own second half of life experiences (e.g., storytelling, story listening).

- Share with adult kids and friends the new ways of seeing, what I'm learning, and what I'm experiencing as I encounter Christ in the "back half of life." Be honest with the ups and downs of the journey along the way.
- Interview people and invite them to share their experiences.
- Invite others in my organization into a short-term explorative community to discuss the "second half."
- Pursue a group of friends to talk about these kinds of second half of life concepts.

Focus on "being" and not just "doing."

- What gets evaluated gets done. Have different metrics that reflect 2HC values such as "being" rather than merely "doing."
- The foundation seems to be making sure "2HC DNA" is alive, well, and cultivated in me. If it's "who I am," I will necessarily carry it with me everywhere I go and in every interaction. It will be something that simply and naturally "bubbles out of me."
- Talk about who we are called to be (i.e., where we find our deepest significance) in our groups.

What happens in mission organizations that do not provide spaces and support for those facing the challenges and opportunities of the second half of life? Conversely, when we steward the precious resource, the maturing person in mission, what results will follow? At the very least, fruitfulness and longevity in mission will naturally flow from that person. Additionally, that individual will become a safe, trustworthy, and compassionate role model for younger generations of those drawn to the excitement and calling of God in mission. 



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—2022–23 Participant

Strategy Questions: The Meaning of *Christian* and Using the Qur'an

By GREG H. PARSONS

Greg and his wife have been on staff with Frontier Ventures since 1982. They live in Southern California.



During the last 42 years on the staff of Frontier Ventures, I have heard many reasons why one strategy or another is bad or dangerous. Often, the arguments against a given approach are weak. Let me give a few examples.

“Believers must call themselves Christians.”

I don't hear this much in “mission” circles anymore, but many who have not been exposed to cross-cultural situations often do not notice how much of the world views Christians and Christianity. So, they naturally use the word “Christian” to describe themselves, without thinking about it. Many mission workers do not.

This is not because these workers are afraid of testifying about Christ. Quite the opposite. They are afraid of what the word “Christian” means to the surrounding culture and realize it may hamper their witness to their neighbors. Many (if not most?) Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists don't have a problem with Jesus at some level, but often, the long, painful history with Christians in their context is a stumbling block to believing faith in Christ. To many people, Christian means Western, as if Jesus was American or white! Naturally, once they know you follow Jesus, they will assume you are a Christian, since that is the only category they have. But you can both explain and live out what you mean by the words you use.

They are afraid of what the word “Christian” means to the surrounding culture and realize it may hamper their witness to their neighbors.

Worse now is that the whole idea of a “religion” (be it “Christian,” “Hindu,” etc.) is misleading. The paradigm of “religion” is a recent idea growing out of the Enlightenment. Saying someone is a Christian is almost meaningless without more information. It may be helpful on a global statistical level when demographers measure how many people call themselves “Christian.” But that includes a very broad range from Roman Catholic to Orthodox to Protestant, and even from Mormon to Jehovah's Witnesses. So basically, it only means they are *not* Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, Jews, or Jains. When we use the word, we mean someone is a committed believer seeking to follow Jesus with their whole life. Countless others do not.

A Christ-following Jewish friend of mine has ministered to Jewish people for a very long time. Her mother was not a believer, so I always asked her how her mother and other family were doing and prayed for them. When we talked a few years ago, I had a thought that I believe came from the Spirit. So, I said, “You know, you should tell your mom that she does not need to become a ‘Christian’ to follow Jesus.”

My friend, who has been very creative in ministry, quickly said, “You know, I never thought of that.” Last fall, her mom believed, just before she died. I don't think it was because of the idea I shared, but humanly speaking, it could have helped her in her journey.

“You shouldn’t use the verses in the Qur’an to witness to Muslims.”

I understand the argument. Our use of the Qur’an, in passages where it mentions Jesus for example, may make Muslims think we affirm or agree with the entire book. But think about it this way. It seems like a great idea to use a tool that is very familiar and important to them, especially when they may not be familiar with the Bible *and* may have misperceptions about it.

It seems like a great idea to use a tool that is very familiar and important to them [Muslims], especially when they may not be familiar with the Bible *and* may have misperceptions about it.

Just a few weeks ago, I heard a detailed testimony of a particular Jesus follower. Growing up in a strong Islamic culture meant he memorized the Qur’an as a child. Later, he came to Christ through his own study of

the Qur’an in a mosque. There were several references that he was trying to understand. When he asked the mosque leaders, they gave him a standard interpretation (which he knew already) or told him not to worry about it. It turns out they were positive and helpful references to Jesus. Now, as a believer in his home context, he continues to love and serve his Muslim neighbors.

In a future issue, I’ll consider additional strategy questions. One I plan to tackle is whether *movements are bad*. I recall a mission leader serving among unreached groups telling me he wanted to have “multiple teams using multiple strategies in the same people group.” In effect, since we don’t know what will work, we should try different approaches with the same people and places. As many have said, *the message is the same... the methods to communicate will vary*, just as it did in the Scriptures. This will be a topic for a later discussion. ❏

THE MISSIONS

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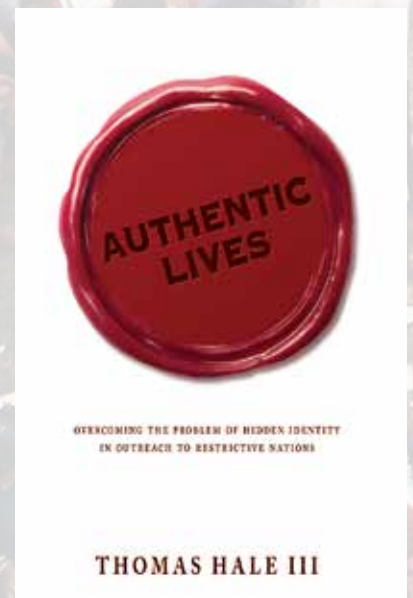
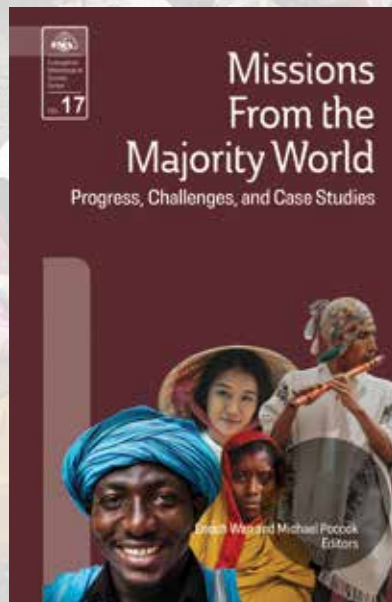
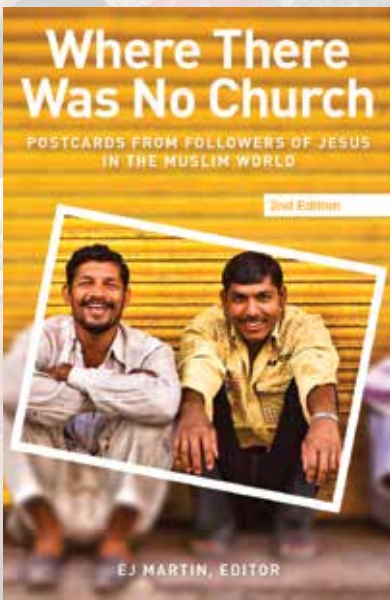
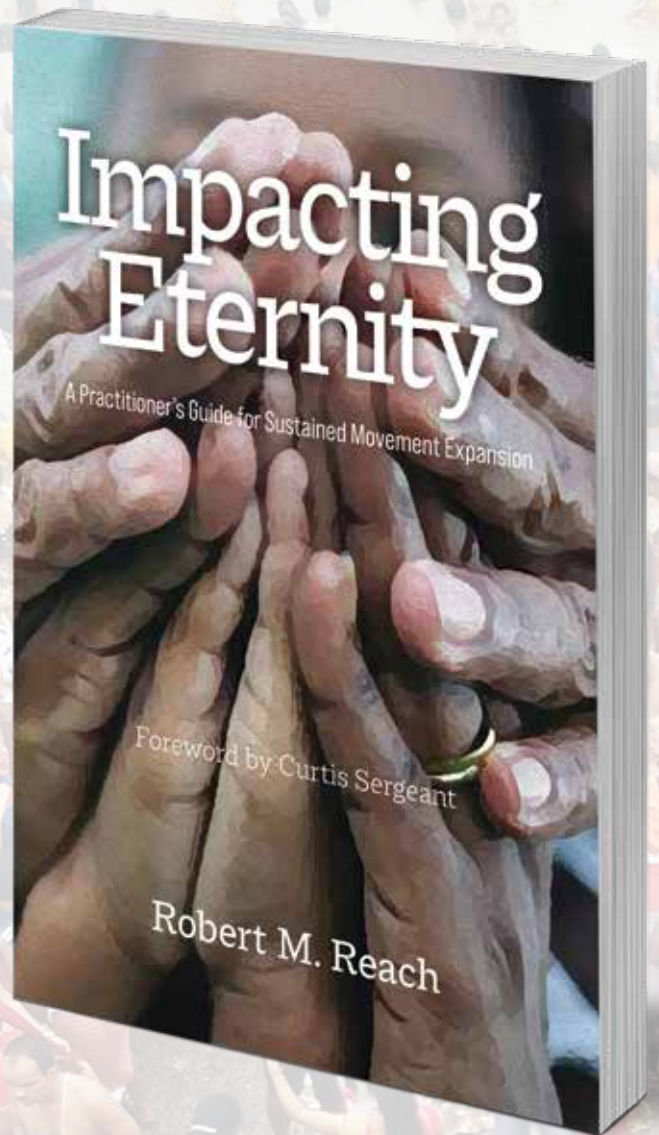


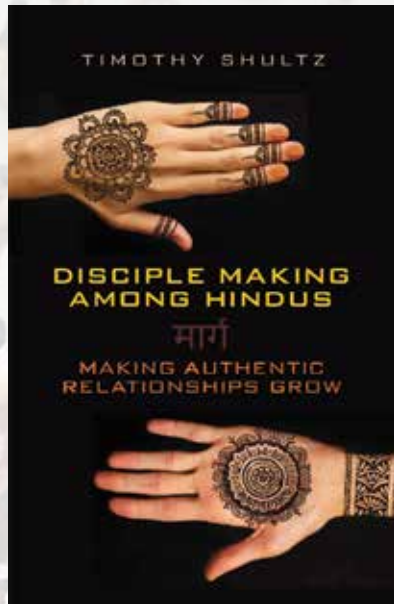
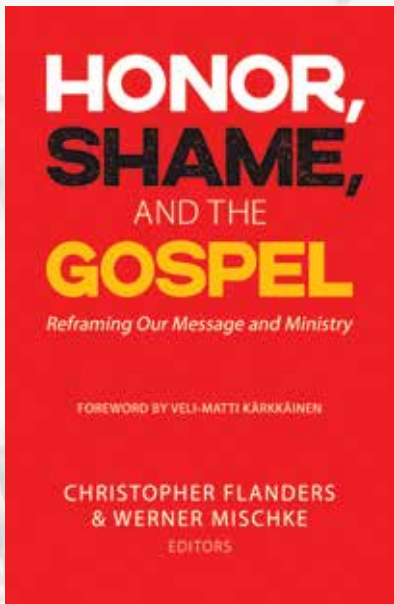
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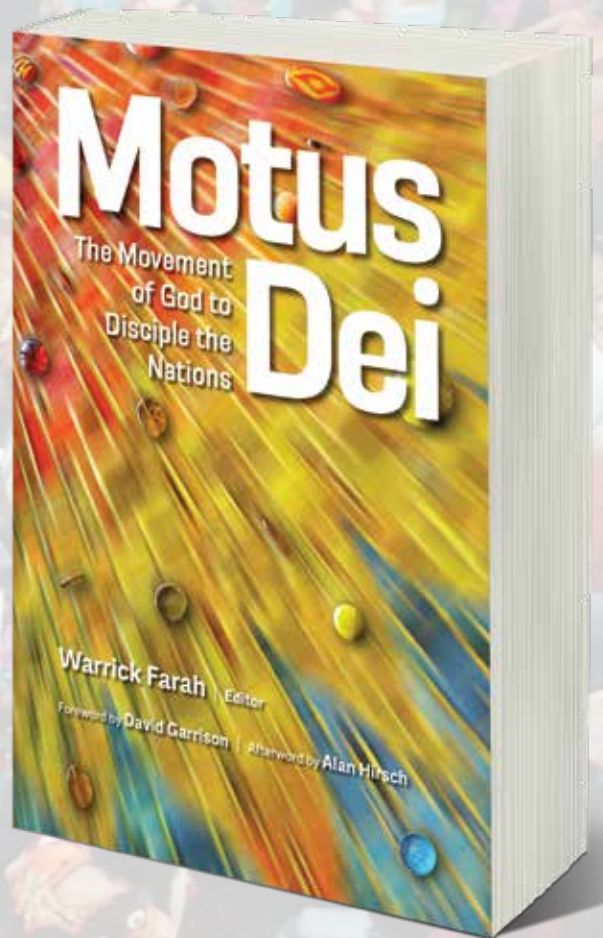


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MARCH

■ 1 Hindu Sunri in Bangladesh

The Sunri people live in India and Bangladesh, with approximately equal numbers in each country. Traditionally, they distill alcohol, though many of the Sunri have become merchants, traders and government workers.

*For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing;
my strength fails because of my iniquity,
and my bones waste away.*

—PSALM 31:10

- Pray that this people group will understand that sin drains and destroys, but the Lord offers forgiveness and spiritual refreshment.
- Pray for a spiritual discernment and hunger that will drive them to the loving arms of Christ.
- Pray for the Sunri people to understand and embrace that Jesus wants to bless their families and neighborhoods.
- Pray for a movement of Jesus to heal and strengthen Sunri communities.

■ 2 Muslim Bihari in Bangladesh

The so-called Bihari are Muslims who originated from different people groups in Bihar and neighboring states of what was once British India. They live in Bangladesh. The congested housing situation and lack of sanitation and potable water cause many health problems.

*Blessed be the LORD, for he has wondrously shown his
steadfast love to me when I was in a besieged city.*

—PSALM 31:21

- Pray that this people group will be drawn to the unfailing love of the Lord, our eternal Heavenly Father.
- Pray for their needs to be met for clean water.
- Pray for outreach workers who can explain the gospel with accuracy and cultural sensitivity leading to a movement to Christ.
- May Bihari hearts be softened and open to God's truth.

■ 3 Hindu Jogi

The Hindu Jogi people of Bangladesh are followers of yoga. They are made up of religious mendicants (i.e., beggars) of the various Jogi orders, and people who live by fortune telling, practicing exorcisms, and divination. Many Muslims in Bangladesh feel that the Jogi people are a threat to true Islam.

*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.*

—PSALM 32:8

- Pray for this people group to accept the Lord's guidance and salvation.
- Pray the Jogi would be able to find employment to improve their standard of living and provide for their families.
- Pray that there would be many Christian workers called and anointed by God to take the gospel to the Jogi people in Bangladesh.

■ 4 Hunan Lu Mien in China

The Hunan Lu Mien people live in the high mountains to avoid the powerful Han Chinese. The Chinese government has maintained the policy of trying to force the Lu Mien to become like the Han Chinese. They have resisted these efforts and still speak their own language as their heart language. Most Lu Mien still practice their ancient religion of ancestor veneration, animism, and Taoism.

*Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love
surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD.*

—PSALM 32:10

- Pray for many from this people group to notice this stark difference and turn to the Lord.
- Pray that the Lord would inspire anointed Han Chinese Christian believers to pray for and go to the Hunan Lu Mien.
- Pray the Lu Mien would begin to read and study the recently translated Lu Mien Bible. Ask the Lord to raise up a church planting movement among the Lu Mien of China.



■ 5 Bashkir in Belarus

Though most Bashkirs live in their homeland that is now in southwestern Russia, others have fled to other countries like Belarus. Though the Bashkirs were traditionally nomadic herdsman, most are farmers today, though they still raise livestock. Belarus has some religious freedom, and there are all kinds of gospel materials in the Bashkir language.

He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.
—PSALM 33:5

- May this people group seek and find the Lord's unfailing love!
- Pray for Bashkir elders to open their communities to the transforming work of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger that will lead Bashkir Muslims to the cross and the empty grave.
- Pray for workers, filled with the fruit and the power of the Holy Spirit.

■ 6 French Jewish in Belgium

Most Belgium's Jews live in Brussels and Antwerp. Brussels has three Jewish schools. The European Union for Jewish Students is in Brussels. There are 30 Orthodox synagogues in Antwerp along with several kosher restaurants and grocery stores. Approximately 95% of Jewish children in Antwerp attend Jewish day schools and receive intensive religious education.

Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!
—PSALM 33:12

- May this nation choose the Lord, and no other!
- Pray that believers would patiently befriend Belgium's Jews and give them the peace only found in knowing their true Messiah, Jesus.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would begin even now to soften the hearts of Jews in Belgium.

■ 7 Kabyle Berber in Belgium

The Kabyle are an African Berber tribe mostly located primarily in Morocco, Tunisia, western Libya and the coastal mountain regions of northern Algeria. The Africans call this entire region of North Africa Maghrib. Some arrived in Belgium after World War II when there was a labor shortage. Others went as merchants since Belgium was an important trading partner with North African countries.

Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name.
—PSALM 33:20–21

- May this people group rejoice in the Lord always.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger among the Kabyle Berbers in Belgium, especially among their leaders.
- Pray for people who love Jesus to go to them with the gospel.
- Pray that Belgium would be a place where Kabyle Berbers experience a movement to Christ.

■ 8 Sindhi in Belize

The Sindhi, named for the Sindhu River, are said to be one of the oldest people groups in South Asia. The Sindhi are native to the Sindh Province of Pakistan. Their culture has been heavily influenced by Muslim beliefs and their customs reflect that. Though most Sindhi still live in India and Pakistan, others are scattered all over the world in places like Belize, Central America. We know of no Sindhi believers in Belize.

Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in you.
—PSALM 33:22

- Pray for this people group to give their love and devotion to the Lord and be rewarded with hope and joy forever.
- Pray for the physical and spiritual needs of the Sindhi of Belize to be met through a strong faith in the Living Lord.



■ 9 Dendi in Benin

The Dendi are in the northernmost region of Benin, mainly in the lush plains of the Niger River. Settlements contain many rice fields and garden plots. The Dendi are almost entirely Muslim. Even though Islam introduced new elements into the Dendi culture, it left the underlying framework of custom and tradition virtually untouched. Spirit possession, magic, sorcery, ancestor worship, and witchcraft remain vital components of the Dendi belief system.

*I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.*
—PSALM 34:1

- May many from this people group praise Him at all times!
- Pray for entire Dendi families to embrace Christ.
- Pray for adequate rainfall to produce good crops and for improved health care.

■ 10 Kheng in Bhutan

The Kheng are found primarily in south central Bhutan and speak Khengkha. The southernmost areas inhabited by the Kheng are off-limits to foreign travelers because of the threat posed by separatist groups across the border in the Indian state of Assam. The Kheng are Tibetan Buddhists, but the shamanistic Bon religion greatly influences their belief. It is very difficult for them to understand or embrace the ways of Christ.

*Those who look to him are radiant,
and their faces shall never be ashamed.*
—PSALM 34:5

- May there be many from this people group who look only to the Lord for help, and may they be filled with joy and peace.
- Pray that the Kheng would be given the opportunity to hear the gospel in their mother tongue and in a manner they can fully understand.
- Pray for spiritual discernment and hunger for truth.

■ 11 Ryukyuan in Bolivia

The Ryukyuan are the indigenous peoples of the Ryukyu Islands of Japan. They see themselves as bound together by their home island and, especially among older people, will always consider themselves Ryukyuan first and Japanese second. They are among the longest-lived people in the world. A small number are now in Bolivia.

*Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds. Your righteousness is like
the mountains of God; your judgments are like the great deep;
man and beast you save, O LORD. How precious is your
steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind
take refuge in the shadow of your wings.*
—PSALM 36:5-7

- Pray for this people group to understand the vastness of the Lord's faithfulness and righteousness. May they be drawn to Him.
- Pray that a strong movement to Jesus would bring Ryukyuan families and communities into a rich experience of God's blessings.
- Pray for the Ryukyuan people in Bolivia to become aware of their need for forgiveness of sin and that forgiveness has been provided through faith in the work of Christ on the cross.

■ 12 Yerwa Kanuri in Cameroon

Kanuri villages in Cameroon contain a local school and mosque. Attached to the mosque are smaller schools for religious teachings. From an early age, Kanuri children are taught Islamic doctrines that leave no room for a victorious resurrected Savior. Towns serve as local markets and administrative centers. These locations may be the only possibilities for direct contact with Kanuri people to hear and accept the gospel.

*For I am ready to fall, and my pain is ever before me.
I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin.*
—PSALM 38:17-18

- Pray that this people group finds peace and salvation when they confess their sins to the Lord.
- Pray that Kanuri people in Cameroon would discover the Living Lord through all available sources from radio, internet and personal contacts with Christ followers.
- Pray that a Disciple Making Movement would develop among the Yerwa Kanuri people.

■ 13 Bosniak in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Bosniaks are characterized by their tie to the Bosnian historical region, traditional adherence to Islam and common culture and language. Once spread throughout the regions they inhabited, various instances of ethnic cleansing and genocide have sent them to several countries. Most remain in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Christians need to build friendships with the Bosniaks, serving their physical and material needs.

*As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.*
—PSALM 42:1

- Pray for this kind of longing for the Lord among today's people group!
- Pray the Bosniak people would understand that Jesus desires to bless their families and communities.
- Pray the Lord would open their eyes to His true nature and would draw many Bosniaks to Himself.

■ 14 Muslim Darzi in Bangladesh

Darzi means "tailor." For hundreds of years, they were highly respected for their craftsmanship throughout their communities throughout South Asia including Bangladesh. Some now work in clothing factories, sell ready-made clothes, and a few are clothing designers. Many young Darzi have chosen other professions such as teaching, business and government jobs. The majority of Darzi people in Bangladesh are Muslim.

By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.
—PSALM 42:8

- Pray for many from this people group to find the Lord's unfailing love and respond with praise and worship.
- Pray that God's servants would be strong in faith and prepared to lead the Darzi people to His living Word.
- Pray for an unstoppable movement to Christ among the Muslim Darzi people that will expand to other people groups in Bangladesh.

■ 15 Miranha in Brazil

The Miranha (or Bora) tribe lives in the Amazon region of Brazil. They move about to different regions because of their work of selling fish and fruit. In addition to Brazil, they live in Colombia and in Peru. The Miranha live mostly in forest settlements and speak Bora. They are suited to their environment, using bows and arrows and they have an excellent knowledge about plants. For practical reasons the government of Brazil is trying to protect the small tribes from contact with outsiders.

*Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling!*
—PSALM 43:3

- Pray that this people group will respond to the Lord's light and truth.
- Pray for the Lord to make a way for the Miranha people to hear the gospel without being subjected to diseases, etc. from the outside.

■ 16 Shanenawa in Brazil

Shane means "blue bird" and Nawa means "foreign people." Some are farmers and shepherds while others are fishermen, so they have diverse lifestyles. Along with other Amazon tribes, the Shanenawa have joined together in an organization to preserve their way of life. The best way to reach the Shanenawa would be for indigenous followers of Christ to reach them. They understand the needs and the worldview of the Shanenawa people.

*The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God;
he is highly exalted!*
—PSALM 47:9

- Pray that the Lord will find honor and worship from today's people group.
- May they understand that they belong to Him.
- Pray for Shanenawa believers to make disciples among their people and that a movement will spread from tribe to tribe.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would respond to our prayers for the Shanenawa to have open hearts to Jesus Christ.



■ 17 Pipipa in Brazil

How do you reach a people if they feel threatened by religious change? That is the situation for the Pipipa people of Brazil. Their ethnic religion is deeply rooted in their identity. Leaving their traditional religion is viewed by their community as one more part of their culture robbed from them. There are necessary efforts by the Brazilian government to protect indigenous people from outsiders who can potentially introduce diseases for which native peoples have no immunity. However, this situation keeps them from hearing about and responding to Jesus Christ.

The Mighty One, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.
—PSALM 50:1

- Pray that today's people group will respond to God's summons to come to Him!
- Pray for physical and spiritual protection for the Pipipa.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among them and other indigenous peoples in Brazil.

■ 18 Ucayali-Yurua Asheninka in Brazil

The Ucayali-Yurua Asheninka live a subsistence lifestyle, connected to the land with only enough food for one or two days. To make matters worse, the lands of indigenous peoples are often exploited by loggers. Christianity is often viewed as the religion of those who wish to use them, so they want nothing to do with it. Missionaries who can offer medical treatment and perhaps a medical facility would greatly improve their lives.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.
—PSALM 51:2-3

- Pray for true heart-felt repentance to come to leaders of this people group.
- Pray for the Lord to improve their lives physically, economically and spiritually.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare their hearts to hear of the savior of all mankind.

■ 19 Kadazan Dusun in Brunei

The Kadazan Dusun are primarily agriculturalists who grow rice and vegetables and raise animals. Many are employed in the timber industry. Village life is usually communal, but those in urban areas tend to be less so. The lifestyle of the Kadazan Dusun in the urban and developed areas is quite different from their lifestyle in remote rural areas.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

—PSALM 51:4

- Pray that leaders among this people group will understand the depth of their sin just as King David did.
- Pray that believers from Malaysia would have the compassion and mercy of Christ to go to the Kadazan Dusun people in Brunei.
- Pray for Jesus movements to bless extended families so the gospel will spread rapidly among this people group.

■ 20 Bulgarian Jewish in Bulgaria

Most Bulgarian Jews in Bulgaria are elderly. In 1997, the Jewish community sought to revitalize Judaism through education and the introduction of Hebrew into public schools as a foreign language. However, there are still only two synagogues. Revitalization of Jewish communities may prove to be either an obstacle or a bridge of God for Bulgarian Jews. If the gospel is viewed as a threat to their "Jewishness," it will be an obstacle. Traditional evangelism is usually viewed this way by Jewish populations.

By which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

—2 PETER 1:4

- Pray for the believers in this people group to cling to the promises of God and escape the world's corruption.
- Pray that the Bulgarian Orthodox Church would become mission-minded and experience a Holy Spirit revitalization.
- May they actively seek the salvation of Bulgarian Jews.

■ 21 Bobo Madare in Burkina Faso

Malaria, measles, meningitis, and malnutrition annually take many lives among the Bobo Madare in Burkina Faso. Many churches have been established in the southern area of the Bobo Madare. Many have professed conversion to Christianity, but most of the population remains rooted in Islam and traditional animistic beliefs. They need open hearts.

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

—1 PETER 4:12

- Pray that the hardships that God allows in the lives of believers in this people group do not discourage them.
- Pray for the Lord to thrust out workers among this people and for persons of peace to welcome them.
- Pray that the Lord would raise up a church planting and discipleship training movement among this needy people group that will grow.

■ 22 Lobi in Burkina Faso

The name Lobi means “children of the forest.” They are known as warriors and have been victims of slave raids and clan warfare. They are traditionally farmers and hunters. They are strongly animistic in their religious beliefs, worshiping ancestors. There are significant numbers of Christ followers among the Lobi people in Burkina Faso. They have the potential to reach their own people.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

—PSALM 51:12

- Pray that when some from this people group accept the ways of God that they will be refreshed with joy and share it with others.
- Pray that Lobi Christ followers would be strong in their faith and willing to take Christ to others.
- Pray the Lord would set the Lobi tribe free from superstition and the worship of gods that cannot see or hear or help them in any way.

■ 23 Arab in Burundi

What is a stateless person? The Arabs in Burundi are considered stateless, as they are not given Burundi citizenship and their original homeland of Oman does not claim responsibility for them either. The Arab population in Burundi speaks Arabic as their primary language and those who received education may speak French or English. Burundi is a country with low resources. Coffee and tea are the main cash crops.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

—PSALM 51:17

- Pray for the Lord to break the spirits of members of this people group and bless them with joy of salvation and mercy.
- Pray for Christian Arabs from outside Burundi to have the love and courage to share the gospel with them.
- Pray that a movement to Christ among the Arabs living in Burundi.

■ 24 Khmer Krom in Cambodia

A significant number of Kampuchea Krom (descendants of the original Khmer inhabitants of what is now southern Vietnam) have migrated from Vietnam and now live within the borders of Cambodia. Because of linguistic, political and social factors, they are distinct in many ways from the wider Khmer population in Cambodia. Buddhism is the public veneer of Kampuchea Krom religion, but animistic belief in the spirit world may have more influence in their daily lives.

You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book?

—PSALM 56:8

- Pray for members of this people group to turn to the Lord with their sorrows and trust Him to wipe away their tears and replace it with eternal joy.
- Pray for this people group to have the opportunity to hear of Christ.
- Pray for workers to plant and water seeds of the gospel in the Khmer Krom community.

■ 25 Western Cham in Cambodia

Cham villagers are extremely poor, and their settlements convey a sense of impermanence. They are now largely integrated into the Cambodian lifestyle and many now speak Khmer. This Muslim community living in Buddhist Cambodia may have become especially protective of their religious tradition.

For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.
—PSALM 62:1-2

- Pray that many from this people group will make Christ the rock of their salvation this decade.
- Pray for improved living conditions for the Cham, for employment opportunities and for good schools to be available for the children.
- There are some believers in Christ among the Cham of Cambodia. Pray the JESUS Film and gospel recordings (which are available) would be taken to these believers.

■ 26 Wandala in Cameroon

The Wandala live in compact villages that are grouped in rectangular compounds. They are almost entirely Muslim. Nominal Christianity is a huge problem in Cameroon, so Muslims do not see living Christianity in action. There is an indication there may be a few followers of Jesus today among the Wandala people in both Cameroon and Nigeria.

Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.
Selah
—PSALM 62:8

- Pray that the Holy Spirit will draw many from this people group to trust the Lord at all times and share their hearts with Him.
- Pray these believers would come to trust fully in Christ for their salvation and for power to live in obedience to Christ.
- Pray the Wandala would be drawn to Isa (Jesus), leading to a powerful movement to Christ.

■ 27 South Giziga in Cameroon

Kirdi (meaning “pagan”) is a broad, collective name for several people groups. One of these groups is the South Giziga tribe. They believe in a god who is the creator of all things but only intervenes when order has been disturbed. The Giziga do not pray to this god, but rather to their ancestors, whom they believe will intercede on their behalf.

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
—PSALM 63:1

- Pray that hundreds from this people group will earnestly seek God and find Him.
- Pray that the Lord would increase their hunger for the Word of God and open their eyes to the truth.
- Pray for South Giziga believers to lead their people into a movement to Christ.

■ 28 Punjabi in Canada

The Punjabi people are from the Punjab, straddling the border between India and Pakistan. There are several Punjabi emigrant communities scattered around the world, including Canada. They are traditionally Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. Most of those in Canada are Sikh and they are well-established in that country. There are some Sikh background Christian believers in Canada.

Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.
—PSALM 63:3

- May many from this people group understand this and act upon it.
- Pray these Christ followers would live lives that honor the Lord, being united in love around truth.
- Pray they would be salt and light to other Punjabis.
- Pray for a movement to Jesus to multiply among Punjabi families and communities.

■ 29 North African in Canada

North African Muslims have immigrated to Canada since the 1960s. They are from Morocco, Egypt, Libya, Algeria and Tunisia. They have their own community organizations. These North Africans have increased through immigration and by producing children.

*So I will bless you as long as I live;
in your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food,
and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips.*
—PSALM 63:4-5

- Pray that much praise reaches the heavens from this people group.
- Pray that North Africans in Canada would tune in to SAT-7 Arabic programs.
- Pray that they would see visions and dreams of Jesus calling them to faith in Him, leading to a church planting movement in Canada.

■ 30 Adamawa Fulani in Cape Verde

The Fulani tribes are grouped and named according to their locations, occupations, and dialects. The Adamawa Fulani are the group of Fulani who live in Nigeria's Adamawa Province. There are a small number in Cape Verde, off the coast of West Africa. Fulani identity is deeply tied in with Islam. They are not likely to consider any other spiritual beliefs.

*Blessed is the one you choose and bring near,
to dwell in your courts! We shall be satisfied with the
goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple!*
—PSALM 65:4

- Pray for many from this people group to find joy in the Lord.
- Pray for spiritual openness to the lordship of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among every Fulani group in Africa and Cape Verde.



■ 31 Runga in Central African Republic

The Runga are an agrarian Central African Republic people group. Many practice folk Islam, that is, animism with a veneer of Sunni Islam. The remainder are Sunni Muslims. They also engage in Sufiism, a mystic form of Islam. Not much is known about the Runga, so it is difficult to develop an outreach strategy. No Christian resources are available in their heart language.

*By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness,
O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth
and of the farthest seas;*
—PSALM 65:5

- Thank the Lord that He is the hope of all the earth and the hope of all nations!
- Pray for cross-cultural evangelists and agricultural scientists, Christian radio broadcasts and literature in their language.
- Pray for rapid growth of followers of Jesus.

APRIL

■ 1 Fertit Baggara in Central African Republic

Baggara (also Shuwa Arabs) is derived from the Arabic word bagar, meaning "cow," and refers to the Arab tribes in West Africa who are cattle herders. Most Baggara tribes depend entirely on their animals for survival. Each year they move the herds to where there is water and they usually plant crops in their fields to harvest upon their return. They have been Muslims since the thirteenth century and believe strongly in evil spirits, which causes very few to dare to seek and find Christ.

*So that those who dwell at the ends of the earth
are in awe at your signs. You make the going out
of the morning and the evening to shout for joy.*
—PSALM 65:8

- May many from this people group stand in awe of the Lord's deeds and joyfully follow Him.
- Pray for the Lord to thrust out workers with talents in veterinarian medicine.
- Pray for a Baggara movement to Christ.

2 Kanembu in Chad

Rich natron deposits are scattered across more than 30,000 acres of Chad. They are found in salt mines, most of which the Kanembu people own. While most of the Kanembu are farmers, many earn a living by mining the natron.

Shout for joy to God, all the earth; sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise!
—PSALM 66:1-2

- May there be many from this people group doing just this very soon!
- Pray that the few Kanembu believers would allow the light of the Holy Spirit to shine through them in such a way that others will be drawn to their Savior.
- Ask God to raise up strong local churches that will plant other churches among the Kanembu.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to soften Kanembu hearts towards Christ.
- Ask that they would be receptive to His teachings, igniting a movement to Christ.

3 Maba in Chad

The Maba are one of the larger non-Arab people groups in Chad. Unlike cultures that assimilate the ways of their conquerors, historically, the Maba were not weakened by invasions, remaining a dominant people. The Maba have been Muslims for three centuries. The Maba are very influential with Chad's Muslim population. Efforts to reach them would probably influence another ten unreached Muslim people groups living in their region.

Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard.
—PSALM 66:8

- Pray that today's people group will loudly sing His praises to other nations.
- Pray for Maba elders and family leaders to have a spiritual hunger that will open them to the ways of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Maba that will spread to many other Muslim peoples.

4 Northern Pashtun in Chile

Since Chile is a peaceful, prosperous nation, the Pashtuns who were used to constant war in Afghanistan are learning to enjoy peace and prosperity in their new homeland. Having been in Chile for a long time, they are less likely to be open to spiritual change than they were when they first arrived.

For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried.
—PSALM 66:10

- Pray for the Lord to test and purify today's people group.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to kindle a desire among Pashtuns for true spirituality that only comes from a relationship with Christ.
- Ask God to call those who are willing to share Christ with Pashtuns in Chile.
- Pray for an unstoppable multiplication of disciples among the Pashtuns.

5 Peripheral Mongolian in China

Mongols in Inner Mongolia survive bitter winters and have traditionally lived in yurts (tents), racing their horses and raising livestock. Shamanism is a spiritual obstacle to the gospel. Christian broadcasting is available, and the translation of the New Testament is a work in progress. The literacy rate is high, so the Mongols can be reached with printed materials. There are 12,000 known followers of Christ.

Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul.
—PSALM 66:16

- Pray for bold testimonies of the Lord's deeds to come from today's people group.
- Pray for a strong church planting movement to rapidly increase these numbers, especially in rural areas.
- Pray for the Mongol peoples to turn to the power of the Holy Spirit rather than of their shamans.

6 Rtahu Amdo in China

You know that the Dalai Lama is Tibetan, but did you know he is from one of the Amdo groups? The Rtahu Amdo people are dedicated Tibetan Buddhists. They worship spirit beings. No Christian believers live among the Rtahu Amdo, and if anyone in the tribe puts all their trust in Christ, community response will undoubtedly be hostile. Believers can take them gospel materials if they are careful.

*That your way may be known on earth,
your saving power among all nations.*

—PSALM 67:2

- Pray that His ways will soon be known by today's people group.
- Pray that the Rtahu Amdo would seek the freedom that can be found in Christ—no matter where they live and no matter who rules over them.
- Pray for a movement to Christ to flourish among them.

7 Hbrogpa Amdo in China

Hbrogpa is the largest of the four main Amdo languages. Most Hbrogpa Amdo herd sheep, yaks and goats. The Hbrogpa Amdo are Tibetan Buddhists which means they blend Buddhism with shamanistic practices. Christians need to build bridges of trust and friendship with the Amdo.

*Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing
for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the
nations upon earth.*

Selah

—PSALM 67:3-4

- Pray that this day will come soon!
- Pray the Amdo would be increasingly aware of their need for a savior and that there is a savior in Jesus Christ.
- Pray for their elders to have dreams and visions of Jesus that will prepare them to welcome him.

8 Mozhihei in China

When does one become two? The Mozhihei are one of two Tujia peoples, who have their roots in a migration that happened between 1,800 and 2,200 years ago. Today they grow a wide variety of crops, and are also quite proficient in hunting, trapping, and fishing. They hold to religious practices involving a combination of shamanism, Daoism, ancestral worship, and ancient spiritual beliefs. Perhaps the greatest obstacle standing between the Mozhihei and Christ is that few believers have ever gone to their homeland in the Hunan Mountains.

God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

—PSALM 67:7

- Pray for fear and worship to rise up from all peoples in the 2020s.
- Pray for loving workers! Pray for a people movement to Christ.

9 Jiasou in China

The Jiasou people live in a mountainous region of south-central China near the border with Vietnam. Since 1949, the government's policy has been to incorporate indigenous peoples like the Jiasou into the Han majority language and culture. Due to their isolation, the Jiasou have been able to hang on to their primary language of Sani and their distinct traditions. Few have heard the claims of Jesus Christ. The Jiasou religion of animism and ancestor veneration is deeply ingrained in their society. There are no Christian resources available in Sani except for some audio recordings.

*Sing to God, sing praises to his name;
lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts;
his name is the LORD; exult before him!*

—PSALM 68:4

- May today's people group feel His holy presence when they worship Him.
- Ask the Lord to send loving, Spirit-filled workers to the Jiasou.



10 Tseku in China

The Tseku people live in the high, remote Himalayan Mountains. They live in freezing, blizzard-like weather. Their food is mainly meat and milk from their livestock together with barley and rice. Since their language is like the Kham Tibetans, they are probably mistaken for members of that larger people group. There are no believers among the Tseku people in Bhutan and a very small number in China.

*Father of the fatherless and protector of widows
is God in his holy habitation.*

—PSALM 68:5

- May the widows and orphans among this people group become part of His family.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to give the Tseku people teachable and understanding hearts.
- Pray that a strong movement of the Holy Spirit would bring entire Tseku families into a rich experience of God's blessing.

11 Yinuo Nosu in China

The Yinuo speak a dialect of the Nosu language that is unintelligible to their neighbors. They live in mountains and forests far from urban areas of China. Their language and remoteness provide challenges to getting them the gospel.

*Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up;
God is our salvation.*

Selah

—PSALM 68:19

- May today's people group allow the Lord to carry them in His powerful arms.
- Pray that workers would be called to this harvest field, and that the necessary resources would become available.
- Pray that the Yinuo would have a church planting movement started among them.
- Pray that the Yinuo Nosu would hear the truth of God's Word, believe it and act upon it.

12 Dongxiang in China

The Dongxiang region is a desolate, arid place with a moon-like landscape. Other Muslims in China do not consider the Dongxiang to be a part of the Islamic faith because of their involvement in drug and prostitution rackets. No scripture is reported as available in the language of the Dongxiang, but gospel recordings are available. Perhaps Han Chinese Christians will be led to pray much for the Dongxiang people.

*O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God; sing praises to the Lord,
Selah to him who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens;
behold, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice.*

—PSALM 68:32–33

- May all the nations praise Him!
- Pray the Lord will lead Christ followers to do this.
- Pray the Lord will soften the hearts of the Dongxiang toward the person of Christ.

13 Daizhan in China

In the old days, when a Daizhan couple decided to marry, the groom would gather flute players, and dance around the bride's home until nightfall. At dawn he would gather her in his arms and take her into the forest for the wedding. Later, the wife would take her new husband to visit her parents. He would apologize to his in-laws for taking their daughter. The Daizhan live in Yunnan Province, the least reached part of that vast country. There are no known Christ followers among the Daizhan.

*Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel,
and whose power is in the skies. Awesome is God
from his sanctuary; the God of Israel—he is the one
who gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!*

—PSALM 68:34–35

- Pray for many from today's people group to tell of God's power and goodness to others.
- Pray for the establishment of a thriving church-planting movement in their communities.

14 Gtsang Tibetan in China

The Gtsang Tibetans are part of the Tibetan nationality, but their mother tongue, Gtsang, is only partly intelligible with other Tibetan varieties. The Gtsang region hosts many sects of Buddhism. The Gtsang celebrate the Xigaze New Year Festival with horse racing and an archery show. The Tibetan region is geographically difficult to enter, and Tibetan Buddhists have a long history of having no interest in the gospel.

*You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will receive me to glory.*
—PSALM 73:24

- Pray that today's people group will seek God's counsel and be led to His glorious destiny.
- Pray the Gtsang Tibetans would increasingly desire to find forgiveness for sin, and for messengers to tell them that provision has been made for forgiveness.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Gtsang.

15 Northern Hmu in China

Chinese people have despised the Hmu people for centuries and called them men-dogs. When a Hmu person dies, a shaman "opens the road" by giving directions to enable the soul of the deceased to reach heaven after a long journey. Northern Hmu have always resisted the good news of Christ and this resistance may linger today.

*Whom have I in heaven but you?
And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.
My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength
of my heart and my portion forever.*
—PSALM 73:25-26

- Pray for many from today's people to know that they must have no other God but the Lord.
- Pray for Northern Hmu family heads to have the spiritual hunger it takes to seek and find Christ no matter what the cost.
- Pray for the Northern Hmu to have spiritual understanding.

16 Yadu Qiang in China

Embroidery is a favorite pastime of Yadu Qiang women, and women have the final say in family decisions. Newly married couples live with the bride's family. Their Buddhism is mixed with folk religion and ancestor worship. Prayer flags and prayer wheels are two of the common symbols they have borrowed from their fellow Tibetans. At present there are no scriptural resources available in their language.

*When the earth totters, and all its inhabitants,
it is I who keep steady its pillars.*
Selah
—PSALM 75:3

- Pray that many from today's people group will allow Him to be their firm foundation in times of trouble.
- Pray that any group of Yadu believers would grow in numbers and spiritual maturity.
- Pray that the scriptures would become available in the Yadu's language.
- Pray that a movement to Christ would begin and flourish among the Yadu Qiang.

17 Liujiang Zhuang in China

China's Guangxi Province is made up mostly of people from the Zhuang people groups. They live similar lives and each subgroup, including the Liujiang, is unreached with the gospel. Fear of retaliation by various spirits might be one of the reasons why they remain unreached. However, people with traditional religion are often the first to embrace Christ once they know He can overcome all opposition of the spirit world. Han Chinese believers can take Christ to Zhuang peoples.

*But I will declare it forever;
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.*
—PSALM 75:9

- Pray for many from today's people group to tell of God's wondrous deeds to their families.
- Pray for Christ to show Himself powerful and righteous before the Liujiang Zhuang people.
- Pray for a movement to Christ that will bless all Zhuang peoples.

18 Guibei Zhuang in China

Anyone who wishes to share Christ with the Guibei Zhuang would probably have to move to Guangxi Province. There are also the usual obstacles of spiritual dullness and deceit that are common to all peoples. After much prayer, believers can go to Guibei Zhuang communities and pray for the sick and injured. Healing will open doors to the gospel.

*Glorious are you,
more majestic than the mountains full of prey.*
—PSALM 76:4

- Pray that this people group will realize the eternal majesty and glory of the Lord, and give Him praise.
- Pray for boldness tempered by love for believers as they attempt to take the precious Savior to Guibei Zhuang communities.
- Pray that this would be the decade where hundreds of Guibei Zhuang people embrace Jesus and take Him to the lost in western China.

19 Pingdi in China

Pingdi believers are often viewed as strange by their families, friends and neighbors. The JESUS Film and some audio resources are available in Xiang, the language of the Pingdi.

*Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name;
deliver us, and atone for our sins, for your name's sake!*
—PSALM 79:9

- Pray that many from this people group will call out to the Lord as desperately as the psalmist did in this verse.
- Pray they would overcome social obstacles by being supernaturally transformed into loving disciples.
- Pray for Holy Spirit-anointed believers from the Pingdi people to change their society from within.
- Pray that believers from other parts of China would bring them the good news of Jesus.

20 Sinhalese in Hong Kong

The Sinhala migrated from India to Sri Lanka as early as the 6th century B.C. where they became known as Sinhalese. Some of them left their island during the three decades long Sri Lankan civil war (1983–2009) and settled in many other countries, including Hong Kong.

*Hear, O my people, while I admonish you!
O Israel, if you would but listen to me!*
—PSALM 81:8

- Pray for this people group to heed God's warning and listen to Him!
- Pray for strong Christian believers in Hong Kong to take the life-changing gospel to the Sinhalese.
- Pray for His kingdom to come and His will to be done among the Buddhist Sinhalese people in Hong Kong.
- Pray for a movement of Buddhist Sinhalese households to study the Bible and accept the blessings of Christ.

21 Cantonese in Macau

Did you know there is a region in China with Portuguese as one of the two official languages? Macau was a Portuguese colony until China took over this gambling hub in 1999. Many residents of Macau work in casinos and the tourism industry. Macau's per capital income is eight times higher than mainland China. Cantonese people make up nearly 90% of the residents.

*But my people did not listen to my voice;
Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over
to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels.*
—PSALM 81:11–12

- Pray that this will be the year when this people group stops following their own stubborn desires and begins to follow the Lord.
- Pray that the people of Macau would see the emptiness of materialism and turn to the Lord.
- Pray the believers in Macau would share their faith with others.



22 Saaroa in Taiwan

What is a dying language? It is a language with few adult speakers and no speakers in the younger generation. The Saaroa language of Taiwan fits into the endangered language category. Fewer than a dozen older adults speak Saaroa and no child or young person can speak the language. Young Saaroa people are learning Mandarin and Bunun. The Saaroa live in an isolated area in the mountains of Taiwan. Christian linguists can go to the Saaroa and attempt to save their endangered language.

*My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.*
—PSALM 84:2

- Pray that the Lord will raise up many from this people group who have this kind of heart for being in the presence of the loving Lord.
- Pray that each Saaroa person would have the opportunity to hear a clear presentation of the gospel in a way he or she can understand.
- Pray for a movement to Christ.

23 Hakka Chinese in Taiwan

The Hakka Chinese have their own cuisine, architecture and dress. Ethnic religions are closely tied in with Hakka ethnic identity. It's difficult for anyone to "abandon" the ways of their ancestors. However, there is already a sizable number of Hakka Christians who can reach out to the others in their communities and families.

O LORD of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you!
—PSALM 84:12

- Pray for many from this people group to find joy and hope in trusting the Lord Almighty.
- Pray for hearts and minds that are open to adhering to the ways of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for more Holy Spirit anointed believers to go to the Hakka in Taiwan.
- Pray for leaders in the Taiwanese Hakka community to open the doors to hearing the gospel.

24 Embera-Baudo in Colombia

The Baudo is a subgroup of the greater Embera people who live in Colombia and Panama. There are many parts of Colombia that have no government control, so the local people are in danger of drug lords and other criminals. The Embera-Baudo do not have the resources to defend themselves. They view outsiders as a threat. Unfortunately, those who take the gospel to the Embera-Baudo will be met with the same suspicion as other outsiders.

*Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;
but let them not turn back to folly.*
—PSALM 85:8

- Pray that those who follow the Lord among this people group will never return to their old ways.
- Pray for indigenous peoples who love the Lord to go to the Embera-Baudo people.
- Pray for the Lord to prepare Embera-Baudo hearts to hear and respond to Christ.

25 Wiwa in Colombia

The Wiwa people live in the valleys of the Sierra Nevada Mountains of northern Colombia. Every few weeks, the men gather at night to discuss and vote on the various issues their tribe faces. Village shamans act as leaders. The Wiwa suffer from extreme poverty. Child malnutrition is a major problem. In addition, the Wiwa are struggling to keep their land from encroachment of Spanish-speaking settlers. Education among the Wiwa is almost non-existent.

*Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.*
—PSALM 85:9

- Pray for the land of this people group to soon be filled with His glory and mercy!
- Pray that Wiwa parents would be able to provide for their children.
- Pray that teams would go to the Wiwa to help with both their physical and spiritual needs.

26 Ngazidja Comorian in the Comoros

Living on a group of islands in the Indian Ocean between Madagascar and Mozambique, the Ngazidja Comorians are farmers and fishermen. Traditional clothing is still common among older adults. Comorians enjoy dancing, singing and playing instruments.

*For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.*
—PSALM 86:5

- Thank the Lord that He is eager to offer love & forgiveness to peoples who turn to Him for help!
- Pray that anyone working to bring the good news to the Comorians may be met with receptiveness.
- Pray that they may learn about Jesus and be saved.
- Pray that more people would go and share God's Word with them.

27 Swahili in DRC

The name Swahili literally is the name given to several people groups that share a common culture (Uswahili), language (Kiswahili) and religion (Islam). Many of the upper-class Swahili in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) now manage small businesses, do clerical work and teach in schools. Islam is deeply ingrained in the worldview of the Swahili people. It will be difficult for them to accept the foundational belief in salvation by Jesus Christ.

*All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you,
O Lord, and shall glorify your name. For you are great and do
wondrous things; you alone are God.*
—PSALM 86:9-10

- Pray for this people group to understand this.
- Pray for an openness to Christ as being the only way to abundant life and eternal salvation.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to anoint Swahili believers to take the gospel to their people.

28 Hindu Bedia in Nepal

One source considers Bedia to be the generic name of a number of vagrant, nomadic groups. Traditionally, a large section of the Bedia was reported to be earning a livelihood from prostitution and dancing, however, this has largely been discontinued. The Bedia worship various Hindu deities.

*A God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones,
and awesome above all who are around him?*
—PSALM 89:7

- Pray that many from today's people group will understand that the only God is the Lord, and they must turn to Him.
- Pray they will be in awe of His might.
- Pray for the Bedia people to embrace God's blessing through His Word for their families and clans.
- Pray the Bedia would make schooling a priority for their children and would be able to improve their standard of living.

29 Hausa in the Republic of the Congo

Members of the Hausa community are highly trained, educated and assimilated into the political and social life of many African countries including the Republic of the Congo. Some of the Hausas have become very rich. They are deeply involved in the politics of their communities. Islam and high status as a community are huge obstacles for those who might otherwise come humbly to the Lord of lords.

*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne;
steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.*
—PSALM 89:14

- Pray that today's people group will seek and find His righteousness and justice.
- Pray that they will be thankful for His unfailing love. There has been intense persecution of Christian Hausas.
- Pray that they would stay firmly grounded in their faith and stand as a light in the darkness.

30 Sikh Bawaria in India

Sikh Bawaria are considered a low status group in India. The majority are semi-nomadic, working the land and tending animals for high status groups. Many Bawaria are illiterate, so gospel presentations must be oral. As Sikhs, they believe that pleasing God comes from living a good life and practicing charity. They also believe in reincarnation and the law of karma. Given their current beliefs it will be difficult for them to embrace resurrection and grace.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.
—PSALM 90:1

- Pray that today's people group will make the Lord their "home" forever.
- Pray for the Lord to awaken the Bawaria to the truth of His Word and the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for mission workers who are willing to invest themselves in reaching the Bawaria.



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