

REACHING THE NATIONS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

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From Gujarati Hindus residing in Jersey City, to Lao Buddhists of Portland, Oregon, to Kurds in Nashville, Tennessee—God is bringing the nations into U.S. communities large and small, and the Mission America Coalition (MAC) is responding. Following last year's annual conference in Orlando, MAC leaders understood a strategic focus was needed to respond to the growing population of diaspora peoples coming here. Globalization, urbanization and migration have changed the complexity of reaching cities and communities for Christ, making cross-cultural mission not just a foreign mission practice any longer.

The difference between recent immigrants and previous generations is that many are from "unreached" places of our world. The Joshua Project (joshuaproject.net) lists over 160 ethnolinguistic people groups considered "Least-Reached" who now call the U.S. home. This includes 568,000 Iraqis, 111,000 Palestinians, 135,000 Bengali, 175,000 Thai (Central) and 331,000 Persians among the largest groups. Many of these people are from nations "closed" to the gospel, such as Iran, Pakistan, and other countries of the "10/40 Window." MAC, along with a growing number of ministries and churches, are asking: Who are these peoples? Where are they located? What role do church leaders and mission mobilizers play? And, how do we reach them for Christ?

MOBILIZING RESEARCHERS

Missiologist and pastor, J.D. Payne points out that, "one of the greatest ironies in missions today is the fact that although we have a good understanding of the evangelical status of many of the world's peoples in other nations, for the most part, we are ignorant regarding the evangelical status of the peoples of the world living in our backyards." We simply don't have good data at the city level to answer the questions regarding the diaspora. What we do have is often dated and the 2010 census did not ask the questions we need answered. For that reason MAC has been encouraging its CityReaching ministries (www.cityreaching.com) to join the movement and help equip churches to discover and love their diaspora neighbors to Christ, including an online step-by-step research and outreach tutorial found at: www.mac-global.net/blessing

THE PERSPECTIVES CONNECTION

Because research is often time consuming and costly, MAC is looking to new partners such as *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*. Annually, thousands of Perspectives students complete an Unreached People Group project, which provides an excellent exercise for thinking about how to reach Unreached People Groups. While personally reaching out to diaspora peoples in a suburb of Philadelphia, Sue Patt, Northeast Regional Director for Perspectives, has long encouraged Perspectives students to think

about doing their research on local diaspora peoples and to build lasting relationships with them. Similarly, Brian Considine, MAC CityReacher and Dallas Area Mobilizer for Perspectives, recently launched “Ethnic Embrace Lab” to challenge Perspectives students to discover unreached peoples in the Dallas area and to see how reaching them opens doors for the gospel back in their homelands. Examples like these are a huge part of why MAC is casting a vision for City/Community networks to partner together with Perspectives coordinators where there are diaspora populations.

DENOMINATIONAL & AGENCY CONNECTIONS

MAC is also growing in collaborative relationships with other diaspora-focused ministries, such as the Ethnic America Network, The Southern Baptist’s IMB & NAMB, Christ for All Peoples, and Global Gates. If you are part of a national or local diaspora ministry and would like to explore how we can work better together, please contact: dave@missionamerica.org or brian.j.considine@gmail.com

PRAYER—CARE—SHARE

The Mission America Coalition has long championed a Prayer-Care-Share lifestyle and embracing the diaspora represents a new opportunity to live this out. MAC is using the PCS framework to serve the Church through three new initiatives:

- **Prayer**—*Ethnic Embrace USA—a 40 Day Prayer Journey* is a project of MAC’s in partnership with the Ethnic America Network identifying 40 People Groups (population over 50,000) in the U.S. *Ethnic Embrace USA* is more than a prayer guide however—it is journey through the story of God’s mission for the nations. *Ethnic Embrace USA* is a resource designed to inspire people to live “on mission” in their communities. For more information visit www.ethnicembraceusa.net
- **Care**—Love 2020 is another MAC initiative calling the church to love as we have been loved. Chairman

Paul Cedar says of Love 2020, “First, we should love others enough to pray for them, especially that they would become followers of Jesus. Second, we should love them in action in every possible way at every possible time. Third, we can share the good news of Jesus in loving and appropriate ways.” While Love 2020 is broader than a diaspora focus, caring for our international neighbors demonstrates the love of God in Christ to those who need to know. For more information visit: www.love2020.com

- **Share**—MAC’s CityReaching diaspora Initiative is a new learning community launched in June 2012 to bring cities together to share their stories of victory and challenge in reaching the diaspora. Within the community, practitioners share best-practices of ministry for the benefit of workers in other cities. Bi-monthly conference calls involve over 100 leaders. For more information visit CityReaching.org

PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

Since 1994, MAC CityReaching has been seeking to edify and encourage coalition partners by sensitively highlighting what God is doing in cities across the nation. Beginning this year, those stories have begun

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to include a consistent diaspora focus. With God’s help we look forward to sharing stories from Houston, Minneapolis, Nashville, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and every city with a growing network of churches and ministries with a heart for blessing diaspora peoples. If you are part of a citywide network, are you ready to collaborate in this endeavor? 