



# MISSION FRONTIERS™

THE

# ZUME

PROJECT



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FRONTIER  
VENTURES

# 06 THE ZÚME PROJECT: IGNITING THE SPARK

DR. CURTIS SERGEANT

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# LAUNCHING A GLOBAL MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS



BY **RICK WOOD**  
EDITOR OF *MF*

EDITORIAL

**OVER SIX YEARS AGO I CAME** to a stunning realization that changed my life and ministry forever. As a member of Frontier Ventures and a “disciple” of Ralph Winter, I am fully committed to the biblical necessity of reaching the unreached peoples of the world—of taking the gospel to those who are cut off from access to salvation by barriers of language, culture and ethnic identity. But I came to the realization that simply establishing a “church” presence in every people was not enough. In fact, in some ways it could be worse than doing nothing at all.

For if we simply go to every people group and establish a church like many we have in the West, where believers are not equipped to go and make disciples and churches do not plant reproducing churches, then we will have established in every people a sterile form of the Christian faith that could inoculate those in need of the gospel against the powerful biblical faith of Scripture where Jesus has called all of us to go and

make disciples who disciple others. Establishing a faulty form of doing church in every people group could prevent the creation of the thousands of discipleship movements that are essential to providing access to the gospel to every person.

This realization started me on a journey to discover the most effective methods of making disciples who go on to disciple others. There is simply nothing more critical for the global church to learn how to do than to equip believers to make disciples and start movements of discipleship and church planting within every people group. As I discovered the various methods God is using to foster these movements of discipleship, methods such as T4T (Training for Trainers) or the Discovery Bible Study Method, I have shared them with you in the pages of *Mission Frontiers*.

My wife and I read the wonderful books available on this topic and had gone to the seminars, all with the desire to apply what we were learning in the real world. We wanted to be among those faithful followers of Jesus who made the kind of disciples who go on to make more disciples.

But it wasn’t happening! We were not starting new groups or making disciples who were starting groups.

Something was wrong; something was missing, but we did not know what it was. We had most of the head knowledge, but the practical skills were missing. We needed someone to come alongside us and show us how to do it—just like Jesus did with his disciples.

In His providence, God brought a trainer into our lives and we formed a group in our home. He trained us in the process of starting a group and running it with those we invited to participate. We now have two different groups where we are training people to go and do the same. We have learned a lot and while there is much more for us to learn, we are committed to the process of making disciples, so we know we will get better at it over time.

I tell you this story in order to illustrate a critical need in missions today and the reason for this particular issue of *Mission Frontiers*. In order to provide access to the gospel to every person living within every people group, we will need thousands of disciple-making movements started by ordinary people like you and me. Right now there is a critical shortage of trainers who are able to help people get started in making disciples. This is where the Zume Project comes in.

The Zume Project (pronounced zoo-may) is designed to help provide the initial spark of inertia to get groups started and to begin the training process. Through a web-based video curriculum, the participants in each of the new Zume groups are led through the process of hosting a meeting with all of its various elements. The video curriculum takes the place of an in-person trainer such as the one that helped my wife and me get started with our church. The curriculum helps to establish the vision, values and practices that empower ordinary people to become disciple-makers and church planters one generation after another. When someone goes to [www.zumeproject.com](http://www.zumeproject.com) and registers a new group, a live coach is assigned to that group to help in answering questions. You will not be left on your own, but the video curriculum is meant to convey the content of the disciple-making process.

The web-based video curriculum is not meant to be a permanent part of the disciple-making process. It is only meant to help get new groups started for the first time in an area. Once a new group has begun, it is expected that each participant will become an in-person trainer who will help to get new groups started without using the video curriculum. From then on each generation of disciple-makers will foster each succeeding generation of disciple-makers as in-person trainers. The disciple-making DNA that is to be reproduced one generation after another is contained in the initial video curriculum but the video curriculum itself is not to be used after the first generation of disciple makers is trained. It is the initial spark that can start the engine of multi-generational discipleship and church planting.

## So What Makes Zume Special?

Why have we chosen to highlight Zume? As I have mentioned, it is critical to the cause of world evangelization that average believers learn how to become disciple makers. There are currently very few places where this sort of training can take place and very few trained people who can equip believers to start disciple-making movements. The Zume Project has come up with a creative and effective means to fill this “training gap” between the need and the available supply of trainers. They have also developed the computer software to allow for the efficient fostering of new groups and the tracking of their progress as they grow and multiply. My experience with their website has been a pleasant one, where each step forward is well laid out and easy to understand.

The people behind the Zume Project have extensive experience in training disciple makers. Curtis Sergeant trained Ying Kai and worked with him to develop the T4T Process. The people he has trained have planted hundreds of thousands of churches. Now he is taking the training of disciples to a global level with the Zume Project. The Zume Project is now operational here in the U.S. but will go global in the near future.

## If We Build It, Will They Come?

The movie, *Field of Dreams* with Kevin Costner introduced into our cultural lexicon the phrase, “Build it and they will come.” But just building one of the best disciple-making websites available in the world today does not guarantee success. There are many factors that will determine whether or not the Zume Project will succeed. Here are a couple of them.

1. Those interested in making disciples will need to learn that this resource is available. Even with the help of *Mission Frontiers*, it will not be easy to get the word out. Those who believe in the potential of this project will need to be its marketing department and invite others to participate in it.
2. It is a big unknown as to how many there are in the American Evangelical church community who are committed to obeying Jesus in making disciples and who will be eager to get involved with this new project. But the real question is what will *you* do with this opportunity to learn to make disciples?

The Zume Project is one of those rare opportunities to change the course of world evangelization. It is an opportunity to launch a movement of movements where we foster disciple-making movements in every people group and in every region of the world until there is no place left where the gospel is not readily available to every person. There is no guarantee that the Zume Project will succeed, but it will likely fail if we all do nothing. So let us run with it and see what marvelous things God does in and through us. 

**Definitions:** The term “simple church” is used a number of places in this issue of MF. For our purposes it is defined as a spiritual family with Christ in their midst as King, who love God, love others, and make disciples.

## CONTACT

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# THE ZÚME IGNITING THE SPARK

FEATURE ARTICLE

(pronounced zoo-may)  
[www.zumeproject.com](http://www.zumeproject.com)

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Dr. Curtis Sergeant has served among Unreached, Unengaged People Groups, on senior leadership teams of agencies including the International Mission Board (SBC) and e3 Partners Ministry, as a consultant for many large agencies, and as a missions and church planting trainer in well over 100 countries. These days he primarily provides training in multiplicative ministry approaches and coaches those whom he has previously trained.

# PROJECT: THE



**WE, AS BELIEVERS, HAVE BEEN GIVEN** many sure and precious promises from the Lord that anchor us to an eternal hope and an eternal victory. Promises such as every people group on the planet having a chance to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ, promises of Jesus' return to rule and reign in a restored and redeemed creation, and promises of Jesus being with us to the very end of the age. There is no one to be more inspired and hope-filled on this earth than a follower of our Lord Jesus.

Until the fulfillment of those promises, we are also promised hardships and tribulations. When we look around, it is no wonder that we see a world full of brokenness, death, sin, and man choosing his or her own way over God's design. Victory may be sure, but it will not come easily. It will always come with a cost. As we follow in the footsteps of our Savior, we too must lay down our own lives and pick up our own cross.

Everything in this world, crafted by the enemy himself, is designed to slow, halt, poison, destroy, and damage the advancement of God's mission on this earth. Everything!

But Jesus made us to overcome this world.

It would be easy to quit. It would be simple to think someone else will step up and answer the call. It would be tragic if we sat hopeless in a broken world when we are the ones He put here to co-labor with Him to do something about it.

### **In America:**

Only 2% of Christians share their faith.

Let's do something about it – in Jesus' name!

In the last 10 years, church attendance has gone down in every single county.

Let's do something about it – in Jesus' name!

In the last 10 years, church membership dropped nearly 10% and population increased 11.4%.

Let's do something about it – in Jesus' name!

Transfers or children being born account for 96% of church growth.

Let's do something about it – in Jesus' name!

Of all Americans, 53% are now considered “uninvitable.”

Let's do something about it – in Jesus' name!

Our cities and states are becoming increasingly unreached.

Let's do something about it – in Jesus' name!

Other religions like Islam, Hinduism, Atheism, and Secularism are shaping society.

Let's do something about it – in Jesus' name!

We all have seen or heard of movements taking place in China, India, Africa, and many other places by the hand of the Lord. Now, it is America's time. Let us believe this in faith!

As God rhetorically asked in His first book, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?”

Only 1% of church leaders say, “today's churches are doing very well at discipling new and young believers” (Barna, State of Discipleship, 2015). And yet this same study says that 77% of all practicing Christians believe discipleship to be very important. We know discipleship is vital to the health and growth of God's Kingdom, but we just aren't making it happen. Christians want to be discipled and they want to make disciples of others, but they need tools, training, and mentoring to make it all possible. Zúme aims to address this very specific and timely need.

**It was out of this knowledge of the increasing problem in America and of the anchor in our sure hope in God's promises that the solution of the Zúme Project was born.**

### **What is the Zúme (zoo-may) Project?**

The Zúme Project mission is to help ordinary people make a big impact for the Kingdom of God by obeying and implementing the Great Commandment and Great Commission. Ultimately, Zúme hopes to see disciples multiplying in every census tract (a neighborhood or small town-sized area averaging around 4,000 people, smaller than a county) in the United States and every Omega District globally (an extension of the 4k Map), **using an online training platform focused on equipping participants in the basic disciple-making and simple church planting multiplication principles, processes, and practices.**

**WE KNOW DISCIPLES**

**SHIP IS VITAL TO**

**THE HEALTH AND GROWTH**

**OF GOD'S KINGDOM**

**AND WE'RE NOT**

**JUST AREN'T MAKING IT**

**HAPPEN**

# The Zúme Project is a solution in the modern era to catalyze disciple-making movements in our day and connect groups and individuals with live coaches

Zúme is not an organization or a group, but a tool and experience for all ministries, churches, small groups, laymen, students, and leaders of any kind to make disciples who make disciples. There is no organization that is “running” the Zúme Project. It is an open-handed coalition of people who have a heart to carry out Christ’s command to make disciples of every people group on earth and expand His Kingdom to every place until His will is done on earth as it is in heaven. So in a culture full of “who accomplished or created what,” the Zúme Project offers a threat-free hand to all who simply want to see the Great Commission fulfilled.

The Zúme Project is a solution in the modern era to catalyze disciple-making movements in our day and connect groups and individuals with live coaches who otherwise would have never had the opportunity. It was launched on Valentine’s Day, February 14th, 2017 as a website at <http://www.zumeproject.com>, complete with training videos (in a video-scribe format), downloadable tools, online coaches, and a group-mapping feature enabling groups across the country and around the world to access to all the necessary resources they need to make multiplying disciples.

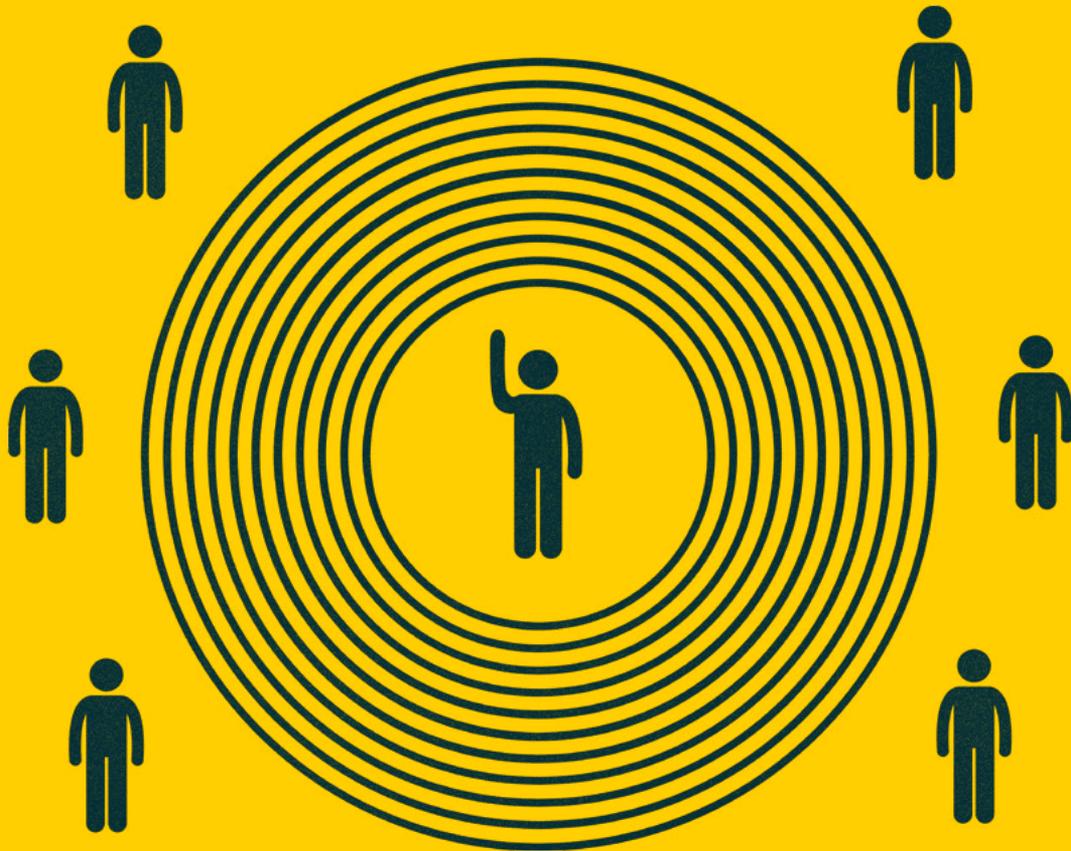
The curriculum is intentionally aimed at teaching people how to make disciples who make disciples, who make disciples. The 10-week course teaches key principles and processes for making and multiplying disciples using simple, easy-to-use tools and resources to equip and empower ordinary believers to reach every neighborhood.

## Rolling out the Zúme Project in Phases

The first phase of the Zúme Project focuses specifically on the United States and English-speaking people. The initial goal is for there to be a training group of four to twelve people in each census tract in the country. Each of these training groups will start two first-generation churches which will then begin to reproduce. There are about 75,000 census tracts so this will mean 150,000 first-generation churches.

The second phase focuses on other language groups in the United States. The data available through [www.mappingcenter.org](http://www.mappingcenter.org) is mapped to the census tract level so it will be easy for those working in each of the census tracts to determine which of the target languages are significantly represented within their local area and seek to start training groups in the appropriate languages. These training groups can then start first-generation churches in those language groups.

The third phase focuses globally in major world languages. The framework for targeting the training groups is based on the 4K maps developed by YWAM. It divides the world into segments based on population and the general level of gospel saturation, with less evangelized areas receiving about three times the attention of more evangelized areas. For more information on the framework, go to [www.4Kworldmap.com](http://www.4Kworldmap.com). The project will use the next generation of the data, 4K Plus, which divides the world into about 60,000 Omega Districts. There will be training groups started in each



Omega District which will then launch first-generation churches within the districts. In the least evangelized areas this will be a training group for approximately every 50,000 people.

### **How to Get Involved**

It is simple.

Head over to [www.zumeproject.com](http://www.zumeproject.com) and sign up using your email. Then gather some of your friends together to host a training. If you are a pastor, leader of an organization or institution, or if you oversee and influence different types of groups, this is an incredible way to engage and activate them to accomplish all that we dream of them doing—making disciples who make disciples.

### **Help Spread the Word!**

The more we get the word out there about this tool and online disciple-making experience, the more impact it

will ultimately have. So we are calling on you for your help! Please share these articles, the Zúme website, and endless numbers of your group's pictures on social media and by any means possible. How incredible would it be to see every census tract in America making disciples? Can you imagine the impact this would have on our families, our society, our churches, the lost, and the world around us?

We believe this is a defining moment in history.

Simple faith. Radical obedience. Ordinary people – making a big impact for the Kingdom of God by obeying and implementing the Great Commission and Great Commandment.

Let's ALL do something about it – in Jesus' name! 

# The Zúme Vison:

## The Amazing Power of Ordinary People | Frank Schattner

Frank Schattner is the Founder and Director of the Jonathan Project. You may contact him at [faivchoj@comcast.net](mailto:faivchoj@comcast.net).

“Look at the nations and watch and be utterly amazed for I’m going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told” (Hab. 1:5). Through the prophet Habakkuk, God spoke to His people during a very tumultuous period in the history Israel. Despite the fact that the Northern Kingdom was about to be taken captive into Babylon, God was still committed to fulfilling His missional purposes. Through the man of promise (Savior), God sets the cornerstone (Gen. 3:15) of His redemptive purposes. Through the Abrahamic covenant, we see the extent of God’s missional purposes, that is, all the peoples of the earth (Gen. 12:2-3).

Seven centuries after Habakkuk, God gave birth to the Church. The iconic missionary, Paul, was determined to bring closure to the Great Commission within his generation. In his letter to the Church in Rome, he writes that he was making plans to travel to Spain, claiming that within a mere 30 years of his ministry, the huge area he had been working in was reached,

prompting him to explore virgin territory for the gospel!

The DNA he infected the Church with spread throughout the Roman Empire to the point that even government officials took notice, saying that the “contagion of this superstition has spread not only to the cities but also to villages and farms.” (Governor Pliny of Pliny A.D. 111). Eight decades later, the movement was still healthy and moving forward. The Church historian Tertullian writes in A.D. 197, “we are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled all the places that belong to you—cities, islands, forts, towns, exchanges, the military camps themselves, tribes, town councils, the palace, the senate, the market-place; we have left you nothing but your temples.”

Today, we live in no less tumultuous times, but God is still our most reliable partner. Missionaries of this generation continue to build on the faith and experience of those that have gone before. God’s global movement is still alive and healthy to the point where we’ve just learned that the number of

Unengaged Unreached People Groups is now down to only around 1400 (Finishing The Task meeting, Dec. 2016)!

In this issue of *Mission Frontiers*, modern day practitioners present what God is doing to bring closure to the Great Commission. In April 2015, a small group of global practitioners gathered for their annual vision casting meeting. While reflecting on Luke 13:20-21, it was noted how God uses ordinary people using ordinary resources to accomplish His mission. In that instant, the Zúme vision was born. Zúme is the Greek word for yeast.

We hope you enjoy reading the Zúme-related articles in the special edition of *Mission Frontiers*. It’s a call for everyone to become part of a movement of God made up of ordinary people using ordinary resources to accomplish a great work for God. This is who we are. This is what we do. Will you join us? [www.zumeproject.com](http://www.zumeproject.com)



BY **DR. CURTIS SERGEANT**

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Dr. Curtis Sergeant has served among Unreached, Unengaged People Groups, on senior leadership teams of agencies including the International Mission Board (SBC) and e3 Partners Ministry, as a consultant for many large agencies, and as a missions and church planting trainer in well over 100 countries. These days he primarily provides training in multiplicative ministry approaches and coaches those whom he has previously trained.

**LUKE 5 TEACHES US TO LISTEN** to Jesus as we “launch out into the deep” for a great catch. As the disciples listened to Jesus and obeyed as he told them where to throw their nets, they ended up with more than they could handle on their own. They had to call out to the other boats to help with the catch without caring who would get the credit. It is amazing to think of the power of unity as many like-minded ministries with similar strategies and processes are coming together like never before. The Zúme Project has not reinvented any methods. In fact, many organizations and ministries use training methods that are similar to the training that Zúme uses. However, in a very real way, Zúme is a unifying tool that is calling out to all the other boats to come and catch the fish together.

The Zúme Project is the only online discipleship course that is raising up laborers to make disciples who make more disciples and is not owned or run by any specific ministry. Instead, this open-handed approach is a gift and a tool for ministries, churches, organizations, and families to use and to learn how to make disciples who make disciples in their own areas. The Zúme Project is also unique in that it has the ability to connect to and train people who otherwise would have no contact to live disciple-making coaches. It will have mapping features to show where groups are forming (and where they are yet to be formed).

Throughout this course, those who are in the groups will be matched up with live coaches in their regions who will walk with them on their journey. So, in essence, this tool will filter for people of peace (Luke 10) and filter out those who drop off early.

There are roughly 75,000 census tracts in America and the goal is to be in every one.

At the completion of the course, each group will be challenged to start another simple church, so the vision is to see over 150,000 healthy, simple churches started within a short amount of time.

Here is a brief overview of what you will experience when you go to the Zume Project website to get involved.

## USER PROCESS

### 1. SIGN UP

- Go to [www.zumeproject.com](http://www.zumeproject.com)
- Scroll down and fill in your first and last name.
- Fill in your email address.
- Create a password for your account and then re-enter it.
- Click on “Sign Up.”
- An email will be sent to you to confirm and activate your account.
- In your email, click on the link that is provided. This link will redirect you back to the Zúme site and you will be logged in.

### 2. INVITE YOUR FRIENDS

- Fill in your address in the spaces provided and then click “Next.”
- Fill in your group’s name (Ex: J Smith’s Home or Brown County Group).
- Invite some friends or family that you would like to join you for the Zúme Project by filling in their email addresses. (To add more invites click on “Invite more”).
- Communicate to your friends and family to follow the prompts in their email by clicking on the link they received. They will be automatically added to your group.
- Confirm and activate your group by clicking on “START FIRST SESSION.”

### 3. HOST A TRAINING

- Set a time and date for your group to regularly get together for the duration of the Zúme Project.
- When you gather together, log in and go to SESSION 01. Click on “Start Session.”

- You will be prompted to download the Zúme Guidebook. We recommend you have this printed for your group as they arrive for the first meeting.
- After downloaded, click on “Next.”
- Begin with a time of prayer before starting your journey together.
- Click on “Next.”
- Watch the first video and spend time in discussion with your group.
- When you are finished, click “Next.”
- Continue to watch and discuss the videos in Session 1 followed by clicking “Next” as you move through the session.
- In the “Practice” section, spend some time practicing what you have learned (the activity will be provided here and in all future sessions).
- In the “Plan Together” section, you will go over the week’s assignments.
- Finish your time in prayer together.
- Click on “Complete Session.”
- Like Session 1, the following sessions will have the same simple pattern to follow as you are hosting the Zúme training.

#### 4. 3-MONTH COMMITMENT PLAN

- In the final session (Session 09), you will be asked to fill out a “3-month plan.” (This is a tool that will help you be intentional in the disciple-making lifestyle.)
- Spend at least a half hour praying and listening to God as you fill out your 3-month plan that is provided in the Zúme Guidebook.
- Take turns sharing your 3-Month Plans with each other. Take time to ask questions about things you might not understand about plans and how the others will meet their commitments. Ask them to do the same for you and your plan.
- Find a training partner(s) that is willing to check in with you to report on progress and challenges, and to ask questions after 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 12 weeks.

Commit to doing the same for them.

- Discuss and develop a group plan for starting at least two (2) new 3/3 Groups or Zúme Training Groups in your area. The goal is to start Simple Churches that multiply. 3/3 Groups and Zúme Training Groups are two ways to do that.

#### 5. CONNECTING WITH LIVE COACHES

- Every group will be assigned a live coach who will help mentor them during the disciple-making process and help keep them accountable.
- Make sure all your group members know how to contact the Zúme Coach that’s been assigned to them in case anyone has questions or needs more training. Remember to share your 3-Month Plan with your Coach, so they understand your goals.

#### 6. ADVANCED TRAINING

- Once you have completed the first 9 sessions and have seen growth in your networks, continue on to the Advanced Training in “Session 10”.
- In this advanced training session, we’ll take a look at how we can level-up our Coaching Strengths with a quick checklist assessment. We’ll learn how Leadership in Networks allows a growing group of small churches to work together to accomplish even more. And we’ll learn how to develop Peer Mentoring Groups that take leaders to a whole new level of growth.



Do you believe it is possible to see a rapidly reproducing Disciple-Making Movement take place in your city? | **Lee Wood believed Jesus was able.**

# CASE STUDY

A network of house churches in Tampa, FL functioning as a model of a city Church, as well as, a regional and global model.

## 2013

Lee Wood (former drug-addict and ordinary man) attended a Disciple-making training (Module 1) led by Curtis Sergeant.

Lee immediately launched numerous groups, some reaching the 4th generation.

As Lee was obedient to Jesus, Curtis was also pouring deeply into him:

- 1st month: Coached Lee weekly
- 2nd month: Coached Lee 2x/month
- 3rd month: Coached Lee monthly
- After the 3rd month, Curtis gave Lee the open door to call anytime he wanted for coaching

There were 63 simple churches functioning in just 6 months.

An elder, Jose Martinez, was trained and simplified training even further (also in Spanish).

### EFFECTIVE METHODS USED TO OVERCOME

- Consistent coaching
- Simplified training
- Coaching tools (Model, Assist, Watch, Leave principles)
- Intimate, abiding, and simultaneous prayer
- Accountability within the groups (checking in)
- Prayerwalking for people of peace and for the least, last, and the lost
- Simple church model (3/3rds group)

## 2014

First person of peace was found near the University Mall.

After one year Lee and the disciples he trained had rapidly started 130 simple churches and saw growth to the 4th generation.

Lee realized he has spread his time and groups too thin; Curtis reminds him to pour deeply into a few and to obey and train others to do the same.

Lee went back to each group and began to simplify and pour deeply into the leaders

Curtis came to Tampa to train, check on, and encourage the simple churches.

## 2015

House church leaders trained in how to coach others and how to steward a movement (Module 2).

300+ simple churches had been started.

Group of kids met for the first time near a community field and came to faith using Jose's simplified training.

Started seeing leaders launched to other countries (Mozambique, China, Cambodia, Thailand, Australia, and more).

## 2016

House Church network bought the community field for community transformation and events.

3rd generation leader, Darren Thurber, bought a house near the field, turning it into a "Tyrannous-like" training center for leaders.

US Leaders from various ministries visited Tampa to immerse themselves in the movement to take back to their city

## 2017

Today, more than a thousand groups are active and making disciples today—down to the 8th generation.

### OBSTACLES LEADERS FACED

Feeling unqualified and not being good enough

Repetitive Failure

Consumer mindsets and self-satisfaction

Spiritual Opposition

Complex Training

Temptation to think of this as production instead of relational

# THE COMMISSIONING OF A GENERATION

IT'S ALL ABOUT OBEDIENCE.

| FEATURE ARTICLE

BY **NEAL KARSTEN**

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Neal Karsten lives in West Michigan with his wife and three daughters where they have been living out disciple-making and church multiplying principles. Working in the traditional church as a pastor while doing simple church on the side, he was recently called away from traditional pastoral work to join with Biglife ministry and now trains others in multiplying principles.

**THIS VERY MOMENT, THERE** are believers around the world on the cusp of taking the next step for the Lord. In the eyes of some, that step may seem small, like sharing the gospel with a coworker, or it may be as large as selling a house and moving to a new country for Jesus. Either way, the size of the step is not what matters; rather it is that the Lord has spoken and now we get the privilege of following Him where He calls. Though at times what He speaks may seem difficult, for all of us professing Jesus, we are called to obey Him. His statement in the Great Commission still stands: “Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

In the world, and even in a Christian culture where obedience sadly feels like a dirty word, we are God’s people who are to follow wherever he calls. “Jesus is Lord” is a bold statement that we profess. And we are not just to obey His call, but also to teach others to do the same. If only our minds could truly see that obeying God is not a matter of drudgery, but a privilege to be honored. But as many of us can attest, obedience is generally not easy. I’m sure it was not easy for Abraham to step out toward a land he did not know. Or easy for Moses to approach Pharaoh and say, “Let my people go.” Was it easy for Noah to build the ark when there was no rain? Was it easy for John the Baptist to become less, so Jesus could become more? Was it easy for the disciples to receive beatings, persecution and, most of them, death for the faith? Was it easy for Saul to convert from Judaism and become Paul and tirelessly work for the sake of the kingdom? And even Jesus himself—was it easy for Him to submit his life to the cross? Yet even He said, “Not my will, but yours be done.” In a Christian culture that is fearfully sitting on its hands waiting for “open doors,” we have Scriptures full of people who walked by faith, striving toward what was ahead, even when the door didn’t feel very open. So when the Lord speaks, how will you respond? Stepping out in these times is something we call Immediate. Radical. Costly. Obedience. Most people who are used mightily by the Lord learn to operate in this this kind of radical and immediate obedience fluently. Let me be clear: This does not mean it is easy; it just means they have learned that He is Lord. God loves to take fragile vessels like this who have been faithful in small things and

entrust more to them. In doing so, faith is built, but apart from obedience, I can hardly imagine how faith can grow.

To make this point, a friend of mine named Curtis shares a story of training the leaders of one of the top five underground church networks in China. The theme of the time together was the Lord gathering people from all different tribes and nations into His kingdom. At the gathering, Curtis put a world map on the wall and began to explain some of what was taking place with Christianity in various countries. This group had essentially been cut off from global Christianity for the previous 40 years, so they were scrupulously writing notes. While that training was coming to a close, the Lord laid it on Curtis’ heart that one of the people in the room was called to foreign missions. This was an uncommon thing for a Chinese believer in that time. It was more common for people to travel throughout China to share Jesus, but not often outside of China. He shared what the Lord spoke to him with the believers gathered, and hearing this, the group decided to pray for 10 minutes and search God to see who it was. After praying, the question was asked whether the Lord had laid it on someone’s heart. No one responded. So they prayed again for ten minutes. Again, no one responded. So another time, they sought the Lord, but yet again, no one responded. This happened seven times, but after the seventh time, a woman started crying and said, “It’s me. Even before you asked the question the first time, when the map was put on the wall and Burma was talked about, the Lord told me I’m called to Burma. But I don’t know anyone there, the language or how I could support myself. But the Lord has spoken and I will obey.” After this, the believers in that room spent some time commissioning the woman to be sent out. By the time they finished, it was early into the next morning and Curtis took some time to sleep, but he awoke three hours later. He looked around and seeing that the girl was not there, he asked a man where she had gone. Somewhat confused by the question, the man looked at Curtis and said, “She is gone.” Curtis asked if it was her turn to get food for the group, but the man still somewhat confused by the question said, “The Lord called her to Burma. She has gone. While you were sleeping, the Lord raised up another woman

# IMMEDIATE. RADICAL. COSTLY. OBEDIENCE. IF WE DO NOT GO WHERE GOD CALLS AND WHERE WE NEED GOD, HOW CAN WE EXPECT TO SEE GOD- SIZE MOVEMENTS?

to go with her. After this, we emptied our pockets and there was just enough money for two one-way bus tickets to the border of Burma and China. They took the first bus out at 4am and we are just now getting back from dropping them off at the station.”

So now, right where you are, imagine the map of the United States in front of you—or better yet—pull a map out to look at. Now look at your state... your county...all the way down to the census tract level. Will we be a part of what God is doing in this generation? Will we join hands together in seeing the Gospel of the

Kingdom leavened into every county and census tract in our nation and beyond?

**Immediate. Radical. Costly. Obedience.** If we do not go where God calls and where we need God, how can we expect to see God-size movements? So when God calls you, will you go? Whether big or small, will you obey? Even when it is hard, may our mindset be that it is an honor and a privilege to follow no matter how narrow the path. 

# Every Nation: Bless God Together



| FEATURE ARTICLE

BY **ZACH DUKE**

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Zach Duke serves on Biglife's team, as a disciple-making movement catalyst, domestically and internationally. His greatest passion is to intimately know the Father through obedience and he loves to activate and reproduce that lifestyle in others wherever they are. Zach lives in Indiana and is married to Megan—and has two beautiful girls, Malia Faith and Natalie Grace.

**MANY OF YOU MAY KNOW THE BIBLE** exceptionally well and may know its themes, its historical stories, and its teachings, but what you may not know is there is a continuous thread running from Genesis to Revelation tying the whole biblical narrative together. This single thread is imperative to know if we want to understand our response and our role as God's children in this world. I want to give you a quick flyover of this thread. This is by no means exhaustive, but once you see this thread you will begin to see it all over Scripture everywhere you read from here on out.

### Old Testament

So, naturally, we are going to start in the beginning with Genesis. In the beginning God created everything. The heavens. The earth. He breathed out stars. He spoke, and planets and galaxies came into existence. He created everything in the world. The trees. The waters. The animals. And then He came to the pinnacle of His creation.

Look here in Genesis 1:27 and the beginning of verse 28. Read this. What does it say?

“So God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.”

Really? Are God's first words and commands to His greatest creation, “Procreate over all the earth?” You would think He would say something more significant. . . Well, look again, because that is precisely what He does. Whom does God say He makes them in the image of?

He makes man and woman in His own image.

So what God is commanding is to spread His image over all the earth. And God blessed them to this end. God wants His image and His glory to cover the entire earth. God blessed Adam and Eve, so they could bless the whole earth, so the whole earth would bless God together. In this God is most glorified.

In fact, one could make a case for Habakkuk 2:14 to be the thesis of the Bible; it says, “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

This is a promise. He will do it. It will happen.

So how did Adam and Eve do? They obeyed this command and the earth was filled with the glory of the Lord, right? I wish. . .they didn't even make it out of the third chapter without messing it all up! When sin entered into the world, God's image was stained and tainted within them and they no longer could multiply God's image over all the earth perfectly. This is not good. It got so ugly, in fact, that by Noah's time, God's wrath was devastatingly poured on all men, and He started over. Started again with Noah and his family. And guess what the first thing is that God told Noah?

No joke. He said: “And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” Genesis 9:1 The exact same command He gave to Adam and Eve.

Multiply my image over all the earth.

As God blessed Adam, he now blessed Noah, so that he could bless the whole earth, so the whole earth could bless God together. In this God is most glorified.

And that went well for a while, until the tower of Babel, when the people of the earth went completely against God's command. . .Here's what they foolishly said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” Genesis 11: 4

This is direct opposition of God's command. God said to make HIS name great and multiply HIS image over all the earth. Now the people are saying, “Let's make a name for ourselves,” and “Let's not go throughout the whole earth.” God frustrated their plans and scattered them to the nations to continue His eternal plan.

Then we get to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3, an absolutely critical passage in understanding the thread of the Bible.

“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 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.’”

God blessed Abraham, so that he would not just bless his own nation, but all the families of the earth, so

# God did not just rescue Israel, but ALL who trusted in Yahweh... including Egyptians.

they would all bless God together. In this God is most glorified.

And once again, this went well for a while, but then the Hebrew nation, Israel, was enslaved by the kingdom of Egypt. Yet God delivered Israel out of Egypt's hand, but here is what we often miss...

“A mixed multitude went up with them.” Exodus 12:38

God did not just rescue Israel, but ALL who trusted in Yahweh—including Egyptians.

We think the Old Testament is all about Israel, which, in a way, it is—but why? What is Israel's role? Exodus 19:5-6 has the answer.

“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

What does it mean that Israel's role was to be a “kingdom of priests and a holy nation”? A priest's role was to go before God on behalf of the people and before the people on behalf of God. Therefore, Israel's role was to act as priest on behalf of all the nations whom God loved and was fervently pursuing!

God blessed Israel, so they would bless all of the nations, so they would all bless God together. In this God is most glorified.

But Israel didn't get it. They thought they were the special ones, chosen by God as a Holy nation, so they could reject and kill the rest of the nations. The Psalms,

the Prophets, the Old Testament are full of God's unending love for all of the nations.

He wanted the earth to be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea!

The prophet Isaiah made this point loud and clear when he said in Isaiah 56:3-8:

*Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, “The LORD will surely separate me from his people;” and let not the eunuch say, “Behold, I am a dry tree.” For thus says the LORD: “To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.*

*“And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant—these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”*

*The Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, “I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered.”*

Out of God's rich mercy and abundant love, He blessed Adam. He blessed Noah. He blessed Abraham, He blessed Israel, so that every nation and family on earth would be blessed, so all nations would bless God's name. In this God is most glorified.



# The thread of the Bible is understanding: God has blessed His people, so they may bless all the families of the earth, of every nation, so we can all one day bless God together!

Are you beginning to see it? Think of it as a triangle.

## **New Testament**

So remember, God's image even at this point is still stained. As His image is spreading over the whole earth, His people are only temporarily covered by imperfect blood sacrifices to cover their sins...waiting for the fullness of time, for the perfect sacrifice.

At the fullness of time, Jesus came—the Word, God in the flesh—and by becoming a perfect, sinless sacrifice for sins, He restored our relationship with the Father that Adam enjoyed in the beginning. He destroyed death, Satan, and sin forever. God never gave up. He never dismissed for good our shortcomings. He kept coming. Kept giving mercy. Violently loved through our continual disobedience.

God, in ultimate fashion, bankrupted Heaven by giving His one and only Son—His most treasured possession—to win His children back, to destroy the enemy, and to receive matchless glory! As He did this, God's image in mankind was restored in His people who trusted in Him, being filled with His very Spirit.

Now here is what is amazing: Guess what Jesus' command to

His people was after His image was restored?

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” (Matthew 28:18-20)

Did you catch that? Do you see it?!

As He restored His image, He tells His people to multiply HIS IMAGE IN ALL THE NATIONS. This is the exact command given from the very beginning.

So now, God has blessed His church, to bless all the nations, so all nations would bless God together. In this God is most glorified.

So, multiplying the image of God is exactly what his disciples —Peter, Paul and the rest of them until present day—did. Even as Paul told Timothy in his second letter to him, “And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

It gets better. God says to his church, just like he said to Israel, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation...”.

We are not on earth to simply “be happy” that we are the chosen nation of God, His chosen church. This was Israel’s common misunderstanding. We are His chosen people, His priests, because we are called to go before God on behalf of all the nations and before the nations on behalf of God!

God blessed Adam. He blessed Noah. He blessed Abraham. He blessed Israel. He blessed His church. And now He has blessed YOU, so that you will bless all the nations, so all nations will bless God together! In this God is most glorified.

So here we are today with the same command. We have an opportunity to respond to the Father’s radical love and glory. We have an opportunity to stand together as the church, to unite, to take His glorious message of salvation to all the nations. We are identified fully with Jesus, filled with His Spirit, carriers of His image, ambassadors from a better country, to bless the nations so that all of us, every tongue, tribe, and nation can worship, bless, and glorify Jesus forever! We get to partner with our Father, listen to Him, obey Him, and watch Him move with power over all the earth!

As my friend Todd Ahrend, founder of the Traveling Team, famously says, “It’s time to put our YES on the table.” We are all carrying a “yes” in our hands. Will we hold it to ourselves or will we with white hot love for our Good Savior put our “yes” on the table and run with boldness and perseverance for the rest of our race? Let’s hasten the day of Jesus Christ!

Let’s finish this way.

If this is true, then this thread will run all the way into Revelation, right?

Let’s look in Revelation 7:9-12, a beautiful picture into the future that God has revealed to John:

*“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation,*

*from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”*

God Will do it. He has promised He will.

The fulfillment of Habakkuk 2:14 and all of God’s promises are seen here. God blessed His people, and they blessed the whole world, so we could all bless God together.

This is the Story of His Glory. Will we be a part of His story or try to write our own narrative and try to make our own name great?

The thread of the Bible is understanding that God has blessed His people, so they may bless all the families of the earth, of every nation, so we can all one day bless God together! Are you willing to be a part of His Story? Are you ready to join His vision?

In this God is most glorified. 

# Missionary Banking Questions



You're headed to the mission field. That means you've been checking off items on multiple to-do lists for months. We'd like to save you a little time by taking care of one of those lists. Here are five questions you need to answer before moving outside the U.S.

## **1. Is my bank prepared for me living abroad?**

Some banks in the U.S. and abroad can be hesitant about serving American citizens living outside the states. ECCU has been serving missionary members for decades and understands both their needs and the regulatory requirements for a financial institution serving them.

## **2. Can I wire funds from my U.S. bank to a local bank where I serve outside the US?**

Yes you can, but with different time zones and country codes, wiring funds can be difficult. ECCU makes it easier for missionary members with a mobile app that lets you to wire funds at your convenience.

## **3. How will I access my accounts internationally?**

Few people are more familiar with the challenges of banking outside the US than missionaries. So, accessing your account information from a phone, tablet or laptop can be a game changer. With online and mobile banking, it's easy to transfer money, make or collect payments, and deposit checks.

## **4. What are my bank's international fees?**

Many common stateside transactions that are free may incur fees when done internationally. ECCU helps ease this expense for missionary members by giving them a bunch of free\* features, like incoming wire transfers and ATM withdrawals. These features save missionaries hundreds of dollars a year in banking fees.\*\*

## **5. How will I do my banking internationally?**

More than 4,000 missionaries worldwide and some of the largest mission sending agencies in the US trust ECCU to be their banking resource.



Over **4,000** missionaries bank with ECCU in **119** countries.

**FREE** incoming wires\*



**FREE** international ATM withdrawals\*



An average savings of \$600 a year in banking fees\*\*

Evangelical Christian Credit Union offers full service banking options for individuals, missionaries, churches and ministries including: checking and savings accounts, personal and ministry credit cards, online and mobile banking, and account access at over 5,000 shared branch locations in the U.S. and ATMs worldwide.



Visit [ECCU.org/missionarybanking](http://ECCU.org/missionarybanking)  
or call us at 800.634.3228

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\* With missionary checking accounts only.

\*\* For complete information and fees on all of ECCU's accounts, please visit [www.eccu.org/missionarybanking](http://www.eccu.org/missionarybanking)

# Eyes to See Where the Kingdom is Not

FEATURE ARTICLE

Every disciple needs to be equipped to have eyes to see where the Kingdom is not. While that probably seems a bit of a strange concept to you, bear with me for just a few moments.

We are naturally wired to look at what is. Our eyes are drawn to the things that actually exist; subsequently, we give little thought to what does not. We need to develop eyes to see where the Kingdom is yet to exist.

In the Lord's Prayer, we ask, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." When we pray in this way, we're acknowledging that there is a gap between what is and what God intends. If we are to be obedient Kingdom citizens, we must be concerned with closing that gap!

Have you ever considered that God has favorites? The Bible describes them as the last, the least, and the lost. Throughout the Old Testament, God spoke of the proper treatment of widows and orphans. (Exodus 22:22; Psalm 68:5, 146:9, 82:3) In the New Testament, he describes a pure and faultless religion as one that "looks after orphans and widows in their distress." (James 1:27). In these and many other passages the

Father is highlighting the need to care for those who need the most care! We need to be concerned about the gaps, the places where the gospel is the least accessible. This focus on the last, the least, and the lost is having eyes to see where the Kingdom is not.

Take a map of your community and pinpoint every area where a church currently exists. Now look at the blank spaces that remain. Those blank spaces indicate where churches are still needed and disciples need to be made. When you begin to think geographically like this, you can also start to identify other characteristics that exist within these areas. For example, are there any particular socio-economic needs or ethno-linguistic groups? Who are the people in those areas that need the good news of the Kingdom more than anyone else? How can we build bridges into those communities?

Just as Jesus modeled, every believer needs to be equipped to have the kind of eyes that look for opportunities to enter new places and engage new people groups in order to meet the greatest needs so that God's desire will be accomplished on earth as it is in Heaven!

BY **FORREST HEAD**

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Forrest Head is the Director of North America for Biglife. Prior to joining the staff at Biglife to catalyze the disciple making/multiplication efforts in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, he served the local church for 28 years, most recently as the Senior Associate Pastor at the First Baptist Church of Naples Florida.

# Planting Rapidly Reproducing Churches



FEATURE ARTICLE

BY **DR. CURTIS SERGEANT**

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Dr. Curtis Sergeant has served among Unreached, Unengaged People Groups, on senior leadership teams of agencies including the International Mission Board (SBC) and e3 Partners Ministry, as a consultant for many large agencies, and as a missions and church planting trainer in well over 100 countries. These days he primarily provides training in multiplicative ministry approaches and coaches those whom he has previously trained.

**THE PRINCIPLES IN THIS ARTICLE** are gleaned from experience in planting rapidly reproducing churches in China. They were then tested through training, coaching and mentoring church planters serving in over one hundred nations, mostly working among unreached people groups. Over the years I have concluded it is difficult to make generalizations about evangelism; but it is more appropriate to make generalizations about discipleship and church planting. Evangelism is quite context-specific because half of the process is determined by what an individual believes and understands truth to be. Once someone has given themselves fully to the Lord, the discipleship and church planting processes become almost entirely about what God is calling us to. That deals with the culture of the Kingdom of God rather than the cultures from which we come.

### All Disciples Are Involved

The main purpose of life is to glorify the Lord. We can do this best when we know Him most intimately and serve Him most fervently. It is God's intention for every disciple to be engaged in ministry. Those who are gifted with the five leadership gifts in Ephesians 4:11-12 are to equip those with other gifts to do the work of the ministry, which results in the building up of the Body of Christ. *Though each believer has a different gifting and a unique calling, everyone is to be engaged in living out the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-40) and carrying out the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).*

If we are living out the Great Commandment then we will be making reproducing disciples because part of the disciple-making process is "teaching them to obey everything I [Christ] have commanded" and the Commission itself is one of those commands. Hence, every believer should by definition be involved in making reproducing disciples. It is a short step from this toward starting reproducing spiritual communities (churches) because several of the other commands demand a spiritual community to carry out. Reproducing disciples will result in reproducing churches as a matter of obedience.

God is concerned not only with what He accomplishes in us in conforming us to the image of Christ, but also what He accomplishes through us in bringing glory to His name by being a blessing to everyone. We are to bless unbelievers by being a testimony of his grace and

mercy – and to bless fellow believers as encouragers, partners, and equippers.

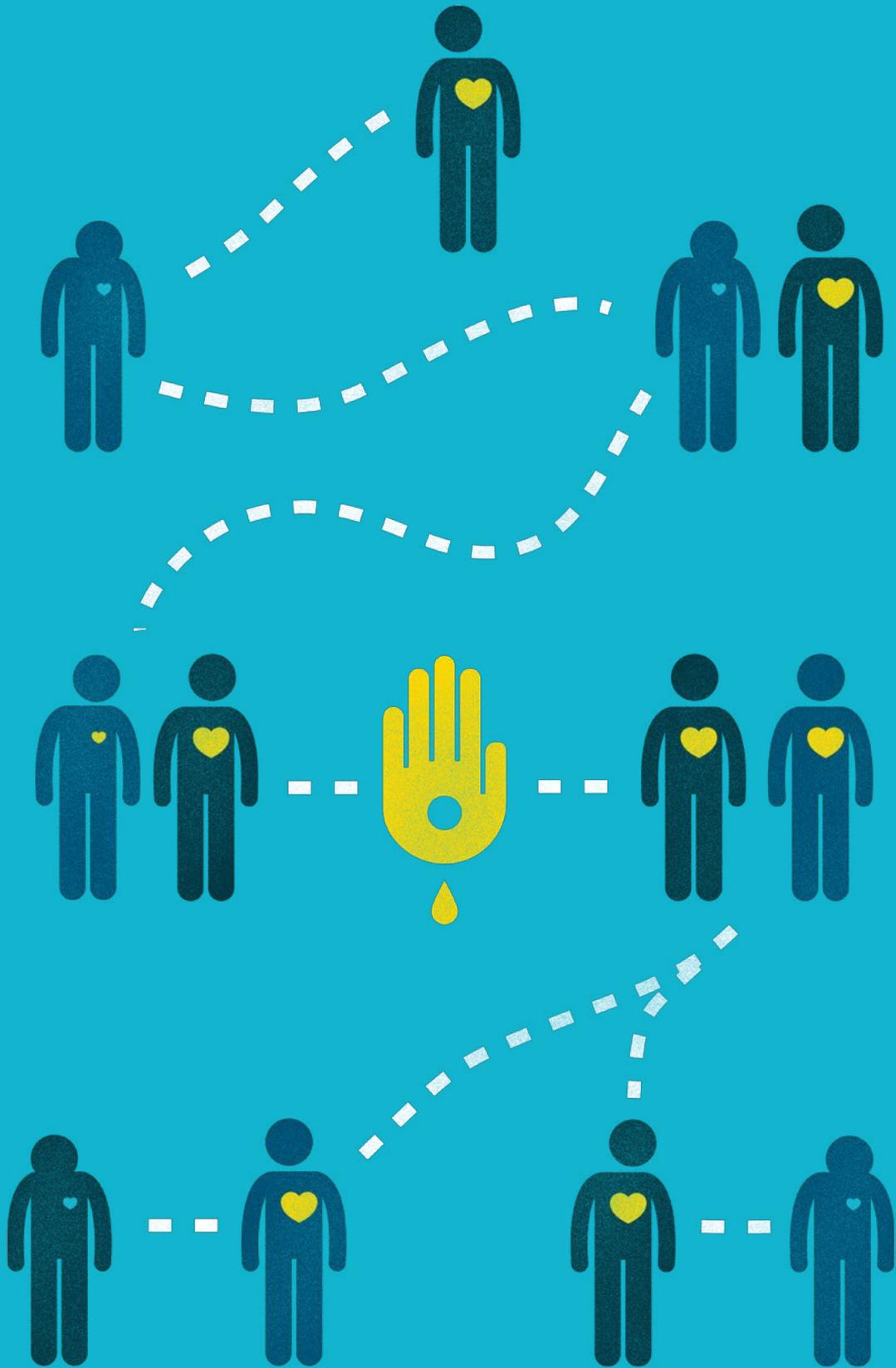
### Be Worth Reproducing

Our constant aspiration should be to grow in our character, faith, fruit of the Spirit, and obedience. Such growth in discipleship transforms us into something that is desirable to reproduce. *God is not interested in multiplying mediocrity.* Hence, one of the first considerations for every disciple to consider as he/she begins such ministry is to spend time in introspection and if necessary, repentance. We must never become complacent or satisfied with the level of maturity and love and faith to which the Lord has already brought us. We must continually aspire to more fully and completely love the Lord our God with all of our hearts, minds, souls and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves. One way we can pursue this is to structure our spiritual communities to provide what I like to call dual accountability. That is, accountability to obey the Lord, and accountability to pass on to others what we have received.

The spiritual economy differs from the earthly economy in that the spiritual economy is based on giving away what one has. God reveals more of Himself to us when we are faithful in sharing with others what we already know of Him. He gives more insight and revelation to those who are faithful in sharing with others what they already understand. He speaks to us more clearly when we obey what he has already spoken to us.

This means the most loving thing we can do for one another is to hold one another accountable for obeying what we learn from the Lord and to share it with others. This is not a matter of legalism, but of love. This is what we must do if we truly want the best for one another, the greatest spiritual blessing and insight, the deepest intimacy with our Father.

From a practical standpoint, this can be carried out in many ways, but the simplest is my favorite. At the end of each time of Bible discussion and prayer, in small groups each disciple spends time expressing to others in the group what the Lord is specifically speaking to him/her about and with whom they plan to have a spiritual discussion about the topic. The person(s) with whom they share might be unbelievers, in which case the conversation might be more pre-evangelistic or evangelistic in nature, or they might be believers in which case the conversation might be more for encouragement



# THE POINT IS THAT AFTER READING OR HEARING A PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE EVERY BELIEVER SHOULD BE ABLE TO TELL WHAT IT SAYS, WHAT IT MEANS, AND THE IMPLICATIONS IT HAS FOR HIS OR HER LIFE.

or equipping. The next time the group gathers together, each person shares how they did in obeying what the Lord had spoken to them and in sharing it with others. In such a setting, the entire group can be held accountable for being faithful in incorporating specific applications into their own lives and faithful in passing on to others the insights they are gleaning. This keeps every disciple constantly involved in either evangelizing the lost or helping to disciple fellow believers or both.

## **Rethinking Leadership**

Therefore, since ministry is not only for the mature in Christ, but for all of us who follow Him, all of us are leaders in some sense of the word. In the church, we tend to think of leaders as those who serve in a role of one or more of the five-fold gifts in Ephesians 1:11-12--apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors or teachers--or else in terms of the officers of the church--bishops/pastors, elders or deacons. We tend to have an attitude that leaders in the church must be mature believers. This view is fine as long as we remember that is only one type of leadership. In another sense, God has given each individual a sphere of influence. A poor, illiterate housewife in the developing world can be a leader for her children and neighbors. This type of "leadership" needs greater emphasis in the Kingdom of God today.

I like to think of this type of leadership in terms of the metaphor of a mother duck leading her ducklings. As

they walk or swim single file, only the first duckling is following the mother duck. Each of the other ducklings is following the one preceding them in line. In order to lead a duckling like this, one does not have to be a mature duck, just one step ahead of another duckling. In this metaphor, it is important to realize there is only one Leader of leaders – Jesus. All the rest of us are simply ducklings. None of us are totally mature (to the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ). We are all in process. However, this does not excuse us from the responsibility to lead those whom we can. We still have the responsibility to steward whatever leadership opportunities God has given us.

## **Helping Shape New Believers**

The process of establishing a pattern of dual accountability involving each disciple in leadership begins with immediately guiding new believers to evangelize their own friends and family. As soon as someone decides to repent and follow Jesus, I like to tell them, "It is a great blessing to bring others into a relationship with Jesus. It is a greater blessing to start a new spiritual community. It is the greatest blessing to equip others to start new spiritual communities. Right now I want to help you have a blessing, a greater blessing, and the greatest blessing."

At that point I ask them to make a list of one hundred people with whom they need to share the good news about Jesus. I ask them to select five to share with

immediately. I then teach them some contextually appropriate way to share the gospel and have them practice five times, each time envisioning they are sharing with one of the five people on their list. I do the same thing in helping them prepare to share their testimony and practice it. This process takes at least two hours, but is well worth the time invested. When I finish, I set a time for them to meet back with me and send them out to share their faith. I instruct them to follow the same process I followed with them should any of the five people they share with decide to follow the Lord. Frequently, one or more people come to the Lord as a result and sometimes a new spiritual community (church) is born very quickly.

When I meet back with them, I model the dual accountability model and if they have not shared with five people and followed up with any who responded positively, then we go over the same material again and make sure they have all the preparation they need. This sets up a pattern for their spiritual lives. More responsibility and leadership are given to those who have been faithful in the small elements of responsibility they have already practiced. Small increments are important in this respect. This approach is most easily practiced in a small group setting, so if you are part of a larger church then you should offer such accountability structures as a subset of the large group meetings.

### **Self-Feeding**

**Every new disciple must also be equipped to be spiritually self-feeding in at least four aspects:** Scripture, prayer, church life, and persecution and suffering. These are some of the primary ways God grows us to maturity.

In terms of being able to interpret and apply Scripture, this can most easily be done by teaching a series of questions that can be applied in any Scripture study. Generally, this will include questions of observation, interpretation and application. There are a number of sets of questions that can be used in this way, depending on the age or education level and the level of spiritual sophistication of the believers. The point is that after reading or hearing a passage of Scripture, every believer should be able to tell what it says, what it means, and the implications it has for his/her life. Clearly someone's ability to do this and the depth at which they do it will increase over time, but the point is to establish a pattern for how they view and respond to Scripture.

Prayer is another key tool God uses to grow us into the likeness of Christ. Through prayer we speak to the Lord, hear from His heart and mind, minister to both believers

and unbelievers, and more. Prayer is a teaching tool. It is an evangelism tool. In fact, praying for unbelievers in their presence can be one of the most powerful evangelistic tools that exists. It is often under-utilized. The best way to teach prayer to a new believer is by example reinforced by studying what the Bible says about prayer.

The church serves not only as a spiritual community, but also as the Body of Christ. In Ephesians 4, 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12 and 1 Peter 4, the Bible expresses how we as members of the Body of Christ have differing gifts and abilities that are to function together in a coordinated fashion in order to build up the Body and bring it to maturity. Thus, for both individual and corporate growth and maturity, we must understand how this works and participate in it. This idea is supplemented by numerous "one another" passages in the New Testament. More than fifty times we are told in Scripture to do something for one another in the Body. We need each other in order to grow.

**Persecution and suffering are also venues for our spiritual growth and development.** The Bible tells us that all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12). We know that we have an enemy who will also oppose us in many ways as we follow the Lord. New believers need to understand how God works to perfect our character, prove our faith, equip us for ministry, and provide a testimony for him through persecution and suffering. Being aware of this before it happens can help fend off discouragement and help us to be intentional about taking advantage of these opportunities rather than wasting them or responding to them inappropriately.

If a believer understands and can apply these basic opportunities for growth, along with the pattern of dual accountability we implement, then they can initiate an entire movement of new churches even if, for some reason they are separated from their spiritual community. They have the power of the Holy Spirit and access to Scripture along with these basic skills to move them toward maturity and equip them to bring others along. There is no way to stop such a movement.

### **Training Cycle**

As believers increase in their competence in these areas, **it is important to help them understand the phases of the training cycle so they know when and how to transition from modeling, to assisting, to watching, to leaving as they initiate work with new believers or new churches.** This is a natural process by which they can help others grow

into maturity as well, both individually and corporately.

I like to compare this process to teaching a child to ride a bicycle. Though we rarely think about it, the first step in a child learning to ride a bicycle is seeing someone else ride one. This only takes a moment. The purpose is to create awareness. In making disciples or planting churches, this can be an extremely quick process as well. But, it does not matter how good the model is; simply modeling will never train someone else to ride a bicycle. The learner must get on the seat and begin to pedal for themselves. This brings us to the second stage.

We need to begin to assist the beginner right away. This means the learner is on the seat and we are holding them up. They cannot do it without us, but from the first moments, we are trying to reduce their dependence on us. As soon as we believe they have a chance of maintaining their own balance and momentum, we release them. We must be willing to let them fall, as in learning it will happen repeatedly. We must not let our fear of them falling prevent us from letting go. That is part of the learning process. This stage of learning lasts a bit longer than the modeling stage, but it should still be kept as short as possible. I like to think in terms of getting through this stage in about three months in a church planting setting. During that time, I “shadow mentor,” modeling with the natural leaders (alone) in the new church what they should do when the entire group meets together. During this period I am covering the self-feeding skills mentioned earlier.

After assisting, it is time to enter the **observation** stage. This is a much longer phase, often taking many years. It is carried out at arm’s length, however, and is much more occasional in nature. One person can be observing multiple churches at the same time. When someone learns to ride a bicycle they must be able to mount, dismount, steer, brake, understand the rules of the road and know when and where it is safe to ride. These skills take some time to learn. It is not safe to let a child ride on his/her own until these skills are mastered. In the New Testament we see the apostle Paul use this cycle. He would model and assist with new churches on his missionary journey as he entered cities for the first time. This was a very brief process in all the churches except for Corinth (eighteen months) and Ephesus (three years). The observation stage, however, lasted for many years. He would come for repeat visits, send coworkers to check on things, write letters, etc. He needed to be sure the churches were

practicing and passing on what they had received.

Once the basic skills are learned, it is time for the mentor to **exit**. It is not only embarrassing, but also inconvenient, and impractical for a teacher to always be present in order for someone to ride a bicycle. The same is true spiritually. As soon as possible, new believers and new churches should be at the point of being producers rather than merely consumers. Spiritual reproduction should be happening and, in fact, is one good indicator that it is time to consider moving to the next phase. Model for the first generation, assist while they model for the second generation, watch for the third generation and if the other indicators look good, then it is time to leave. We see Paul formally leave the Ephesian church in Acts 20:17-38. It is a touching scene that demonstrates when leaving becomes appropriate and not irresponsible.

### **Entering New Communities**

New disciples and new churches also need to grow in their ability to see where the church is not. This is where they can begin to understand how to cross cultures and other boundaries in order to make disciples of all nations (peoples). I like to use maps with known churches indicated with pushpins. This can begin to sensitize people to geographic gaps. Very soon I also begin to introduce concepts of gaps in terms of language, socioeconomic levels, education levels, ethnicity, and so on. This helps new believers begin to look for opportunities to reach out to the people and places in the greatest spiritual darkness.

**It is important to model biblical approaches in ministry as well as to teach them.** For example, people need to understand how to look for and identify a “man of peace” as they enter new communities. This term comes from Matthew 10 and Luke 10 when Jesus is giving instructions to His disciples. Essentially, a man of peace is someone who is responsive, has a circle of influence and will open the door to that circle. Of course, a person of peace can sometimes be a woman! Going in a needy state can often uncover a person of peace as they offer assistance. One of my favorite ways of locating such a person is to begin a spiritual conversation. If someone indicates interest, rather than simply continuing to talk with them, I will inquire as to whether or not they know of others who might be interested in discussing such matters. If they do, I ask if they would be willing to gather them. If they are willing, the chances are quite strong that I have found a person of peace.



There are practical advantages to finding a person of peace. First, it is more effective to group unbelievers and win them rather than win individual converts and then group them. The new spiritual communities which are formed tend to be more durable and resilient, tend to function more smoothly, have higher trust levels, and tend to mature more quickly. If we are not sure whether we have found a person of peace, we should still see if we can assist a new believer or seeker to establish a new church from among their own network of relationships rather than automatically adding them to an existing church. This can be done naturally when we have them begin sharing their new faith with their list of one hundred people who need to know the Lord. The pattern that was used in Acts, and still works well today, is that new believers are gathered into new spiritual communities with new leaders raised up from among them. Our natural tendency is to add new converts to existing churches, which results in a hindrance with regard to multiplication of disciples and churches.

### Conclusion

When basic elements such as those mentioned in this article are combined, God frequently moves in remarkable ways and the resulting disciples and churches seem to be especially fruitful and more resistant to false teaching. Also, you will often see a supernatural impetus to take the gospel where it has not gone, and therefore unengaged people groups around the new churches quickly gain access to the gospel. The pattern of involving every disciple to live out and share their faith and be involved in leading others is key. We can do this with new believers through helping them learn to feed themselves spiritually in a developmental way through using the training cycle. This can be done in such a way that the disciples do this beyond their own community and relationships. These simple and biblical principles can go a long way toward helping you equip new believers to become catalysts in planting rapidly reproducing new churches. 

# The Current State of America



FEATURE ARTICLE

**THERE ARE TWO SIDES** to every story. Life eventually teaches all of us that. It is with this perspective that I want to pull back the curtain and take a look into the state of Christianity in America. As some have already looked into the state of the Church in America, they may have already abandoned all hope and are just waiting for Christ's return with the few believers they see around them. Still, others may see a more hopeful picture of revival, renewal, and reformation.

It is no secret that the number of Christians in America is declining. In 1990, 86% of Americans identified themselves as Christians. By 2014 that number dropped to

70.6%. However, this is the number of “self-identifying Christians” and tells us nothing of the true picture of people who are actually followers of Jesus. Those who regularly attend some kind of religious service is also now down to less than 20%...but remember, this stat is for all religious services. <sup>1</sup>

Recent research states that there are now 195 million non-churched people in America, making America one of the top four largest “unchurched” geopolitical nations in the world. In fact, there are approximately 360 unreached people groups living within America.

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About 23% of the US population are “nones,” up from 16% in 2007. “Nones” are people who don’t believe in anything in particular. Many of them were even at one point attenders of church, or at least born into a nominal Christian family.<sup>2</sup>

During the last ten years, membership of all Protestant denominations declined by 9.5%, while the national population increased by 11.4%. Also, in spite of the rise of “mega-churches,” no county in America has a greater church population than it did ten years ago. This is probably because much of the growth in larger churches is from transfer growth, as less than 2% of Christians share their faith and 96% of church growth is from transfer growth or kids being born into the church.<sup>3</sup>

Obviously, Christianity is not even close to keeping up with the population growth of America. What was once a Christian nation with a Christian culture has now become an unchurched nation. For the most part, many people, especially young people, view church as boring and irrelevant to their lives. One of the reasons for this is that as Western Christians and our fascination with learning, we have focused too much on knowledge. Most Christians unfortunately look at Christianity as a set of doctrinal beliefs and things to know about, rather than as a lifestyle of following Christ and obeying his commands.

There is, however, a brighter picture to this story, another side of the coin as one might say. While people are leaving the church in droves, many of them are people who “self-identify” as Christians yet don’t really have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. They are the “cultural Christians” or the “nominal Christians.”

If one were to look at the state of Evangelicals in the US, the picture is not as dim. Over the past seven years, evangelicals have lost less than 1 percent of their share of the population, holding steady at about 1 in 4 American adults (25.4% in 2014, vs. 26.3% in 2007) and preserving their status as the nation’s largest religious group. Evangelicals now also make up 55% of the nation’s protestant church members.<sup>4</sup>

Another alarming statistic is that around 3,500 to 4,000 churches are closing their doors every year. However, according to estimates from a Nashville-based research organization with input from 34 denominational statisticians, more than 4,000 new churches opened their doors

in 2014, outpacing the 3,700 that closed.<sup>5</sup> While older, stale denominations have lost touch with the younger generations, all is not lost. Churches are being started, and in 2014, the net total of churches was actually greater than the year before!

This also says nothing of the millions of Americans who are starting smaller churches and making disciples in their homes or offices. According to the American pollster George Barna, as many as 30,000 house churches were established as of 2009, and it is estimated 6-12 million Americans attend them.<sup>6</sup> Some house church networks (or simple churches) are seeing multiplication of their churches at an exponential rate. So this stat in 2009 could be largely out of date and much higher now in the year 2016. Many of these people might also not be counted in denominational polls.

So, while nominal Christians are dropping off and the rise of the “nones” is getting larger, there is still so much hope! There is a large group of committed Christians in our country still. Their numbers are not falling drastically, and in fact, could be growing at a much faster pace than we think! These committed followers of Jesus view being a Christian as a lifestyle of following Jesus and obeying His commands out of love for Him. The challenge is that, as humans, we can’t measure this statistic. Only God knows who truly belongs to him and who doesn’t. As we look at the big picture of church growth in America, God is on the move and is drawing people to Himself—maybe just not in the conventional ways we are used to or trying to see him in. 

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# THE TIME IS

# NOW

FEATURE ARTICLE

We are living in the greatest missional opportunity in world history. I believe this to be wholeheartedly true. In the United States, one nation has become the home for every nation. We are now presented with a unique and precious opportunity to sow the gospel into every country on our own soil! Just think, whether our country experiences revival and sustains freedom for hundreds of years or whether persecution and hard times hit our country soon, either way, the internationals who are temporarily calling America home will eventually be forced back or continue to influence those back in their

homeland. Now is the time! Can you see it? The task has come to our backyard! It is right in front of us. The time is now to get the gospel to these precious souls and to all the lost of every people group in America. We are at a tipping point and I believe a generation is rising up that sees Jesus for who He is, is counting the cost, and with joy-filled hearts we are responding to His love with immediate, radical obedience.

Time. It really is about time. “The time is now” is so much more than a cliché line; it is a cry for urgency and

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an anthem to pick up the pace, to respond with fervor to the love that Jesus displayed on the cross. Many people would tell you that “pace” and “urgency” are not spiritual matters. They would argue that God, His Word, eternal destinies, and eternal souls are the real spiritual matters at hand. And yes, they absolutely are. However, we cannot forget the eternal destiny of eternal souls is determined in time. So time and pace are most assuredly critical spiritual matters as well.

The Lord does not delight in the death of any man, but desires for all to come to repentance and for all to willingly love and worship Him. But the fact is that more than one non-Christian per second passes into a Christ-less eternity.

Right where you are, begin snapping your fingers every second.

Keep going.

This pace does not slow down when we are sleeping, when we are at our respective jobs, in the classrooms, or while we are on vacation. One soul. Every second. Dying. And living forever in torment apart from Jesus Christ.

This does not please God. This breaks His heart beyond words. And it should ours too. His heart is for ALL to know him and WE are His method to get the gospel to our neighbors and to the ends of the earth.

Our generation is responsible for this generation of souls.

Pace matters. Urgency matters (You can stop snapping now).

It is true: we are living in a day where there are more Christians alive at one time than ever before! The church is larger than ever before! But this number can be misleading because there are also more non-Christians alive than ever before. The sobering fact remains that the growth of the church is not keeping up with the population growth of the world. In America alone, the number of believers and church attenders has gone down in every county in the country. Not one county went up in number or percentage. Not one county stayed the same.

Pace matters. Urgency matters.

I do not say this as a pessimist or to say doom has come upon us. We hear enough of this talk to last a lifetime. In fact, I am saying quite the opposite! My heart believes and burns with faith that a mobilized faithful generation is ready, willing, and hoping for such a movement to arise! It's time to turn the tables, get our hands dirty, mobilize laborers for the harvest, and get in the game!

I am hearing inspiring story after story, ministry after ministry, church after church that is noticing this downward trend and is willing at any cost to be a part of a miraculous move of God in our generation that bears and multiplies fruit. I hear incredible stories, some of which you will read about in this issue, of men and women who are responding in love to be harvesters in their community, to sow seeds of the gospel and to rapidly reproduce healthy groups where they are. God is doing it! It is happening! He is building His church!

And yes, pace matters. Urgency matters. The time is now to multiply disciples.

For some, talking about pace can give the impression that whatever is being multiplied is being multiplied at a compromise or a lesser quality. This certainly can be true, but it is not necessarily true.

Curtis Sergeant, disciple-trainer, church planter, and founder of Zumé, says it this way:

“There are some things that if they happen faster actually improve the quality and that's the type of pace we are interested in increasing. We are not interested in mediocrity. We are not interested in multiplying a bad product. We are not interested in multiplying weak disciples. But if we can find a way to increase the pace of disciple making and disciple multiplication without hurting the fruit – we are interested in that! So if we can find ways to increase the pace of multiplying good fruit, it will have incredible impact on the spiritual landscape. It will have a huge impact on the expansion of the Kingdom of God. And this is something we do need to be concerned about. Time really does matter.”

What would it look like if we took multiplication and pace seriously? What if we realized the exponential difference between 18-month multiplication compared to 9-month multiplication? What if we captured the heart of God on his people and went out with bold, unoffendable hearts into the harvest field?

It has already begun.

Our generation is responsible for this generation's souls.

Pace matters. Urgency matters.

The time is NOW. 

# The Essential Role of Vision-Casting in Movements

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**AT THE END OF A FULL DAY** of training in a remote house church in Asia, the breakthrough came. I had been sharing deeply from my heart about God’s heart for his kingdom to come fully to every lost community and people group. At the core of this vision was explaining the essence of a seed, just as Jesus used seeds in giving vision to His disciples of how the kingdom grows.

The challenge with my group was to convey to these rural believers the idea of kingdom multiplication. The concept that each disciple could bear fruit thirty, sixty and a hundred times, and then that the next generation of disciples they trained could do the same, just wasn’t sinking in. It was contrary to their discipleship paradigm.

The pastor’s 12-year-old son, soaking up every word, suddenly dashed out of the room. A few minutes later, he rushed back in holding a golden stalk of wheat in his hand. In front of the group, he presented it to me. “Brother Steve, this is what you mean! Each of these seeds will produce many more seeds which will produce many more seeds!”

*In that same hour [Jesus] rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I thank you, Father, Lord*

*of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.” (Luke 10:21, ESV)*

Aha’s spread across the room. We were finally on a path toward a kingdom movement. And now the group was ready for basic equipping and tools to walk that path. But only because the vision for kingdom multiplication was clear at last. The Father’s heart was now inspiring a new level of biblical faith. That stalk of wheat became a cherished possession for years to come.

As we launch disciples toward kingdom movements, vision is the key ingredient to turn them from the status quo to God’s agenda. In the early days with a new group of believers, I find myself spending a third or even half of every meeting just building in them faith for what is on God’s heart—His vision. One group that I trained for one year in church planting movement (CPM) strategies still wasn’t multiplying. A year later, as I was casting vision, the most fruitful person in the group exclaimed, “Oh! That’s what you mean!” Paradigms are hard to break, and vision-casting is

essential in that process.

## The Most Misunderstood and Most Important Element of Multiplying Discipleship

Perhaps the most misunderstood element in a multiplying discipleship process is the role of casting vision on a regular basis. While it is the most misunderstood element, it is also the most important element for building a movement.

If I give a man a screwdriver and tell him to pound a nail into a board, he will quit in frustration. But if there is a million-dollar prize, he will find a way to pound that nail in with a screwdriver. It would be far better for me to give him a hammer. But he will find a way regardless because of the motivation of his heart.

In CPMs, a reproducing discipleship process is at the core of the equipping process, and vision-casting is at the center of it. We are giving disciples a vision of what God wants to do. We are changing their internal motivations. It is important for us to give them effective tools (e.g. the hammer). But if the vision is strong enough, they will find a way to follow God’s leading even with less effective tools.



# As we launch disciples toward kingdom movements, vision is the key ingredient to turn them from the status quo to God's agenda.

Scripture exhorts leaders to equip the saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:11-12), but often we only convey mechanics without actually giving them the *confidence* and competence to make disciples who can make disciples.

To address that, kingdom movements around the world often use variations of a three-thirds process in their weekly discipleship meetings. In the first third, disciples **look back** to evaluate how they did obeying God through 1) personal care, 2) worship/praise, 3) loving accountability and 4) vision-casting. In the middle third of their meeting, they will **look up** to ask God what He wants to speak to them through the 5) Word of God. In the final third, they will **look ahead** to determine how to obey God and how to make disciples who

can make disciples. To prepare for that, they will often 6) practice what they will share with those they train as well as 7) set goals based on what God told them and re-commission each other in prayer.

The element of the three-thirds process I am most often asked about is vision-casting. Because it is so misunderstood, it is the most poorly implemented element of the reproducing discipleship process. Its absence is perhaps the most common reason why discipleship groups and churches fail to multiply.

## What Vision-Casting is Not

Frequently I am asked to observe a group to give feedback to the leader about their implementation of the three thirds. In one meeting, the leader led the group through a time of personal care, worship and accountability. The

meeting was limping along but then almost ground to a halt in terms of any momentum. The leader turned to a group member and said, “John, would you now read our vision statement?”

John read the group’s one-line vision statement in a monotone voice. Everyone nodded. That was it. With vision-casting checked off the list the leader moved on to the second third—Bible study.

I was stunned. No inspiring each other toward faith in what God wants to do. No passionate cries to hang in there. No encouragement to endure and press into the vision.

The meeting limped to its conclusion. In the feedback, I explained to the leader that what I had just observed was a sterile classroom experience, not

a meeting of the body of Christ. It was mere mechanics devoid of the powerful presence of the Spirit. It was not an interaction with God but following a form they felt would multiply.

- Vision-casting is not reciting a vision statement.
- Vision-casting is not a canned monologue that ignores that week's needs.
- Vision-casting is not a sterile enterprise that we can check off our list.
- Vision-casting is not pumping a group to do something that God does not want to do.

### What Vision-Casting Is

Vision-casting is evaluating where a group is and then inspiring them toward faith in our Heavenly Father's heart.

It is not unlike a coach who speaks to his team at halftime. If they are losing, he inspires them to work together to win. If they are winning, he cautions them against slacking off. In the few minutes as the first half winds down and on the walk to the locker room, he is composing his thoughts to speak an apt word that will inspire his team to action.

To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is! (Prov. 15:23, ESV)

Vision-casting is giving an encouraging word to fellow disciples in a way that will remind them of God's heart to work in them and through them. It builds faith in them to act in alignment with how God is acting. It does not incite them to act in a way that is contrary to God and His Word.

### Built around the Father's Heart

Vision-casting follows this progression:

1. What is **Father's heart** for this community, this group and this

person (the vision)?

### 2. Where is this group or person in terms of pursuing His heart?

- Is the vision of Father's heart clear?
- Are they discouraged?
- Are they confused?
- Do they lack faith?
- Are they over-confident or confident in their flesh?

### 3. What word can I share that will inspire them to align their current situation to God's heart?

The crux of this process is knowing our heavenly Father's heart. What is his vision for our community and our circle of relationships? How does He want to equip us and use us in this process? What is God's will, and how do I line up my life to it?

When we understand God's heart—His intentions—and then resolve to act based upon His heart, that is faith. Vision-casting is always about building biblical faith in those we disciple.

### Apt for that Moment

As we understand God's heart, then we inspire those we train in a way that is apt for the moment. In times of discouragement, we encourage. When they are faithless, we impart faith. When they are myopic, we share big vision. When they are over-confident, we share a sobering word. When they are confused, we give clarity.

Before any meeting with a group or individual, I enter a prayerful preparation process. Though I might have planned to share a specific vision-casting element for that week, I stop to ask Father what encouraging word they need. Sometimes it is what I have planned. Sometimes the group needs to hear something different. Just as a coach anticipated

sharing a particular pep talk at halftime but changes it based on circumstances, so also we vary what we share depending on the needs of the week.

Bottom line, we ask: "What encouraging or inspiring word do they need this week? What will build vision in them?" If we meet with these disciples regularly, it doesn't have to be a long message—just five or ten minutes. And we encourage them to do the same thing with those they disciple.

### Tool-Belt Built from Word, Works and Wineskins

Even so, many disciple-makers are at a loss for how to cast vision. Since we are trying to build faith in Father's heart, then we must find inspiring messages from places that line up with His heart. Here are the three most common sources:

- **Word of God:** God's heart is seen throughout Scripture. Comb the Word to find appropriate ways to help disciples align their attitudes and actions to what He says. Be careful to interpret the Word in context and to apply it as it was meant. Messages that do not exegete God's Word faithfully will not enable believers to follow God's heart but set them up for defeat.
- **Works of God:** The ways in which God has worked in history and around us today show us what He is like. Sharing short testimonies of what God has done or is doing can build faith in us that He is still at work in places like ours and in people like us.

*Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who delight in them. (Ps. 111:2)*

- **Wineskins:** Methods and models that flexibly cooperate with the work of the Spirit (Mt. 9:17)

# Vision-casting is evaluating where a group is and then inspiring them toward faith in our Heavenly Father's heart.

offer practical encouragement and pathways for us to follow. Hearing someone share a breakthrough of how he effectively shared the gospel with a post-modern can encourage us to do the same.

Each time we meet with a group of believers, we want to give them a five, or ten-minute inspiring word built from these sources. If it is the first time we meet with a group, we will spend much more time on the vision God has for them.

Helpful in this process is to build a tool-belt of short vision-casting messages. If you have ten to twenty of these in your tool-belt, you are ready in-season and out for a multitude of situations that will arise from week to week. Doubtless you will share others as you prepare each week, but these will keep you ready always. Keep them short, vivid and memorable. In this way, our fellow believers can call them to mind when they are discouraged and can share these words with others.

## Spoken in Passionate Sincerity

The real question is whether we believe what we are sharing. Are we speaking these words with sincerity or do we appear as peddlers?

For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ. (2 Co. 2:17)

Paul is referring to sellers who would stack the good-looking fruit on top and put the sub-par fruit (which they would sell) underneath. Do we present a false picture of God's heart? Do we say one thing but believe another? Instead, we must inspire others because we are convinced that this is the nature of our Father. If so, then we must speak with passion, exhorting the group to believe and respond.

## Vision for a Kingdom Movement

Sometimes, you are the only person

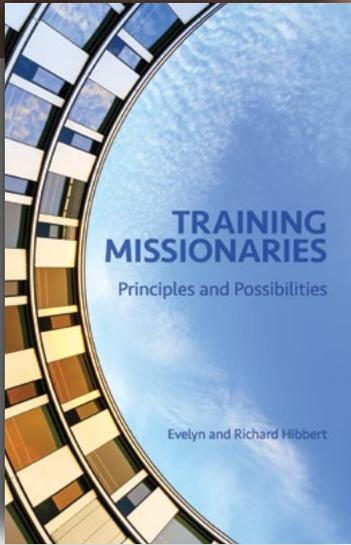
speaking into the lives of others that God wants to build a kingdom movement through them. Sometimes it is the vision you keep imparting that keeps them on the less-traveled path. The enemy is whispering in their ears, "Not here, not now and not through you!"

Your job is to speak the words of the Father to them. Soon you will be joined by others speaking similar messages until eventually we are surrounded by an army of faith.

It is your role to inspire them.

It is your role to build faith in them.

Perhaps no one else will. 



## Training Missionaries

*Principles and Possibilities*

Evelyn and Richard Hibbert (Author)

Missionaries must know God, be able to relate well to other people, understand and engage with another culture, and be able to use the Bible in a way that informs all aspects of their lives and ministries. Missionary training must address each of these areas if it is to help Christians to be effective in taking the gospel to the ends of the earth. Effective training has been shown to prevent people from prematurely leaving the field. It also reduces the danger of cross-cultural workers uncritically exporting culturally bound forms of Christianity. This book details four key areas that every missionary training program, whatever its context, must focus on developing. It shows how these can be holistically addressed in a learning community where trainers and trainees engage in cross-cultural ministry together.

List Price ~~\$24.95~~ • **Our Price \$19.95**

ISBN 9780878085477  
Evelyn and Richard Hibbert (Author)  
WCL | Pages 371 | Paperback 2016



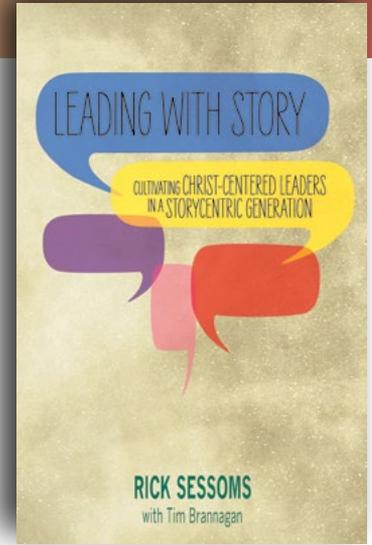
## Leading Multicultural Teams

Evelyn and Richard Hibbert (Author)

Churches and mission agencies are increasingly characterized by cultural diversity. As a result, many Christians find themselves working as part of a multicultural team. Leading these teams is a complex challenge that requires team leaders to understand how to help multicultural teams thrive. Team leaders need to know how to help team members grow in particular qualities and acquire specific skills related to multicultural teamwork. This book integrates insights from the Bible, team theory, leadership, and intercultural studies to explain how leaders of multicultural teams can help their teams become enriching and enjoyable contexts to work in, at the same time as achieving their purpose.

List Price ~~\$17.99~~ • **Our Price \$14.39**

ISBN 9780878085415  
Jay Matenga, Malcolm Gold (Authors)  
WCL | Pages 249 | Paperback 2014



## Leading with Story

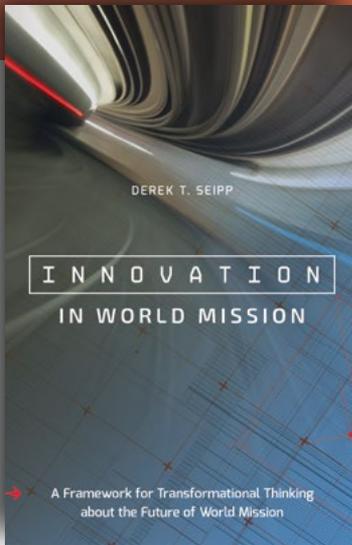
*Cultivating Christ-centered Leaders in a Storycentric Generation*

Rick Sessoms (Author)

Eighty percent of the world's people—including seventy percent of Americans—are storycentric communicators; that is, they prefer to learn and are most likely to be influenced through stories, pictures, drama, and music rather than through reading and writing. Yet more than ninety percent of Christian workers communicate through a highly literacy-based approach. This disconnect overlooks a primary method of Jesus himself in the preparation of leaders and impedes the effective cultivation of leaders in the growing global church. Through engaging stories, biblical insights, leadership research, field-tested methods, and practical models of effective leadership development, *Leading with Story* offers unique solutions that will inspire and challenge any who want to raise up or to be raised up as Christ-centered leaders in this storycentric generation.

List Price ~~\$17.99~~ • **Our Price \$14.39**

ISBN 9780878085309  
Rick Sessoms (Author)  
WCL | Pages 270 | Paperback 2016



## Innovation in World Mission

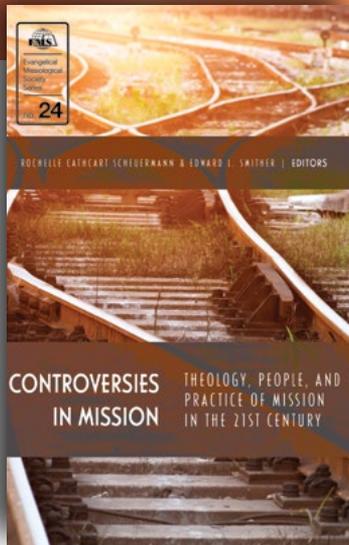
*A Framework for Transformational Thinking about the Future of World Mission*

Derek T. Seipp (Author)

Our world is changing: mass migrations, the emergence of mega-cities, globalization, travel, and ubiquitous connectivity. How do we make sense of it all? Innovation in World Mission was written for those who care about being relevant in this chaotic, yet exciting new world. This book explores the categories of mega-changes happening around us, and the impacts they are making, specifically in world mission. It explores how God created us in his image, to be creative and innovative—modern day children of Issachar who understand change and know how to respond. Real-life examples from ministries, non-profits, and businesses are used throughout to help understand how to put these tools into practice.

List Price ~~\$12.49~~ • **Our Price \$9.99**

ISBN 9780878083978  
Derek T. Seipp (Author)  
WCL | Pages 136 | Paperback 2016



## Controversies in Mission (EMS-24)

*Theology, People, and Practice of Mission in the 21st Century*

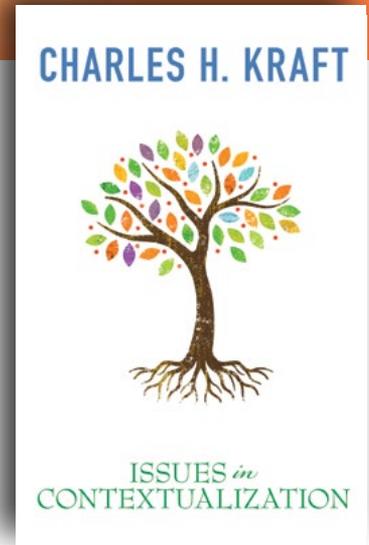
Rochelle Cathcart Scheuermann, Edward L. Smither (Editors)

Drawing on thirty years' experience among Hindus, Timothy Shultz writes this book as a testimony of the kingdom of God growing in a non-Christian environment. *Disciple Making among Hindus: Making Authentic Relationships Grow* describes how Hindu people experience and respond to Jesus Christ. What are the core values and rhythms of their cultural world? What are the patterns of community and discipleship that help them draw closer to Jesus? Through moving personal stories, biblical reflection, and practical wisdom, Shultz introduces us to the centrality of family, the covenantal relationships that make up Hindu social life, and the yearning for authentic spiritual experience.

While this book will benefit anyone wanting to make disciples among Hindus, it is far more than a strategy of contextualization or a blueprint for successful evangelism. Read it to discover the beauty of Hindus as Jesus sees them—and the beauty of Jesus through Hindu eyes.

List Price ~~\$14.99~~ • **Our Price \$11.99**

ISBN 9780878080540  
Rochelle Cathcart Scheuermann, Edward L. Smither (Editors)  
WCL | Pages 338 | Paperback 2016



## Issues in Contextualization

Charles H. Kraft (Author)

The gospel is to be planted as a seed that will sprout within and be nourished by the rain and nutrients in the cultural soil of the receiving peoples. What sprouts from true gospel seed may look quite different above ground from the way it looked in the sending society, but beneath the ground, at the worldview level, the roots are to be the same and the life comes from the same source. What does a vibrant indigenous faith in Jesus look like? How do we communicate the essential meanings of the gospel in forms appropriate to a particular people at a particular time?

Issues in Contextualization, Charles Kraft's latest book, presents his own insights on this topic from decades of experience teaching and ministering around the world. Significantly, Kraft's analysis includes an exploration of spiritual power, an aspect frequently neglected in such discussions. This volume is an update of Kraft's classic work *Appropriate Christianity*. It contains fresh presentations of previous articles and new insights into topics such as insiders (followers of Jesus outside the religious culture of Christianity) and power encounter.

List Price ~~\$21.99~~ • **Our Price \$17.59**

ISBN 9780878084920  
Charles H. Kraft (Author)  
Piquant | Pages 258 | Paperback 2016

# I Need Help and You Probably Do Too

by Greg Parsons

Director of Global Connections  
Frontier Ventures

For years I have said there is a massive amount of information available on the internet and some of it is true!

The information we have at our fingertips (literally) is staggering. When my wife and I joined the staff of the USCWM (now Frontier Ventures) almost 35 years ago, we had a much harder time knowing what was happening around the world. Learning about breakthroughs did not happen in seconds. We depended, in part, on global workers coming through our facilities and sharing with us. For example, we had no idea what was happening with the growth of the church in China. When we started to hear it and share it, no one believed it.

How different it is now. Accessing and sharing information for our work and ministry is much easier, but comes with new challenges. Sometimes we believe things that aren't true! There is not only falsehood, but also misleading information—which can be more dangerous. Then, there is deception, which is a problem because we do not realize it is happening. But distraction may be the most destructive by-product of the “internet age” for committed believers—again, because we don't realize it is happening.

I don't spend much time with social media. Don't tell anyone, but I use it to share vision and insights and to connect with our family and local church. Since I am a visual person, I am easily

distracted. As I have gotten older, I have become even more distractible. For instance, I might reach for my phone to check the weather before a bike ride. Then I notice an email that needs a reply—which I had forgotten about because of some other distraction! By now, I've forgotten why I picked up my phone at all. The impulse nature of “always-on information” and a world that is constantly connected socially (at some level) has changed how we work, relate and mobilize.

That last word—mobilize—is why I write about all this in *MF*. We need to understand what is happening and see where tools like smart phones are good and where we need to challenge their negative aspects. How does this impact mobilizing the next generation globally? Here are a few reflections to suggest what we do about it.

- We lose the ability to focus on a single task. While this is different for each generation, many of us older mobilizers wonder if younger “digital natives” will be able to focus on anything but their phones...say, on language learning with real people they don't know?

Just this morning, while traveling, I was reading my Bible on my phone. And, sure enough, just as I was beginning to think more deeply about Paul's talk to the Ephesian elders, I have a notification cover part of my screen. I have found that deep study of the Word takes time and focus, which is harder and harder to fit in. I fear for those who have never tried. I can (and do) turn off Notifications sometimes. My phone is hardly ever in our bedroom. Yet I realize that to “disconnect” can be a

challenge when we feel a pull to keep up on what people are interested in. Social media can be a great way to network and connect people in new ways.

- We can shape our image so we look “right” to our friends or the world. But, in the process, do we deceive ourselves about ourselves—who we are, what we do? Are we thinking about how we come across and doing things specifically to look good (however we define that) to others? This could also drive some to look more “spiritual” as well as “cool.” Yet either way, motivations need to be considered carefully. Of course, this happens in real face-to-face life also!

- Time for social media seems unlimited. We all know people who post all the time. It may be helpful for them to think through and process things. Actually connecting via social media or in person can be an effective tool for ministry. But it must be controlled like any area of our lives.

We must try and focus our use of these tools and think through our patterns prayerfully. We know we need to filter information, work at ignoring innocent distractions and avoid certain ungodly or sinful things.

Most of the valuable things in a Godward life are hard and require attention. There is a massive amount of information available to us, but the good in it may be distracting us from the best. I strongly encourage you to be mindful—and pray—whenever you pick up your phone.

Please add your thoughts and comments on this article at:  
[www.MissionFrontiers.org](http://www.MissionFrontiers.org)



# Nomad Truck Venture

Come learn about mission to the nomads of Central Asia. If you are a back packer, adventurer, camping enthusiast, or entrepreneur it could be the defining trip of your life.

Join us on this 5 week “mobile work shop,” travelling through the countries where nomads roam. The Nomadic Peoples Network together with Frontier Ventures gives you the chance to get to know the nomadic peoples of Central Asia. We’ll camp our way across countries and go over 3,100 miles. All along the way we will meet nomads and learn from those who work with them.

What does God have for you on this trip? Will God give you a deep love for nomads and a desire to serve among them? Do you have what it takes for this kind of communal experience? Join us during the summer of 2018 and see.

For more information email the Winter Launch Lab:

[winterlaunchlab@frontierventures.org](mailto:winterlaunchlab@frontierventures.org)

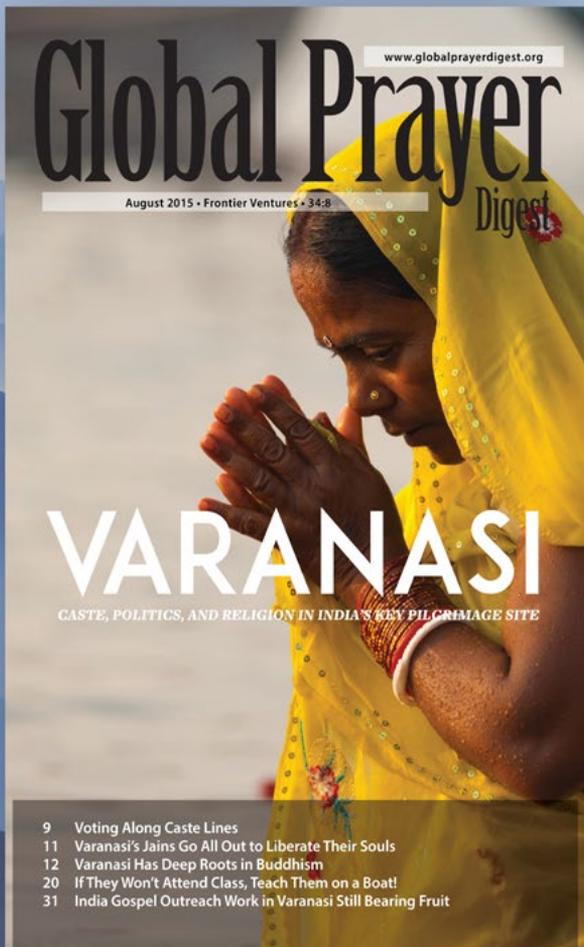


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