

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?



BY RICK WOOD

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Unless you were around when the 1918 Spanish Flu hit the world, leading to at least 50 million deaths, none of us have experienced anything like what we have been going through with the coronavirus crisis. It has affected all of us to one degree or another. As I write in late May, many countries and various U.S. states are lifting lockdown orders and people are learning how to do business in new ways while living with the virus. The lockdowns have not succeeded in eliminating the virus, just slowing its spread long enough for hospitals and governments to cope with its impact. As a result, those most vulnerable to the virus will have to continue taking extraordinary precautions to protect themselves while the virus continues its gradual spread through the broader society until “herd immunity” is achieved or a vaccine is developed.

The efforts to suppress the coronavirus have already caused global upheaval unlike anything we have seen since World War II. The massive economic dislocations caused by shelter-in-place orders are just now becoming visible as unemployment in the U.S. approaches Great Depression levels. It is even more serious for the poor around the world, who, if they are prohibited from working today, do not eat today either. The critical question for governments at every level is what will kill more people, an unchecked coronavirus or the economic lockdowns meant to halt its spread? There are no quick or easy answers here. The likelihood is that we will be dealing with the effects of this pandemic for years to come. Our lives may never get back to what we used to know as “normal.”

As this virus is changing our lives in dramatic ways, it is also changing the way we go about doing missions—which is what this issue is all about. How do we reach people and make disciples while wearing masks and practicing social distancing? It is a new world and we will have to develop creative new ways to foster movements of discipleship and church-planting in all peoples. The confidence we have is that God is in this and He is working to open hearts and minds as never before. We need to be prepared to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in what He is doing at this time.

Mission agencies are adapting and adjusting their methods and strategies to continue their mission in spite of these unprecedented challenges. From Zoom conferences and training sessions to food programs for the poor, they are learning to do missions in a rapidly changing environment. This crisis is stretching our creativity in bold new ways. Perhaps that is exactly what God wants.

Moving Forward In Faith

In various articles in this issue we look back at how the Church has responded to prior pandemics. Take note of the wonderful article by Glenn Sunshine starting on page 23 and the more contemporary example during the Ebola outbreak in Africa starting on page 34. In every case, the people of God moved toward danger and took risks in loving and caring for the needs of those in their community stricken by illness. The unbelievers abandoned the sick. The believers came to their rescue, often at the expense of their own lives. As a result, the gospel expanded greatly. This does not mean that we should be foolish or cavalier in endangering our lives. It does mean that we should take prudent precautions according to medical knowledge while still reaching out to those in need. We can limit, but never eliminate, the risk to ourselves while carrying out our mission to the unreached peoples. As C. Anderson says so well in our lead article starting on page 8, we must not react in fear, but in faith and be willing to go in and boldly “take the land.” In the best of times, missions is a risky business. To enter an unreached people and start a movement is a very costly endeavor and untold numbers of faithful servants have suffered greatly to advance Christ’s kingdom. Some have paid the ultimate price. We are called to reject fear and the “bad reports” we are getting from the media and to obey what Jesus is calling each of us to do in our local context, trusting God with our health and the results of our ministry. Refusing to go to the unreached in order to protect ourselves is not an option for the obedient Jesus follower.

A Movement in Buddhist Thailand—Remarkable!

The article on page 43 about the movement in Thailand is one that you do not want to miss in this issue. There are many lessons that we can learn from the efforts of The Free in Jesus Christ Church Association in reaching out to Buddhist peoples. The story of this movement first appeared as the cover story in the April 2019 issue


of *Christianity Today*. The key lesson for us is how Pastor Somsak adapted his evangelistic approach to reaching Thai Buddhists. There are few known movements to Christ among Buddhist peoples. So when one does occur, it makes us stand up and ask, “What can we learn from this example and apply to other Buddhist peoples?” Unlocking the key to movements among Buddhist peoples is essential in our efforts to bring the gospel to all peoples. This movement in Thailand is worth our careful study.

Become a Mission Frontiers Vision Caster

Mission Frontiers exists to cast the vision and provide the resources to foster Kingdom Movements in every people and place so that every person may have access to the life-saving gospel of Jesus Christ as soon as possible. But we cannot do this without the partnership of you, our readers. Producing *Mission Frontiers* six times a year is not inexpensive. There are fixed costs that must be met regardless of how many subscribers we have. Subscriptions and advertising do not cover our expenses. We need people who believe in what we are doing and are willing to come alongside us in the following ways.

Pray: We need people to pray for the success of our mission to mobilize the global church to focus on fostering Kingdom Movements in all peoples and places. The enemy of our souls would like to silence us because our message is a direct threat to his territory among the unreached peoples.

Donate: We need your donations— both large and small—if we are to cover our costs and then go on to expand this ministry into other languages. We need committed regular support from the many readers who believe in this work. But even if you can only afford \$25 or \$30, every little bit helps. To give, please go to <http://www.frontierventures.org>, click on the **Donate** button and put MA 030 in the dialog box to cover *MF* general expenses. To donate to Rick Wood and his ministry with *MF* put MA323 in the dialog box. Thank you.

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THE 24:14 MOVEMENT DATA DASHBOARD As of June 2020

The Problem: Losing Ground

One of three people have no access to the gospel message.

1985: 3.2 billion lost souls

2019: 5.5 billion lost souls

Evangelism of unreached peoples is not keeping pace with the population growth rate.

The Solution: Movements

Church Planting Movements (CPMs) grow rapidly and often exceed the population growth rate.

In the last 20+ years the number of movements has increased dramatically, spreading to every continent.

The Seven Stages of the CPM Continuum

Stage 1:

Moving purposefully (G1)

Teams on site trying to consistently establish NEW 1st Generation believers and churches

Stage 2: Focused (G2)

Some 2nd generation churches (G1 believers started them)

Stage 3: Breakthrough (G3)

Consistent G2 and some G3 churches

Stage 4: Emerging CPM (G4)

Consistent G3 and some G4 churches

Stage 5: ESTABLISHED CPM

Consistent 4th+ generation churches; multiple streams

Stage 6: Sustained CPM

Visionary, indigenous leadership leading the movement with little/ no need for outsiders. Stood the test of time.

Stage 7: Multiplying CPMs:

Catalyzing new CPMs in other unreached peoples and places.

What God is Doing Through His Body

4,500+ reports of active CPM engagements

1,300 Stage 5 CPMs, 4+ Generations

76.9 million believers in all CPM engagements

4.7 million churches in all known CPM engagements

71,000 believers per Stage 5+ CPM, average

17 average believers per church per CPM

24:14 Vision

The Good News of Jesus Christ for every person and a Church for every people

Mission: Kingdom Movements in all unreached peoples and in every place

Initial Goal: Kingdom Movement engagements in all unreached peoples and every place by December 31, 2025

24:14 Values

1. Fully reaching the unreached peoples and places of the earth
2. Reaching them through Church Planting Movement strategies
3. Engaging them through movement strategies with **urgent sacrifice** by 2025
4. Collaborating with others in the 24:14 community so we can make progress together

Join the 24:14 Community

<https://www.2414now.net/get-involved/>

Questions? Contact: data@2414now.net or visit our FAQs at <https://www.2414now.net/about-us/>

To Report: CPM engagement or progress contact Justin D. Long at Justin@justinlong.org

To view the entire Movement Data Dashboard go to: <https://www.2414now.net>