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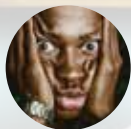> —Psalm 96:3

It is Said That the Only Constant in Life is *Change*

BY **RICK WOOD**

Editor of *Mission Frontiers*
rick.wood@frontierventures.org

EDITORIAL

Things are changing all around us every day with increasing speed. Some of it is good and some of it is bad. But in all cases, we are forced to adapt to the new realities that change brings. Some people adapt easily to change, and others do not. For 45 years now, Frontier Ventures has proclaimed the biblical mandate to reach all peoples with the gospel of Jesus Christ, but the realities on the mission field are changing. That is what this issue is all about. How does the promise of God to Abraham in Gen. 12:3 to bless all the families of the earth through him match up with the tectonic shifts now taking place in the world today? Is that promise still valid in a rapidly changing world? Many of the forces impacting us today such as technology, globalization, migration, urbanization and rapid communication and travel are also impacting the unreached peoples, reshaping their relationships, communities and self-identity. The impact of these changes in terms of mission strategy is like sticking the peoples of the world, their cultures, languages and traditions in a blender and then trying to figure out where to start in reaching them. It is a significant challenge for the Church going forward, but a few simple principles can help us make sense of it all.

Change is Nothing New

The fact is, ever since the promise came to Abraham to bless all peoples, the tribes, clans, families, peoples and nations of the earth have experienced continual change. The problem in our day is that the rate of change is growing exponentially, making it difficult to cope with a rapidly changing people group picture. Tracking these changes becomes a real data challenge for ministries like Joshua Project.

You Just Have to Be There

As good as Joshua Project is, and they are very good indeed at what they do, there is no way to perfectly understand the massive changes happening on the ground within thousands of peoples without intensive study of the situation on site in each people by capable workers. The wonderful data that Joshua Project provides is a great place to start for any workers seeking to reach a particular people. But once onsite, the mission workers learn what is really going on and develop the creative strategies required for the situation. And that info needs to get back to Joshua Project more consistently so others can learn from the information gathered onsite.

The concept of people groups says that the gospel will spread naturally from person to person within a people group until it meets barriers of understanding and acceptance. Ralph Winter often said that you won't know how many Church Planting Movements are required until you get to the mission field and figure out where the boundaries of each people group are. When you run up against those boundaries you need a new effort to get the gospel into a new people group. With the global forces now impacting each unreached people in a

myriad of ways, being onsite is even more necessary to understand where the barriers to understanding and acceptance are.

Let the People Be Your Guide

When you get to an unreached people your first step is to figure out what is going on. Initially, the intricacies of the various relationships will be a mystery, but finding the Persons of Peace will be the key to understanding and reaching any people group. If you work through a Person of Peace, they will be your guide to trusted relationships in starting Discovery Groups. Yes, regardless of the complexities on the field the Disciple Making Movement approach is key to understanding and working with complex relational networks. As Discovery Groups are formed, you can train people to reach out to their own networks of relationships and the gospel will spread naturally along the lines of friends, family, clans, tribes, etc. Our job is to lead people to Jesus and equip them to reach their own. They can do a far better job of it than we can and they already know the complexities of their community relationships. When the gospel stops spreading, that is your clue that you have reached a boundary of a people and a new work is needed in a different people. The application of DMM principles will help us navigate the changing world of tribes, tongues, peoples and nations.

A New Address for Frontier Ventures

Please note on the contents page and back cover that the address for Frontier Ventures has changed. The old address of 1605 E. Elizabeth Street, Pasadena CA 91104, will no longer be the headquarters for Frontier Ventures. This is a major change for us after 45 years. See the masthead at the bottom of the contents page for the latest contact information for address changes, new subscriptions etc.

Support the Work of Mission Frontiers

As is the case with most publications, *Mission Frontiers* cannot cover its costs from subscriptions alone. We need additional funds from those who believe in this ministry and are willing to sacrifice to help us move forward in casting vision for Kingdom Movements in all peoples. Like most of the people who work for Frontier Ventures, my salary is supplied by the donations of churches and friends who believe in what I am doing. And also like many staff members at Frontier Ventures, there are many months when not enough comes in to fully cover our allotted salary. To donate to my ministry with *MF* go to www.frontierventures.org and click on the Donate button. Put MA 323 in the dialog box. If you would like to help *MF* cover its general expenses and expand its influence, go to the same web address, given above, click on the Donate button and put MA 030 in the dialog box. We greatly appreciate whatever you can do to help *Mission Frontiers* and Frontier Ventures continue its work to see Kingdom Movements emerge in all peoples. 🅼🅵

The Changing Shape of

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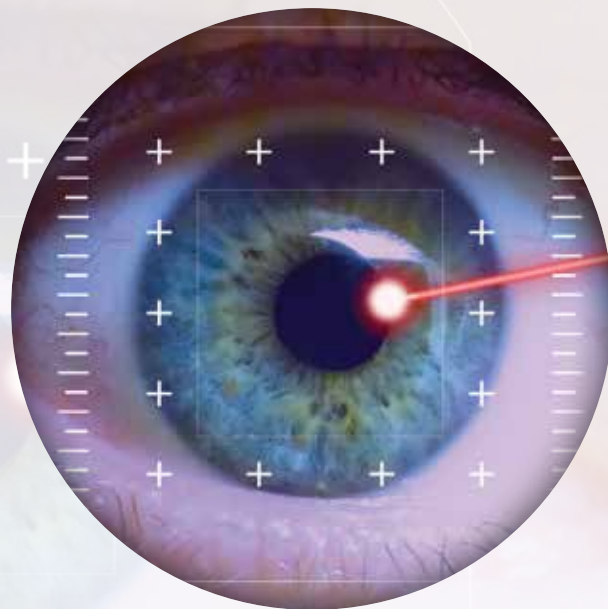
Reimagining & Re-envisioning People Groups

BY **LEONARD N. BARTLOTTI**

Leonard N. Bartlotti (Ph.D., Oxford Centre for Mission Studies) is a mission strategist, educator, speaker and consultant. After serving many years in Central Asia, Len now helps leaders, organizations, workers and churches maximize their ministry effectiveness.

In the sweeping narrative of Scripture, the focus of God's self-disclosure is the peoples of the world. The biblical image of "the people of God" makes sense only against the background of a tempestuous mix of other "peoples," from which God selects one "holy nation" (Israel)—"you above all peoples" (Deuteronomy 10:15).[1] His ultimate purpose, however, is to dwell among a people from "*all* the families of the nations" (Psalm 22:27; 96:7; Revelation 7:9). "For once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God" (1 Peter 2:10). From the standpoint of creation, redemption and eternity, a world full of "peoples" reflects God's beauty, creativity, and love.

Rethinking people groups does not mean eliminating the concept but reimagining and re-envisioning it in light of twenty-first century realities. The essence of my discussion here is reflexive, consciously acknowledging our assumptions and preconceptions. It is also corrective, addressed not to critics but to those of us who embrace and advocate UPG missiology. In this article, I explore ways to reimagine people groups through an upgraded understanding of the concept itself and suggest steps to re-envision the UPG approach in order to maximize efforts to reach all peoples.[2]

Understanding "People Groups"

However, nuanced in the minds of mission scholars, popularly and in practice, "unreached people groups" are primarily "ethno-linguistic" in nature. Criteria related to ethnicity and language dominate.[3] This is reflected in databases where a "people group" is defined as "an ethno-linguistic group with a common self-identity that is shared by the various members."[4]

The shorthand definition has advantages. It is easily communicated and marketed. "Peoples" as "ethnic groups" can be named, profiled, objectified, enumerated, and portrayed in pictures, videos and media. Another advantage is the appearance of an uncomplicated "this equals that" correspondence with Scripture: every identifiable ethnic people and language today[5] is represented in the eschatological multitude (Revelation 7:9; 5:9). This is highly motivational.

One obvious problem, recognized by Ralph Winter, is that from the beginning, the "people group" concept was intended to include "socio-peoples"—groups formed on the basis of other affinities like "shared interest, activity,

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1 In the social, cultural and historical context of the Old Testament, each "nation" was distinguished by name, ethnicity, language, territory, kingship, history, and a religious system marked by lessor "gods" (idolatry) and depravity. See A. J. Köstenberger, "Nations," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, eds. T. D. Alexander and B. S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000, electronic ed.), 676. For example, texts from Anatolia (Asia Minor) c. 1700-1200 BC point to a region inhabited by a number of distinct peoples, including the Hittites, Luwians, Palaians, Hurrians, and Hattians. In the Hittite Empire, from the 14th C BCE, "the ethnic and cultural pluralism still increased as the political expansionism added further foreign elements to 'Hittite' culture" (Manfred Hutter, "Religion in Hittite Anatolia: Some Comments on 'Volkert Haas: Geschichte der Hethitischen Religion,'" *Numen* 44, no. 1 (Jan., 1997): 74–90. Each of these nations "had its own pantheon, and individual cult centres had their own names for deities." ("Religions of the Hittites, Hattians, and Hurrians," https://www.britannica.com/topic/Anatolian-religion/Religions-of-the-Hittites-Hattians-and-Hurrians).

2 Portions of this article are based on my paper "Rethinking Ethnicity: Implications for the People Group Approach," presented to the Rethinking People Groups Forum, Dallas, TX, September 11, 2019. I wish to express my appreciation to the participants for their helpful comments and feedback.

3 The first lists were based in part on SIL's *Ethnologue*, a catalog of the world's languages.

4 https://peoplegroups.org/. Cf. https://JoshuaProject.net also based on language and ethnicity, and the geographic distribution of such groups.

5 The question of the historical genesis, assimilation and disappearance of other people groups is left unanswered.

or occupation.[6] Can we really envision these "shared interest" groups in the heavenly throng? While this is evangelistically pragmatic, I suggest it is an interpretive leap, and thus an imaginative mandate.

While ethno-linguistic groups provide a helpful baseline, we need to look at the challenge of reimagining "ethnicity," "ethnic groups" and "ethnic identity" in light of more recent thinking. Given the primary UPG orientation toward "ethno-linguistic," that is the focus of this discussion.[7] Historically within the social sciences, understandings of ethnicity can be summarized into three general categories: primordialist, instrumentalist and constructivist.

Primordialist

In this view, ethnicity is understood as having a real, tangible foundation, based either on *kinship* and sociobiological factors, or on shared cultural *traits*, practices, and history. We could say that, for the former, ethnicity is "in the heart" or "in the blood," and for the second, ethnicity is "in the cultural stuff"—distinctive "traits" or "surface markers" of identity (language, dress, food, etc.). The "in the heart" or "in the blood" approach is commonly emic, i.e. how peoples see themselves. Ethnic groups are viewed as "quasi-kinship" or "extended kin" groups.[8]

Historically viewed as primordial and fixed, ethnic groups were objectified, documented, and categorized (e.g., "martial races"). Elements of their heritage and culture (including material culture) were institutionalized, sometimes immortalized, in books, journals, ethnographies, histories, memoirs, short stories, movies, and museums.[9]

Instrumentalist

Fredrik Barth's seminal work *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969) marked a turning point and "shift from a static to *interactional approaches* to ethnicity."[10] Barth "abandons the notion that cultures are clearly bounded, separated and homogeneous units."[11] The focus is not on cultural traits, but on dynamic interactions, ways people embrace, constrain, act on and experience ethnicity, and "imagine the ethnic community." Individuals choose and change their ethnic identity, particularly at the boundaries between groups.

In this view, ethnicity functions as a *tool*, an aspect of the way people organize themselves depending on social circumstances.[12] Individuals and groups are actors, versus merely passive recipients of "culture" or heritage. They use cultural resources to pursue personal or communal advantage in particular settings and contexts. This focus reveals that "ethnic groups and their features are produced under *particular interactional, historical, economic and political circumstances; they are highly situational, not primordial.*"[13]

6 Ralph Winter tried but failed to prevent the reduction of "people groups" to ethnolinguistic criteria alone. Dave Datema, "Defining 'Unreached': A Short History," *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 33, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 55. Discussions of UPGs usually include sociopeoples; due to considerations of space, I concentrate on the category of ethnicity. Winter and Koch see strategic value in working with sociopeoples "for preliminary evangelism" as an "intermediate bridge to long-range church planting goals… giving a focus for ministry among a specific sub-set of the larger society as a first step to full-blown church planting." They consider ethnolinguistic groups primary because of their endurance as endogamous, multi-generational quasi-kinship groups. Ralph D. Winter and Bruce A. Koch, "Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge", in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 4th Ed., eds. Ralph D. Winter & Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 535.

7 For a helpful overview of the significant literature and issues, see Marcus Banks, *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions* (London: Routledge, 1996); cf. Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations* (London: Sage Publications, 1997; 2nd edition 2008), "Identity" is one of the most widely researched subjects in every field of the social sciences. I use "identity" here as a social category (referring to a set of distinguishable persons), as well as a personal category (individual actors with self-consciousness). Cf. James D. Fearon, "What is Identity (As We Now Use the Word)?", 1999, https://web.stanford.edu/group/fearon-research/cgi-bin/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/What-is-Identity-as-we-now-use-the-word-.pdf.

8 "Ethnicity," what-when-how.com. The assumption that one's identity is "in the blood" is a driver behind commercials for Ancestry.com. Discovering they have DNA from multiple sites in Eastern Europe or Africa, a person says, "I was grateful. I just felt more connected to who I am." The DNA approach actually reinforces the opposite: It's not really "Who I am" even though one may "feel more connected." Based on test results, individuals make conscious choices, creating a symbolic ethnic representation of their reconstructed identity using identity "markers" (dress, food, etc.).

9 Anthropologists and some missiologists today acknowledge the power imbalances that shaped colonial anthropology, the colonialist paradigm of "tribe," and missionary approaches. Power dynamics continue to influence ethnicities e.g., through the nation state (which "names" and objectifies constituent "minorities"), international bodies, and social institutions (e.g., schools, universities).

10 Hans Vermeulen and Cora Govers, eds., "Introduction," *The Anthropology of Ethnicity: Beyond "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries"* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1994), 2 (emph. added).

11 Vermeulen and Govers, *The Anthropology of Ethnicity*, 5.

12 Vermeulen and Cora Govers, *The Anthropology of Ethnicity*, 2 (emph. added), 1–9; cf. Richard E. Blanton's discussion of Barth's in-group and between-group "visual signaling," i.e. ethnic-specific behaviors constitute "a system of signals" to establish a boundary difference between groups, and to confirm belonging and commitment to the value-orientations of the community, in "Theories of ethnicity and the dynamics of ethnic change in multiethnic societies," *PNAS* 112, no. 30 (July 28, 2015): 9177. https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/112/30/9176.full.pdf. Cf. http://www.chuckiii.com/Reports/Sociology/In_what_ways_is_identity_a_social_construct.shtml.

13 Vermeulen and Govers, *The Anthropology of Ethnicity*, 12, emph. added. See Ronald Cohen, "Ethnicity: Problem and Focus in Anthropology," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 7 (October 1978): 379–403, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.07.100178.002115.

Constructivist

Barth's work led to greater emphasis on the *contextual and situational processes* of ethnic identity. Ethnicity can be mobilized contextually and situationally, "in the contexts of different 'levels' and 'contextual horizons.' "[14] Identities are reconstituted, negotiated and contested in a dynamic process of self-other interaction.

Both the instrumentalist and constructivist approaches reflect a post-modern view of culture. Identities are socially constructed, not fixed but changeable (within certain constraints).[15] Individuals maintain multiple identities and use ethnicity as a set of "diacritic" or "distinguishing markers" and tools for social engagement.

It is fairly obvious that Christian websites, mission agencies and literature tend to display an unquestioned reliance on the primordialist ("in the blood" and "in the stuff") view of ethnicity, ethnic groups and identity. "People profiles" have become a kind of literary sub-genre![16] Unfortunately, among other problems this static approach too often rests on little or no contemporary ethnographic confirmation.

Mission thought leaders tried to account for complexity (e.g., sociopeoples, unimax, diaspora). But the above considerations are largely absent in the way the UPG movement today organizes data and conceives of peoples. By veiling reality, static categories fail to convey the dynamism and fluidity of UPGs. This sometimes leads to unrefined strategies, engagements and priorities.[17] In an interconnected, urbanized, globalized, mobile and changing world, we need to re-envision our approach.

14   "Ethnicity," what-when-how.com.

15   Since ethnic identity involves ascription, what others acknowledge or recognize, constraints related to heritage and cultural "givens" may apply, e.g., a Punjabi is unlikely to be accepted as Afghan.

16   Buttressed by stereotypic descriptions of shared "traits," some attractive (e.g., "generous hospitality," "colorful dress," "love music and dance"), and others from the "dark side" (e.g., "fierce warriors", deceit, blood feuds, seclusion of women), these caricatures are presumed to be relevant to mobilization, prayer and compassion. In one case, researchers cited Wikipedia as the major source of their information on a people group. A quick check revealed that over 90% of the Wikipedia citations were from newspapers and magazines. Other (readily available) scholarly sources (e.g., peer reviewed articles, books, ethnographies, dissertations and theses, etc.) were neglected.

17   This is not to disparage well-intentioned efforts to describe UPGs that have fostered awareness and global prayer. Some have argued that, however inaccurate or static, "Something is better than nothing! We do not have to pray 'with our understanding' in order to be heard!" The problem is what happens next: bad information—inaccurate, insufficient, un- or misinformed, distorted, stereotypical or promotion-driven—can lead to mis-guided agency decisions, wasted efforts and funding, unwise field initiatives, and unintended consequences among the peoples we aspire to reach.

Re-envisioning Approaches

Brad Gill, President of the International Society for Frontier Missiology, notes the "new conditions that are pressing us to reimagine these frontiers." Gill calls for a move beyond the "subtle 'group think'" of our mission organizations, and the language and categories that may "unintentionally restrict our perception" and "blunt our imagination."[18]

Toward that end, I suggest we need a new *flexible, multi-level model of people groups* that works for multiple contextual horizons. We need to reimagine our understandings of UPGs and re-envision strategies for reaching them. I propose four conceptual steps to help us develop a multi-level model and re-envisioned approach.

Triangular Field of Meaning

First, we need a reshaped model of people groups, one that enables us to understand them over a *"triangular field of meaning"* rather than a single lens.[19] Based on our earlier discussion, we can think of ethno-linguistic people groups and identities from three intersecting perspectives, like three corners of a field. See Figure 11.1.
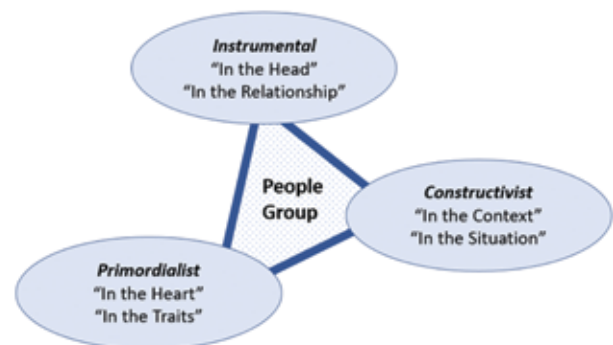
Figure 11.1

18   Brad Gill, "Reimagining Frontier Mission," *IJFM* 36, no. 3 (Fall 2019): 111–118; cf. "ISFM 2019 and the "Reimagining of Frontier Mission," *IJFM* 36, no. 4 (Winter 2019): 161–2.

19   This phrase is borrowed from M.A. Seifrid's explanation of the Pauline phrase "In Christ" as moving within a "triangular field of meaning" between three ideas of locality, instrumentality and modality, in Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid and Gerald F. Hawthorne, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (InterVarsity Press, 1993, e-edition), *loc. cit.*

At one corner of the field, ethnicity is seen "in the heart" or "blood" and "in the traits" or "stuff" of culture. Since, as Geertz reminds us, "cultures are systems of meaning," we need to take these seriously. Communities find symbolic meaning in notions of heritage, land and extended kinship, and elements like language, religion, festivals, food, dress, and music. At another corner, we see "in the head" and "in the relationship," how individuals/groups use aspects of culture as tools for action, instruments to accomplish social ends. Knowing that ethnic identity is also variable "in the context"—constructed, negotiated, contested, self-assumed or ascribed by others—makes us alert to dynamics "in the situation."

In order to have a clearer understanding of UPGs, and to devise more appropriate strategies, we must be able to move subtly and adeptly between these three viewpoints. They are not mutually exclusive. Note, too, that this apparent deconstruction does not eliminate "groupness," but rather reconfigures it more dynamically. To be honest and accurate, ethnicity is also "in the observer's head" (us): We are using "ethnicity" as an analytical tool to make sense of what we see.[20] These etic understandings are appropriate if we are aware of potential biases.

Dynamic Models

Second, we need more dynamic models of people group interaction and social bonding, especially in multi-ethnic, urban and diaspora contexts.

For example, a Kazakh in Turkey preserves Kazakh ethnicity, but constructs a Turkish Kazakh identity. This allows him/her to negotiate more advantageous social connections and a sense of belonging.[21] Migration also fosters a more fluid ethnic identity.

Minority Senegalese (e.g., Seereer) in Dakar adopt vernacular "urban Wolof" as the *lingua franca.* The process of "Wolofization" affects not only language, but also ethnicity. A new "Wolof" identity is constructed, especially among the second generation. As one Pulaar-speaking elementary school teacher reported, "At home I'm Haalpulaar, when I'm in Dakar, I'm Wolof," This suggests "a new urban identity rather than a switch in ethnicity." Depending on the context and interaction, residents may reject an ethno-linguistic identifier and simply say, as did one professor, "I'm from Dakar…that's the new ethnicity now in Senegal, to be from Dakar."[22]

A similar dynamic was observed in Afghanistan. "Kabuli" (people from the capital of Kabul) describes a Persianized urban identity that, while not negating ethnic heritage, influences social relationships and values. Kabulis (Pashtun and Tajik) mix freely and have been more receptive to the gospel than their rural cousins.[23]

Case studies from South Africa, the Netherlands, Mexico, Sweden, the United States, Brazil, Israel, Germany, and Singapore, demonstrate strategies that transnational newcomers and students use to negotiate identity. Some adapt with "situational ethnicity" (hiding or asserting traits situationally). Alternatively, others adopt (or accept an imposed) "hyphenated identity."[24]

In each case, adaptive identities both reflect and affect an ethnic community's interaction with other peoples and the larger society. This has important implications for evangelism and church planting. These dynamics influence a group's sense of belonging, possibilities for bonding with existing fellowships, and/or the need for new movements or compound models of church.

20 Banks, *Ethnicity*, 185. We should also note here the gradual "in our head" shifts in nomenclature from "race" and "tribe" to "culture" and "ethnic group," and (within missiology) "homogeneous unit" to "people group."

21 Kazakh ethnic identity is preserved through ethnic celebrations, meetings that maintain cultural practices, and speaking Kazakh at home, while constructing a new hybrid identity based on shared religion (Islam) and Turkic roots, and the adoption of new practices, preferences and self-identity. See e.g., Yeniceri, Aslihan, "Hybridization and Kazakh ethnic identity formation" (Graduate Theses and Dissertations, Iowa State University, 2015), https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/38939730.pdf.

22 Fiona McLaughlin, "The Ascent of Wolof as an Urban Vernacular and National Lingua Franca in Senegal," in eds. Cécile B. Vigouroux and Salikoko S. Mufwene, *Globalization and Language Vitality: Perspectives from Africa* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2008, e-book), 142–170, https://www.google.com/books/edition/_/J5mvAwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=PA142&dq=Ethnic+identity+and+linguistic+hybridization+in+Senegal.

23 Internally displaced people and returnees from Iran, Pakistan and elsewhere and have swelled Kabul to over 5 million people; according to reports, ethnicity is a more salient identity among them, and the term Kabuli does not apply.

24 Edmund T Hamann and William England, "Conclusion – Hyphenated Identities as a Challenge to Nation-State School Practice?" (Faculty Publications: Department of Teaching, Learning and Teacher Education, 109, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 2011), https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1109&context=teachlearnfacpub. Note the political and power dynamics when a "hyphenated identity" is ascribed by a government or school.

To illustrate this, imagine from high school chemistry how an element like Oxygen can combine with other elements to form molecules (atoms held together by chemical bonds) See Figure 11.2. The analogy isn't perfect, but similarly, we need to envision people groups in a more "combinable" way. With whom, how, when, and in what contexts members of a community affirm "bonds," develop or reject affinities—these are questions relevant to the disciple making and church planting process.
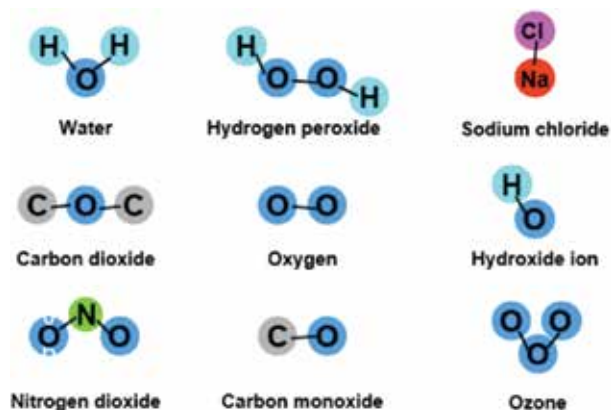

Figure 11.2

Figure 11.2. Like molecules, members of a people group bond with others in different ways, depending on the context.

Note that this dynamism assumes the importance of "place," sensitivity to context, and the relational and situational character of ethnicity. In some contexts, communal structures are tight. In urban and diaspora settings, people often negotiate relational worlds with feelings of multiple belonging or "hybridity." Ethnic and faith identities persist, but may or may not be foregrounded.[25]

There are no perfect analogies, but for higher levels of data, we need to deploy new conceptual images and sensibilities. We need to discern peoples, places and populations where the gospel has yet to exert its catalytic force. Pioneer workers must be keen observers and "barefoot ethnographers." As urban missiologist Alan McMahan puts it, we need to be better "glue sniffers" to figure out the types and strengths of "glue" that hold people together in different networks and contexts.[26]

Multiple Tiers of Data

Third, re-envisioning people groups requires "ethnographic imagination"[27] and multiple tiers of data. The shift from a reductionist, segmented model to one that is multi-perspectival, dynamic, and field based should include:

- *processes*, social chemistry and facts on the ground;
- how *commonality* (faith, city, ethnic, nationality) is imagined or sought;
- how *difference* is encountered and dealt with;
- *intercultural* relationships, bridges and barriers between peoples;
- *diaspora* and *transnational* connections;
- styles and modes of *communication*;
- *lessons learned* from historical efforts and previous approaches;
- current *conditions*, socio-political *change* and *crises*;
- *receptivity* of sub-groups (e.g., youth, immigrants) and associations;
- *proximate* cross-cultural witnesses;
- *incorporability* into existing fellowships and churches;
- associational *bridges* (believers with organic, relational connections);
- *media* and evangelistic resources;
- ongoing *assessments* and research;
- *discernment* of what the Holy Spirit is doing.

Obviously, this data is not needed for mobilization. What we know now is sufficient for prayer and obedience!

Greater detail and refinement, what we might call "Second Tier" and "Third Tier" data, take us to a deeper level of understanding and empathy. This is useful for national research, on-site strategy, outreach and church planting. To gather, track, share, and evaluate field-generated knowledge will necessitate data-sharing platforms, secure communications, and greater collaboration in knowledge stewardship. This re-envisioning of information requires

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25 "A person can simultaneously hold allegiances to a neighborhood, a city, a region, a country, or a continent, or be a transmigrant in a world city or, yet, a global nomad, an employee of a transnational corporation." See https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/computer-science/identity-construction. Cf. Jenkins, who notes that globalization does not always dilute ethnic identification: local and ethnic identity "each may (re)assert itself either as a defensive reaction to, or a result of, the increasingly global context of social life" (*Rethinking Ethnicity*, 2nd ed.), 45. For the way pan-Islamist sentiments can "coexist" with local forms of Muslim identity, see Darryl Li, "Taking the Place of Martyrs: Afghans and Arabs Under the Banner of Islam," *Arab Studies Journal* 20, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 12–39, https://ssrn.com/abstract=2262478.

26 Rethinking People Groups Forum, Dallas, TX (September 13, 2019).

27 I borrow this term from Paul Willis, *The Ethnographic Imagination* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2000).

a broader range of inputs.[28] For security and practical reasons, we cannot "patch" this Second- and Third-Tier information onto our current segmented databases.

This points to another glaring gap: By and large, field workers feel divorced from the missiological conversation! Many workers complain that "nobody is listening" to them. If we are to move forward, it is essential for field workers to map the context. "Often field-based personnel are in the best position to assess whether a people group is adequately engaged, and their relative access to the Gospel…. These contextual ethnographic realities… provide important indicators for new initiatives."[29] Another way to address the disparity is through "Case Studies" that illuminate the complexities of pioneer church planting and provide "thick descriptions" of a people, event, or issue for analysis, training and application.[30]

A multi-tiered, multi-perspectival database must be functional and flexible; view people groups from multiple contextual horizons; promote communities of learning and practice across organizational lines; and contribute to sandals-on-the-ground fruitfulness. Field accessibility is critical.[31]

Re-envisioning the People of God

Finally, we need to re-envision the church as the "people of God," with a shared consciousness that celebrates yet transcends every local identity. We might revitalize this image in relation to incorporability, multi-ethnicity, and church movements.

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28 See Scribner, this issue. As Scribner admits, "Global people group lists, as currently conceived and structured, cannot support dynamic groupings."

29 Leonard N. Bartlotti, "Refining Our Strategies for Engaging All Peoples," *IJFM* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2010): 21–26, https://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/27_3_PDFs/refining_bartlotti.pdf.

30 Case studies are commonly used in the social sciences, and famously, by the Harvard Business School. They can be explanatory, exploratory, descriptive, comparative, or instrumental. See e.g., Baxter, Pamela and Susan Jack, "Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers," *The Qualitative Report* 13, no. 4 (Dec 2008): 544–559, http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR13-4/baxter.pdf. For a simple introduction to the research concept of "thick description" (promoted by anthropologists Gilbert Ryle and Clifford Geertz) and helpful sources, see Chris Drew, "5 Key Principles of 'Thick Description' in Research" (2020), https://helpfulprofessor.com/thick-description/.

31 After a few years on the field, many workers pursue an M.A. or Ph.D. While this contributes to new knowledge, unfortunately, the knowledge tends to be individualized, constrained within publishing channels, or siloed in academia or individual ministries. There appear to be few mechanisms for translating insights into community learning and upgrading of field praxis.

A Place to Belong

Christian faith is "embodied" in churches. This is the *telos*, the end and purpose, of frontier missions: viable, indigenous, growing church movements among all peoples.

The gospel cannot be said to be accessible if church is not accessible. The invitation to believe in Christ is an invitation to receive not only "forgiveness of sins," but also "*a place among those* who are sanctified by faith in me" (Acts 26:17–18). The church is a place for all peoples (Isaiah 56:6–8; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:13–16). "A place to belong" is at the heart of the gospel!

Consequently, for mission purposes, the notion of "unreached peoples" is intrinsically linked to a concept Ralph Winter called "*incorporability.*"

Thus, for both spiritual and practical reasons, I would be much more pleased to talk about the presence of a church allowing people to be *incorporated*, or the absence of a church leaving people *unincorporable* instead of *unreached*. I feel it would be better to try to observe, not whether people are "saved" or not or somehow "reached" or not, but first whether an individual has been incorporated in a believing fellowship or not, and secondly, if a person is not incorporated, does he have the opportunity *within his cultural tradition* to be so incorporated.[32]

The "opportunity within his cultural tradition to be so incorporated" refers to the presence, or absence, of a truly viable, truly indigenous church. If people cannot be incorporated, if existing fellowships are not accessible —due to "barriers of understanding or acceptance"—to other peoples, then a new version of church is needed.

Ethnic Realities and Evangelistic Potential

We must re-envision "churches" in relation to the peoples around them. In his book *Ethnic Realities and the Church: Lessons from India*, Donald McGavran, father of the Church Growth Movement, categorized Indian churches there into nine "types." He described them based on

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32 For insightful reflections on Winter's notion of incorporability, see Brad Gill, "The Unfortunate Unmarketability of 'Unincorporable,'" from which this quote is taken, http://ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/33_2_PDFs/IJFM_33_2-EditorialReflections.pdf.

their *"varying degrees of ethnicity"* as well as their *"evangelistic potential,"*[33] their "different relationships *to* and degrees of acceptance *by* the 'yet to believe.'"[34]

The dual concepts of "degrees of ethnicity" and "evangelistic potential" may be useful to re-envision churches in multiethnic and UPG-proximate settings. In Indonesia, an over 150,000-person multiethnic urban conglomerate with contemporary worship in the *lingua franca* Bahasa Indonesia, includes at least 3,000 Muslim background believers from a UPG![35] But to *maximize* the "evangelistic potential" of these migrant urbanites requires equipping some to *reach out* to their ethnic neighbors, and training others to *reach back* to their ethnic homeland to catalyze vernacular movements.

Church Growth Where There is No Church

We need to re-envision the connection between the frontier missions and the church growth. Amidst the global flow of goods, ideas, and people, mega-, multiethnic, and urban/regional house church networks are thriving from Argentina and Chile, to Nigeria, India, and Indonesia, as well as the West. Despite common roots and exceptions, the two streams are largely disconnected professionally and missionally.[36] Reestablishing synergy and sharing resources would advance an "all peoples" vision.

UPG enthusiasts need to deconstruct categories and recognize that church movements need not be monoethnic to engage and penetrate UPGs. Gospel freedom allows and celebrates, but does not demand, homogeneous ethnic churches. Some church movements involve ethnic blends, with homogeneity in evangelism, and heterogeneity in discipleship. Others facilitate homogeneity in smaller relational circles, and heterogeneity in larger ones. Homogeneity may suit first generation immigrants, but heterogeneity, the children of immigrants (e.g., pan-Asian and pan-Latino churches).

33 (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1979), 25, 64–65, emph. added, https://books.google.com/books?id=XCaLJq3ADQgC&printsec=-frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false.

34 Ibid., 2–3.

35 I am indebted to Alan McMahan for this example. It should be noted that this urban conglomerate church did not intentionally evangelize along ethnic lines or leverage ethnicity.

36 Note e.g., that the two representative professional networks (International Society for Frontier Missiology, and the Great Commission Research Network) have separate journals, conferences, and non-overlapping attendees and speakers, despite many shared concepts, principles and practices related to evangelistic growth, movements, accessibility, receptivity, diversity, innovative models, ethnicity and incorporating people into the church.
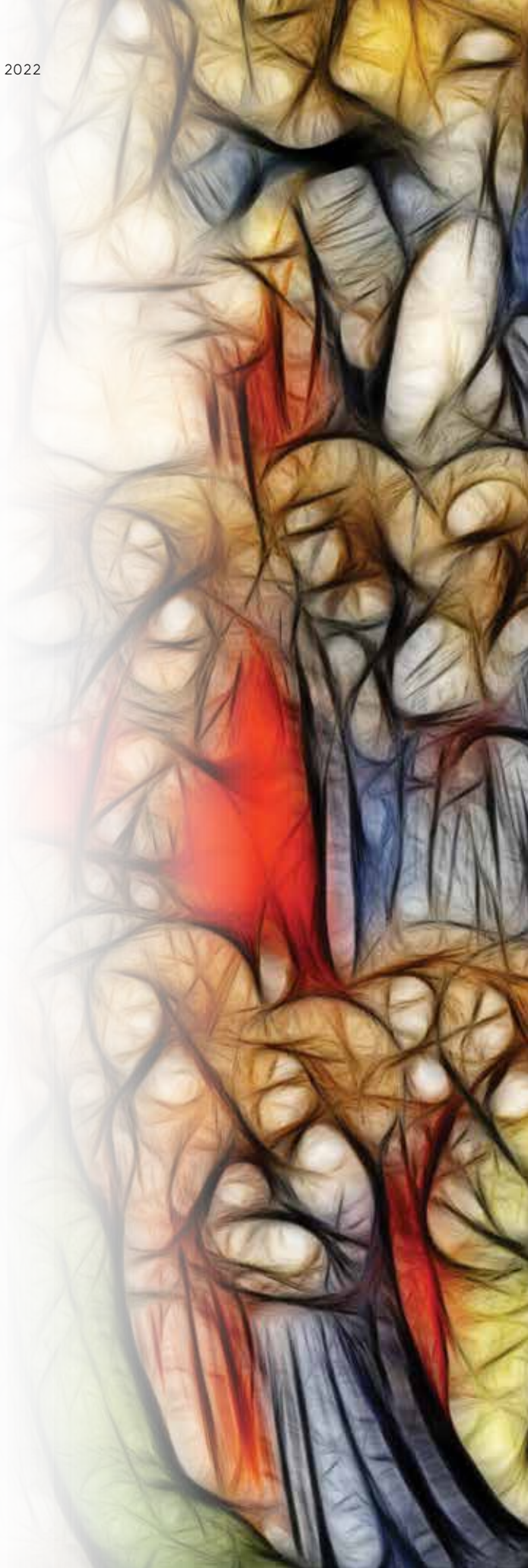
Other churches have an ethnically dominant group plus mixed cultural groups (e.g., Persian, Arab). Mobilizing urban conglomerate churches, house church networks, and proximate believers, and purposefully connecting diaspora disciple making with other frontier initiatives, would help revitalize movement toward UPGs.[37]

Conclusion

The concept of people groups takes us to the heart of the biblical narrative. The frontier mission movement must reimagine itself in light of global realities, the persistent needs of the unevangelized, and God's desire for a people from all peoples. We need to upgrade our understandings, envision new dynamic models, and leverage the evangelistic potential of the global church to impact the remaining UPGs.

The frontier mission movement often draws its inspiration from the panorama of radiant worship in Revelation 5:9–10. As New Testament scholar Gordon Fee outlines it, the "new song" acclaims the *means* of his redeeming act ("with your blood"), the *effect* of that sacrifice ("you purchased for God"), the *breadth* of redemption ("members of every tribe and language and people and nation"), its *goal* ("made…to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God…they will reign on the earth"), and God-centered, God-ordained *climax,* "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"[38] We are invited to respond both with *wonder* and adoration, and with faithful *cruciform witness* (Revelation 6:9–11; 19:10) to "the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (Revelation 1:2; 20:4) before all nations. (MF)

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37 See e.g., GlobalGates focused on UPGs in North America's megacities https://globalgates.info/. Certain "Advocacy Networks" focused around specific UPGs in Central Asia, West Africa and elsewhere, have also shown great promise in facilitating joint ventures in strategy, media, training, and recruiting, and placing workers in diaspora, transnational and homeland engagement points.

38 G. D. Fee, *Revelation: A New Covenant Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 88.

Lifting, Pushing, Squeezing and Blending The Dynamics of Ethnicity and Globalization

BY **BRAD GILL**

Brad Gill helped establish Frontier Ventures (the USCWM) in the 70s and then served for 12 years with his wife, Beth, among a Muslim people in North Africa. For the past decade he has been the editor of the *Int'l Journal of Frontier Missiology* (*IJFM*), and serves as president of the Int'l Society for Frontier Missiology (ISFM).

An emphasis on "people groups" has become a common way to map our mission to the world. It was not always so. When Donald McGavran emerged from caste-ridden India in the 1960s, evangelicals were confronted anew with the strategic role of social and cultural boundaries in world evangelization. The persistent individualism at the core of our Western gospel made many nervous at the idea that large, ethnically homogenous peoples could move so quickly and powerfully towards the gospel. The idea of group conversion remained suspect. Then, in 1974, when Ralph Winter used this controversial idea to map a new demography of "unreached" peoples, the idea of "people groups" began to find its place in mission vernacular.

> But the concept of people groups has always met with "friendly fire" from missionaries and mission anthropologists who have served among these unreached peoples.

But the concept of people groups has always met with "friendly fire" from missionaries and mission anthropologists who have served among these unreached peoples. Their profound critiques call us to reassess whether the social and cultural boundaries that define people groups will persist in today's shrinking world. The recent publication of Paul Hiebert's last two books provides one of the most comprehensive frameworks for this reassessment.[1] His rich, eclectic and nuanced anthropology probes the way modern social processes impact the distinctive boundaries of peoples across the world. And "people group" thinking is maturing as it absorbs these modern trends.

This topic reminds me of a conversation I had on the edge of the Sahara Desert. I rode with the son of a 90-year-old camel driver who had led caravans 11 times across the Sahara to Timbouctou. This son was raised with the same set of skills, but he had learned English amidst the burgeoning tourist industry, and he had recently married a European tourist. He was on his way to Europe, where she awaited. I happened to mention that I had made friends with some from his "Berougi" (people from the desert) years earlier when I worked in a city adjacent to his region. He immediately seemed uncomfortable and corrected my use of this ethnic term "Berougi." His people were not just from the desert, but they were exclusively from a prestigious lineage in the

1 Paul Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 2009.

desert. He and the "Berougi" were very reluctant to visit these cities where I had worked because of all the prejudice they had experienced there. Forced by the crisis of drought to leave their desert trade, it was easier for them (and for him) to access another part of the globe than to contend with a cultural firewall a few hundred miles away.

> "Everybody's trying to get their arms around this idea of globalization."

This young man represents the massive migrations and dispersions of peoples across the world. In the "push and pull" of this young man's story, I notice the interface of two social realities: ethnicity and globalization. The mixture of these two contested concepts is a new focus of many mission anthropologists, for together they seem to provide a new way to exegete the complex field of relations in and around people groups. Ethnicity refers to culture, a peoples' corporate sense of tradition, of shared value, belief and habit. Globalization, on the other hand, addresses the context of global change, and one's sense of place in the flow of it all. The convergence leads to the new "glocal" reality, and I could see it in this young camel driver's story. He carried both an ethnic identity with his people and a new relational link to a globalized world.

Everybody's trying to get their arms around this idea of globalization. Thomas Friedman calls it that "inexorable integration of markets, nation-states and technologies" that enables us "to reach around the world farther, faster, and cheaper than ever before."[2] It flattens our world. Fareed Zakaria of *Newsweek* suggests it's a "Post-American World," where the processes historically identified with "the rise of the West" now include "the rise of the Rest."[3]

The original Western carriers of education, media and technology have been decentralized into initiatives from other parts of the globe. Whatever the definition, globalization gives us a sense that modernity has shifted into overdrive.

So, do the ethnic boundaries of people groups persist, or does globalization rupture and flatten people groups into another social reality? I'd like to exegete four processes or effects of globalization on peoples of the world. They're tossed around by social scientists, but we see them all the time. They can be highly theoretical, so let me begin with another snapshot.

I can recall my initial idea of the Muslim people group I entered years ago: tribal, noble, a corporate sense of destiny and a coherent sense of religious tradition. My mental map held for a few weeks before adjustments began. I was rummaging through the old marketplace one day when I came across an ancient-looking gateway. Over the threshold it said, "Dior Shyukh" (the Houses of the Sheikhs). I discovered that 60 years earlier this had been the seat of government for the entire tribal confederation. Now it was run-down, forgotten and not even a tourist stop. My wife would tell me that all the women at the public bath knew where judgment was now handed down. They would gossip the latest intrigues from across that mountain town, and inevitably it all fastened on either the new courthouse or city hall. Modern institutions had grafted themselves onto this "people group." What initially seemed culturally solid, bounded and corporate was actually looser, fragmented and conflicted.

Lifting

First, there is a hint here of what Anthony Giddens calls the "lifting out" of local relations.[4] The global reach of modern systems is pervasive; these systems begin to subtly redirect the trust persons have traditionally placed in local face-to-face commitments. Making a call on a cell phone, getting water from the kitchen sink or going to the bank are all actions which imply a realignment of trust towards modern, global systems. Consequently,

2 Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, N.Y., 2005.

3 Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World*, W.W.Norton, N.Y., 2008.

4 Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Blackwell, U.K. 1990, p. 21.

trust in traditional relations slowly surrenders its grip to faceless and anonymous global systems. One is gradually lifted out of what was once a more inclusive sense of people group.

Pushing

Second, there's the "push down" effect.[5] Globalization doesn't just pull you up and out, it presses down and creates new demand for ethnic autonomy. It makes the boundaries of people groups become more salient. This downward pressure has been a major catalyst in the astounding revival of local ethnic identities in recent decades (which really surprised mainline social science). When the lid comes off, as it did in Yugoslavia with the collapse of the Soviet Union, it exposes the reality of this "push down" effect. The nature of the ethnic explosion between Serbian, Croat and Bosnian Muslim is manifest in similar ways across a swath of nations in recent decades.

I could see this downward pressure in the Kurdish region I visited. Here's an entire region of displaced Muslims who had to flee the genocidal onslaught of Saddam Hussein. A "no-fly zone" granted them

security, and they had come out of the hills to reestablish their worlds. Amidst the displacement and fragmentations, there was a resurgence of ethnic identity. Boom-town cities were expanding, with new high-rise buildings everywhere. I noted that one tribal group of 20,000 had relocated and settled together in a suburban area, keeping intact their sense of tribal identity and traditional tribal leadership after 25 years of exile. Their ethnic autonomy isn't melting down.

Squeezing

Third, globalization can "squeeze sideways." Amidst the pressure of global systems, a single meaningful aspect of a peoples' identity can move laterally and link itself with others who share the same aspect. Economists note this in new economic zones, but by far the most vital aspect of identity that squeezes sideways is religious. The religious core of ethnicity intensifies and moves sideways, galvanizing large religious association. We've seen how the recent radical "Islamic jihad" forges together Muslims from all over the globe. What fuels this? It could be that abstract and impersonal global systems fail to provide the psychological reward that comes with personal face-to-face ties. Religion becomes the means by which people "re-imbed" themselves in meaningful relations. We see the markers of this broad ethno-religious identity almost everywhere.

5 Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World*, Routledge, N.Y., 2009, p. 13.

How else can one explain the teenage Muslim girl at our local high school whose head is fully covered, but who wears a halter-top and tight cut-off shorts and who hums to the cadence of a heavy metal Middle Eastern tune on her iPod?

Blending

All these effects contribute to a fourth, "blending" effect, what social scientists call "hybridity", or "hybridities" since we see it in many forms and combinations.[6] In mission circles this subject of hybridity began with the observation that large people movements for Christ happened in rural settings, not in urban settings. In the city the inclusive categories of family, clan, and tribe were more complicated as people joined, attended or aligned themselves with modern institutions and associations. The religion and culture of people groups is intersected by new educational and vocational affiliations. And it's in the urban environment that people feel the hyper-effects of global "lifting out," "pushing down" and "squeezing sideways." Ethnicity doesn't necessarily disappear, it just gets compartmentalized as people construct their identities.

So what are we to conclude? Do these effects add up to anything we can calculate or map out? I'm not the one to prognosticate, so I won't. But on the field, I have found that understanding these processes and effects helps me to better understand the intentions and reactions of Muslim peoples among whom I've served. So allow me to venture just three modest observations.

First, I think we can expect that ethnicity will have a new intensity in light of globalization. It will hold, but among many peoples it will hold differently. Ethnicity will be held more deliberately, more defensively, even more defiantly. In the congestion and pressure of globalization, peoples will continue to construct their social boundaries, but even more so. The forces of globalization may continue to be successful in assimilating traditional worlds to modern life. But should we anticipate a kick-back effect, where people recreate a lost ethnicity in reaction to the psychological homelessness of modern life?

> Ethnicity doesn't necessarily disappear, it just gets compartmentalized as people construct their identities.

Second, I concur with Robert Priest that it's not a time to relax our anthropological analyses. On the contrary, more sophisticated tools are needed to inform mission practice.[7]

Third, let's remember that our motive for sifting and sorting mankind is to honor and obey the God who created every people, "who determined the times set for them, and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:26,27). MF

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6 Ted C. Lewellen, *The Anthropology of Globalization*, Bergin & Garvey, 2002, p. 98.

7 Brian Howell and Edwin Zehner, *Power and Identity in the Global Church*, William Carey Library, 2009, p.185.

People Groups and the Bible

The following article is a condensed and revised version of an original article published in *Missiology: An International Review* (49:3), 2021, entitled "The Universal Particularism of Panta ta Ethne: a Biblical Case for the Continued Viability of the People Group Concept in Mission." Used with permission from Sage Publishing.

BY **DAVE EARL DATEMA**

Dave Earl Datema (dave.datema@frontierventures.org) serves as Missiology Catalyst for Frontier Ventures. He has served in various roles within Frontier Ventures since 1999. Dave is married with four children and lives in Pasadena, CA.
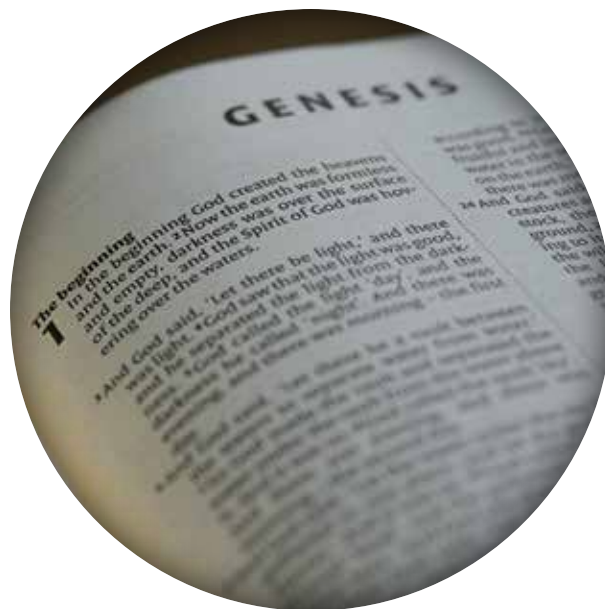
Sometimes we hear that people groups are a recent invention of social science. In the following article I answer this critique by showing that in fact, people groups are as old as Scripture itself.

## Human Grouping in the Old Testament

The Old Testament portrays the people of the world with a diversity of terms that describe very large human groupings to relatively small sub-groups or segments of them. The largest human grouping would be humankind without distinction, as in Genesis 1:26, "Let Us make man (אָדָם, *adam*) in Our image"[1] and 6:5, "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man (*adam*) was great on the earth." In these cases, *adam* refers to "humankind, mankind, a class of being created by God without regard to sex, with a focus as a class of creature, distinct from animals, plants, or even spiritual beings."[2] Another example is in Genesis 11:1, "Now the whole earth (אֶרֶץ, *eretz*) used the same language and the same words." This is an anthropomorphic use of *eretz* to refer to all humankind.

The next layer of human grouping found in the OT is the idea of nations or peoples. It is well known that יוֹג (*goy*) and עַם (*am*) are the most common words for nations/peoples. In one dictionary they are defined similarly as "a people group sharing a common ancestry and/or sociopolitical identity" with an addendum for *am,* "also used for groups of people smaller than a nation, such as the inhabitants of a city." Note the phrase "people group"

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1 All verses of Scripture in NASB 1995 version.

2 JA Swanson (1997a) 132 I. אָדָם ('ā·ḏām). *A Dictionary of Biblical Languages: Hebrew (Old Testament)*. Logos Research Systems, Inc.
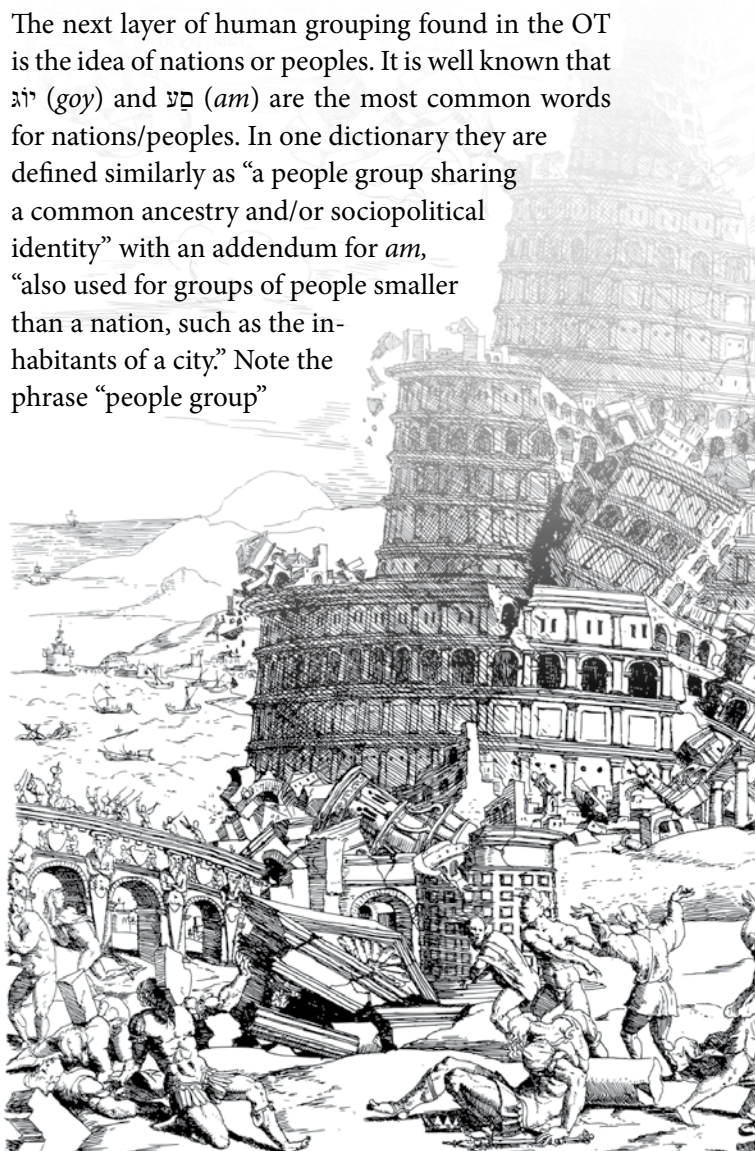
in the very definition and the variety of group size the word *am* covers. *Goy* indicates "a common sociopolitical identity that can be defined by ancestry, language, land, and government… as Israel's national identity becomes more clear in the OT the majority of the occurrences use some form of the plural to refer to the surrounding non-Israelite nations."[3] Thus *goy* can be applied to human groupings defined by a diversity of affinities/boundaries (ancestry, language, land, government) and became synonymous with non-Israelite Gentiles. In the Septuagint, *goy* is usually translated as ἔθνος (*ethnos*), while *am* is generally used to denote God's people Israel and is usually translated as λαός (*laos*).[4]

The fact that language was a major defining element of nations and peoples can be seen in Daniel. Seven times reference is made to "peoples (*am*), nations (הֻמָּא *ummah)* and men of every language

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3 M Minard (2014) Gentiles. *The Lexham Theological Wordbook* Mangum D, Brown DR, Klippenstein R, et al. (eds). Bellingham, WA.: Lexham Press.

4 I note here other less common words used for non-Israelites, those outside the covenant YHWH made with Israel: נָכְרִי (*nokri*) foreignness, זָר (*zar*) someone strange or foreign, עָרֵל (*arel*) uncircumcised, and גֵּר (*ger*) and בָשׁוֹת (*tosab*) sojourner or alien (Minard, 2014).

> " The fact that language was a major defining element of nations and peoples can be seen in Daniel.

(לִשָּׁן *lishan*)" (3:4, 7, 29, 4:1, 5:19, 6:25, 7:14). It would seem fair, in a very general sense, to equate the modern term "ethnolinguistic" to this level of grouping, especially since the OT is full of specific examples of such, both small (Kenites, Kenizzites, Jebusites, etc. of Gen. 15:19-21) and large (Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians—Israel's major enemies).

A third and smaller layer of human groupings can yet be found. In Genesis 12:3 we read, "And in you all the families (הֲמִשְׁפָּחֹת *mishpachah*) of the earth will be blessed." Although *mishpachah* has a wide range of meanings (people, kingdom, tribe, clan, family, group, genus, kind)[5], the overwhelming majority of its occurrences in the OT are translated as "clans" (NIV, 253 of 296 occurrences) or "families" (NASB95, 289 of 303 occurrences).[6] The word refers to "a family group larger than an individual household but smaller than an entire tribe."[7] Another example of such grouping is found in the account of Achan in Joshua 7:14-18, where God first chooses the tribes (שֵׁבֶט *shebet*), then the families (*mishpachah*), then the households (בַּיִת *bayit*), and finally Achan himself. The people of Israel in the Bible are thus presented in segmented groupings and the references to such (tribes, families, households) in the OT are numerous. A good example of these distinctions is found in the phrase "families (*mishpachah*) of the nations (*goy*)" in Psalm 22:27 and "families (*mishpachah*) of the peoples (*am*)" in Psalm 96:7.[8] As early as Genesis 10:5, 20 and 31, the descendants of Noah's sons are each described in terms of families (*mishpachah*), languages (*lishan*), lands (*eretz*) and nations (*goy*). In this case there is a mixture of terms representing smaller (*mishpachah*) and larger (*lishan, eretz, goy*) groups.[9]

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5 JA Swanson (1997b) 5476 הֲמִשְׁפָּחֹת (miš·pā·ḥā(h)). *A Dictionary of Biblical Languages: Hebrew (Old Testament)*. Logos Research Systems, Inc.

6 *Logos Bible Software 8.15* (n.d.) Bible Word Study: mishpachah. See especially the census of Israel in Numbers 26 (ex. v.7) and tribal land allotments in Joshua 13 (ex. v.15) and 15.

7 T Blair (2014) Family. *The Lexham Theological Wordbook* Mangum D, Brown DR, Klippenstein R, et al. (eds). Bellingham, WA.: Lexham Press.

8 Psalm 96 possesses three levels of description for human groupings in the first seven verses: all the earth (*eretz*), nations (*goy*) and peoples (*am*), and families (*mishpachah*).

9 M Minard (2014) Gentiles.

Human Grouping in the NT

The NT contains a similar diversity of words to describe humanity. The top layer once again consists of humanity as a whole, such as John 1:26, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (κόσμος *kosmos*)!"[10] Also Luke 2:1, "Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth (οἰκουμένη *oikoumene*)." In both cases, the "world/earth" is a reference to all the people in the world.

> The tribe, clan/families, household segments in the OT are not as clearly defined in the NT, not because they ceased to exist but because they simply were not as prominent in a nation subjugated under Roman rule.

The next layer of human grouping can be seen in the use of *ethnos*, nation or people, which is the NT equivalent of *goy*. Importantly, "in the majority of NT occurrences . . . it appears in the plural and takes on a more technical sense that is usually translated 'Gentile,'[11] contrasting non-Jews with Jews."[12] These first two layers of human grouping can be seen in Matthew 24:14, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world (*oikoumene*) as a testimony to all the nations (*ethnos*), and then the end will come." Another word of note is *laos*, in significant ways the NT equivalent of *am*. While the singular form normally refers to the Jewish people it is often used for non-Jews in the plural, as is the case

in Rev. 5:9, 7:9, 11:9, 13:7 and 14:6, all of which refer, in differing order, to nations (*ethnos*), tribes (φυλή *phyle*), peoples (*laos*) and tongues/languages (γλῶσσα *glossa*).[13] These phrases are used to describe the entire breadth of humanity in all its forms and varieties. The word *phyle* is used whenever the NT speaks of the tribes of Israel. In Revelation it takes on an eschatological sense and "means generally *people* (as an ethnic collective)."[14] As for *glossa*, in addition to its basic meaning for the tongue, "it could denote a particular language (Acts 2:4) and could thus be used as a distinguishing mark of a people group (Rev 7:9)."[15]

The tribe, clan/families, household segments in the OT are not as clearly defined in the NT, not because they ceased to exist but because they simply were not as prominent in a nation subjugated under Roman rule. The tribe, clan or extended family was usually designated by πατριά (*patria*), as in Luke 2:4, "Joseph also went up from Galilee … because he was of the house and family (*patria*) of David." Similarly, συγγενής (*syngenes*) is used to describe the idea of extended family relatives, "And behold, even your relative (*syngenes*) Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age" (Lk. 1:36). But the main social unit in the NT is the οἶκος (*oikos*), the house or household, an equivalent to the OT *bayiṯ*. In Acts 16:31, the Philippian jailer is told, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household (*oikos*)." In Mark 6:4, these segments are put together, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives (*syngenes*) and in his own household (*oikos*)."[16]

The table on the following page (Table 1—not exhaustive) summarizes this overview of how human groups are described in the biblical record.

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10 Also Rom 5:12–13; 1 Cor 1:27–28; 2 Cor 5:19.

11 Similar to the OT (see footnote 2), the NT employs other less common words to describe the Gentile world: ἐθνικός (*ethnikos*) a pagan or heathen person; ἀκροβυστία (*akrobystia*) the uncircumcised; Ἕλλην (*Hellen*) of Greek descent or a non-Jew living in Graeco-Roman culture; σέβομαι (*sebomai*) devout non-Jew or God-fearer; προσήλυτος (*proselytos*) a proselyte or convert to Judaism; ξένος (*xenos*) a foreigner (Minard, 2014).

12 M Minard (2014) Gentiles.

13 Revelation is significantly dependent on Daniel, thus this grouping of words parallels that in Daniel referenced earlier.

14 H Paulsen (1990) φυλή, ῆς, ἡ phylē tribe, nation, people. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* Balz H and Schneider G (eds). Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

15 J Lookadoo (2014) Body. *The Lexham Theological Wordbook* Mangum D, Brown DR, Klippenstein R, et al. (eds). Bellingham, WA.: Lexham Press.

16 T Blair (2014) Family.

Table 1: Terms Designating Human Grouping in Scripture

Group Types	Hebrew Terms Used	Greek Terms Used	Affinities/Boundaries	Modern Terms[18]
All Humanity	*adam, eretz*	*kosmos, oikoumene*	human	homo sapiens
Nations/Peoples Non-Israelites, Gentiles Tongues/Languages	*goy, am nokri zar arel ger tosab lishan*	*ethnos, laos ethnikos akrobystia Hellen sebomai proselytos xenos glossa*	ancestry, language, land, government	race, ethnicity, language, ethno-linguistic, nation-state, cultural blocs, mega-peoples, macro-peoples
Tribes	*shebet ummah*	*phyle*	kinship, lineage	tribe, socio-peoples, mini-peoples
Families/Clans	*mishpachah*	*patria, syngenes*	smaller kinship segment	micro-peoples, extended family
Households	*bayit*	*oikos*	smallest kinship segment	family

18 These are only rough comparisons and by no means an attempt to suggest exact equivalence of concepts with the biblical terms. For instance, there seems to be no biblical equivalence of the modern idea of a nuclear family.

Biblical writers understood 1) the basic unity of all humankind, 2) human difference based on various and diverse affinities/boundaries that created separate nations/peoples (horizontal segmentation), and 3) segmentation within each nation/people based on kinship/lineage (vertical segmentation). I believe the overview of Scripture above shows that people groups are an ancient phenomenon and were not introduced by people group proponents in the twentieth century.[17] People are always seen as members of such a variety of groups that many terms are needed to fully explain the sub-sets and segments. The Bible highlights this "groupness" in its universal treatment of humanity. Biblical authors understood these human groupings in all their variety and complexity; a mosaic of nations/peoples, languages, tribes, clans and households. **MF**

17 S Hawthorne (2020) A Biblical Understanding of People Groups. *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 56(4).

Mission Possible Book review

Sinclair, Daniel. 2021 *Mission: Possible—Defining and Empowering Your Ministry Among the Unreached*. MOF Publishing.

BY **WES THIESSEN**

Wes Thiessen, PhD, QMed, is a Family Mediator and Church Pastor in southern Alberta, Canada. He has lived overseas in the Muslim world for over 17 years. He writes on cross cultural issues and interpersonal conflict, teaches cultural anthropology and has a PhD in Islamic history. He can be reached at wes@understandingtheother.com.

If you've never had a coach work with you in your church-planting ministry, this book would work toward solving that problem. In the sequel to his well-received *Vision of the Possible: Pioneer Church Planting in Teams*, Daniel Sinclair digs deeper into the subject of sharing the good news in some of the most difficult places with *Mission: Possible—Defining and Empowering Your Ministry Among the Unreached*. This easy to read yet full-bodied text is a mix of both theory and practice, highlighting foundational understandings from Scripture of authority people carry in church-planting along with extremely practical guidance on best practices in church-planting ministry.

To validate the book, it is important to begin with the author's credentials—Sinclair is well-qualified to write on this subject. He and his family have spent decades overseas in parts of the world where the unreached live. His ministry has involved not only participating in church-planting in these locations, but also supervising scores of teams all over the Muslim world. His methods are tried, and not simply written from an armchair. When it comes to biblical study, I know personally that Sinclair prioritizes at least one hour of personal biblical study every single week of the year, creating a strong biblical foundation for the ministry in which he participates. He devours Scripture.

The book itself begins with a scriptural background to the concept of apostleship. Sinclair sincerely believes that specific individuals are called to ministry. However, he does not make hard and fast pronouncements about who those people might be, recognizing that you can sometimes get it wrong when trying to identify who exactly apostles are today. Yet it is clear for him that God has given ministry gifts to people for the purposes of evangelizing and planting churches in places where the gospel has not yet rooted. Sinclair intersperses his biblical basis for ministry with anecdotal illustrations of those living out these principles, demonstrating the work in action. This is where Sinclair's concentrated value lies, as, for years he has observed, interacted and supervised literally hundreds of individuals putting these principles into practice.

Sinclair goes on from his scriptural basis on apostleship with a brief argument for the value in "counting" in one's ministry, followed by a specific thorny issue in ministry with Muslims—baptism. But the real meat of Sinclair's work follows in his weightier fourth and fifth chapters. He spends considerable time presenting the concepts of Disciple Making Movements (DMM). In recent years, much methodology of ministry among Muslims has focused on movements. Sinclair clearly lays out what these principles are and what they mean practically for day-to-day ministry. To make sure readers are not ashamed

of their ignorance of the basics of these concepts, he has entitled the chapter "DMM for Dummies." He goes so far as to describe what a series of discovery Bible studies might look like in real life. As is clear, Sinclair wants his ideas to be practical and applicable to those involved in ministry to the unreached.

His final chapter might come as a surprise to many, but I believe that Sinclair has concluded that many practitioners get bogged down in ministry for lack of organization and scheduling. He spends considerable time outlining the practicalities of creating a personal schedule, one that is reasonable considering all of the demands that an expatriate individual might face when trying to juggle too many commitments. His eye is clearly on the goal of sharing the gospel, and Sinclair wants his disciples not to lose the forest for the trees. Living the overseas life of ministry is filled with demands, especially for those who are goal oriented. Sinclair wants to help these individuals live out their calling without burning out, by making tough decisions about how to spend their time. His chapter gives very practical advice, even giving sample drafts of schedules of individuals wrestling with these issues.
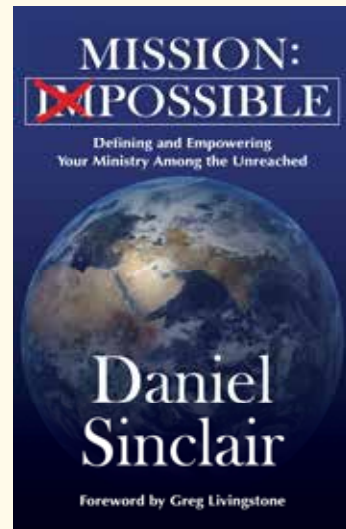
There are several positive reasons to recommend Sinclair's book—the use of clear language, compelling arguments, practical examples, supporting resources, respect for local cultures and a strong desire to get local believers involved in finding the best way forward for the gospel in their culture. Note, however, that Sinclair's methodology will likely appeal to a particular type of movement-minded, church-planting individual: one whose personality tends toward analytical and systems thinking. It may be a challenging read for others, whose spiritual giftings focus on compassion combined with developing deep personal relationships. Those who live a more cerebral, task-oriented and scheduled lifestyle will appreciate Sinclair's wisdom. Yet everyone involved in ministry among the unreached will likely find value in his ideas. He has also priced his work to be accessible to anyone. You'd pay more for one hour of coaching than purchasing his book, which has a *wealth* of experience and observation behind it. If you are involved in ministry among the unreached, Sinclair's reflections are well worth your investment of time and money. **MF**

> **Sinclair wants his ideas to be practical and applicable to those involved in ministry to the unreached.**

Sinclair's book is also useful for the resources he includes. He has eight appendices, including FAQs, sample statements that can be used in real world situations, descriptions of real-life meetings, a lengthy re-telling of the birth of a movement and also the advice for a communication problem—how to deal with too much email! He mixes together excellent resources while giving very helpful, practical advice. Sinclair could be your DMM coach at a distance.

One Unreached People Group at a Time

BY **DUANE FRASIER**

Duane Frasier works at Joshua Project. He lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado, with his wife Erika and sons, Michael and William.

"Help our people group. Help them to be safe. And help them to know you." This is a typical breakfast prayer for 8-year-old William. He listens to the *Unreached of the Day* podcast or learns about the people group on the mobile app. After leading his family in prayer for them, he taps the "I am Praying" button and announces the count of people who have declared that they, too, are praying.

William is joining tens of thousands who use *Unreached of the Day* to intercede for the most gospel deprived peoples of the world. Each day, one group is featured through e-mails, mobile apps, podcasts and web widgets. Downloadable PDFs are available for printing bulletin inserts, booklets and prayer cards. Want to know which groups we are praying for currently? The last few pages of this magazine are dedicated to the *Unreached of the Day* each issue. The team of writers who formerly made *Global Prayer Digest* happen each month now writes the text for *Unreached of the Day*.

Some intercessors are lifting up the day's group in prayer using languages other than English. *Unreached of the Day* is available in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish and Vietnamese. Volunteer translators in several teams are making the content available in their heart language.

> Want to know which groups we are praying for currently? The last few pages of this magazine are dedicated to the *Unreached of the Day* each issue.

The *Unreached of the Day* several years ago was the Dahalo, a small group near the coast of Kenya. The number of people praying that day actually exceeded the total Dahalo population! Less than a year later, a pastor from Nairobi was walking in Dahalo villages, sharing the Good News and seeing several come to faith in Christ. Months earlier, someone had shown him the *Unreached of the Day* app. He decided his church would be the answer to many prayers for the Dahalo. He traveled by plane, then by bus, then by boat and finally by motorcycle to encounter the group. At one point of the journey he had to dress as a policeman to avoid problems with a local extremist group. The effort was worth it. Today, the Dahalo have a body of believers and are reading Bibles in Swahili brought to them by the congregation in Nairobi.

One couple prints out the photos of the people groups each month to hang in their living room so they won't forget to pray. A 15-year-old began using the app and her Christmas wish was that her parents would give a donation to help make it available for others. A believer from India and his American wife pray for the groups. Imagine their surprise one day when the featured group was the specific Brahmin community he is from! Several churches decorate a Christmas tree with people group "ornaments," which they send home with members of the congregation. A church in Oregon highlights one group a month in their children's ministry. A handout is sent home to more than 100 families so they can continue praying with the kids. A couple leaving to work among an Unreached People Group in China was excited to know that their group was featured for prayer. They were glad for the spiritual covering.

For William, tapping the button on the app was initially a fun exercise that rewarded him with a number count he had helped boost. Now he prays without needing that prompt. It has become an automatic part of his mealtime. If we get kids like William, as well as adults, in the habit of making prayer for the unreached a daily occurrence, we have cause to celebrate. What if a generation of kingdom kids grew up with the practice of thinking beyond themselves and their family? What if a family tradition became a powerful vision and determination to make a difference for peoples cut off from the gospel?

> What if a generation of kingdom kids grew up with the practice of thinking beyond themselves and their family? What if a family tradition became a powerful vision and determination to make a difference for peoples cut off from the gospel?

Are you ready to join William and this band of intercessors? Ready to blend your pleas for transformational change by the gospel where it hasn't taken root yet? You can jump in right now by visiting www.unreachedoftheday.org or by downloading the app in the app stores. Simply search for "Joshua Project" or "unreached."

What about diving in deeper? Here is a list of ways you can maximize your interaction with *Unreached of the Day* resources and get them into the hands of many more intercessors:

1. Help reach record "I am Praying" counts. Knowing that others are standing with you is a great encouragement, so tap the button every time you pray.
2. Tell your friends! Help others set up the app on their devices or sign up for the e-mails. And make sure you tell them to invite their friends.
3. Do you teach Sunday school, lead a small group or preach in church? Spread the word of the resource among the family of God.
4. Add *Unreached of the Day* to your family prayer time. You can begin cultivating Christ's love for the nations in young lives.
5. Promote the resources on social media. Share with your wider network of online friends.
6. Follow Joshua Project on social media. We're on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. Additionally, we have a Facebook group where you can join in a conversation about the unreached.
7. Volunteer as profile writer, editor or proofreader.
8. Volunteer as a translator. Join an existing language team or assemble a translation team for a new language offering.
9. Promote the use of *Unreached of the Day.* We especially need promotion of the translated resources.
10. Make suggestions. We can't implement all the additions people have mentioned, but we have put several of them in place. Help us improve the presentation. (MF)

Making Data Count in Reaching the Unreached

BY **CHRIS MAYNARD**

Chris.Maynard@transforminginformation.com

Chris Maynard lives in West Wales, UK, is married to his wife of more than 40 years, and has two adult daughters and one grandchild. He has contributed to several books, including: *From Seed to Fruit* (2008), *Operation World* (2010), *Pray for the World* (2015) and *Mobilizing Movements* (2021). He is currently an associate of the WEA Mission Commission and OC's Global Research Team, ocresearch.info, and is a facilitator for Community of Mission Information Workers globalcmiw.org, and the registrar of Harvest Information Standards, hisregistries.org.

Gathering people group data is important, but how we use it is just as important. There is more than one way to use the data to help shape strategy or inspire mobilization.

Recently, I used a data technique to help a group make a specific decision. But when I showed it to my colleagues, they pointed out that it could be used more widely. So, I share it with you now as an example of what can be done with prayer, with Joshua Project data and with a bit of Excel skill.

We in the Global Data Initiative (GDI) are turning our attention toward Africa. We want to improve the quality of people group data and there are many reasons to focus on this area of the world. But of course, Africa, while not as big as the world, is still a vast continent with vast differences between countries. Where should we start? We went through a process of prayer and consideration, which included drawing a chart of African countries.
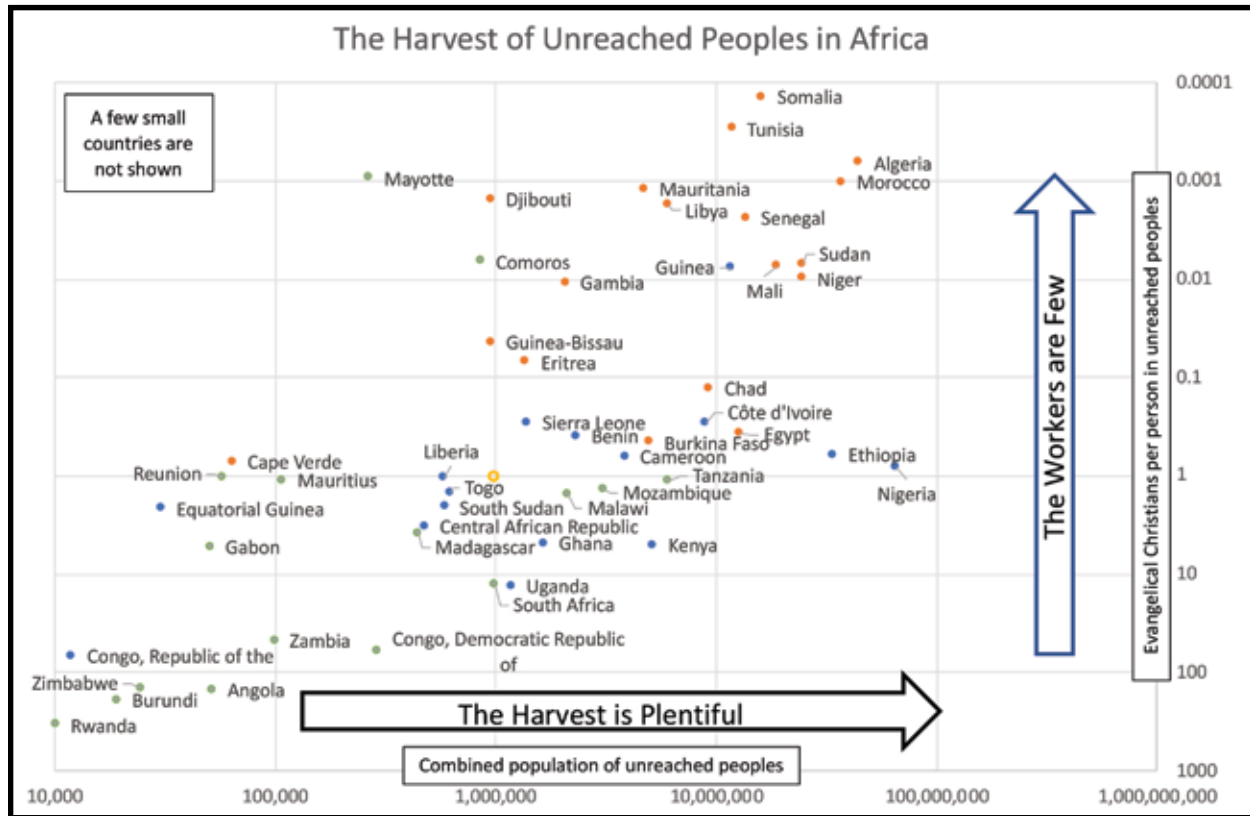
There are ways of presenting data to emphasize something that has already been decided, or to motivate people towards a goal that is not in dispute. Maps can be particularly useful in this role. But maps are not always so useful to help us make the decisions themselves. To help make decisions, I often use a "scatter chart" because you can express two different

> Jesus himself expresses two related concerns when asking us to pray for more workers. He says that the harvest is plentiful, and the workers are few (Matt. 9:27 and Luke 10:2).

Jesus himself expresses two related concerns when asking us to pray for more workers. He says that the harvest is plentiful, and the workers are few (Matt. 9:27 and Luke 10:2). He links these two different factors to the deployment of workers—asking the Lord of the Harvest to "send" them or "throw them out" into the harvest field. Both the harvest, and the workers can be understood in different ways. For GDI purposes, I chose to take the harvest as being the population of people in Joshua Project's "Scale 1" peoples—the least reached or "unreached." For "workers" I chose to take the population of evangelical Christians. I added up all that data by country.

The way that the Joshua Project maintains their data makes it relatively easy to use it to support strategic decision making and I have made use of
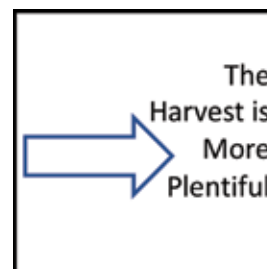
The Harvest of Unreached Peoples in Africa

A few small countries are not shown

The Workers are Few

Evangelical Christians per person in unreached peoples

The Harvest is Plentiful

Combined population of unreached peoples

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this before for several global networks[1]. Note that Joshua Project's definition of evangelical Christians is people who believe in the authority of the Bible, the uniqueness of Jesus, the importance of personal conversion and the need to pass on our faith. Most of those are Protestants, Anglicans, Pentecostals or belong to independent churches, and some are Orthodox or Catholic.

When Jesus says that the workers are few, I assume that He is meaning "few, relative to the harvest." If we have 100 acres waiting to be harvested and 100 workers who could do the job, that is "fewer"

workers in my book than if we have 10 workers ready to harvest one acre. So, on the vertical axis I charted evangelical Christians (the "workers" who could be "sent out") *relative* to the harvest among the least reached in the country where they live.

Now we had a view of Africa as a whole, and we were able to see some big differences between the countries.

The Harvest is More Plentiful

On the left of the chart are countries with a small population among un-reached peoples. On the right of the chart are countries with a large population among the unreached. The harvest, waiting out in the fields for workers, is more plentiful in countries on the right. And the difference is very large! Every vertical grid line on the chart indicates a difference of *ten times*. And you multiply as you go, so there is a thousand times larger harvest waiting to be reaped in the countries in the right-hand grid

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1 This is one of the useful distinctives of Joshua Project data. For instance, they work hard to ensure that the data about each individual people group is consistent with overall country and global population numbers. This means that you can safely add up their numbers in many different ways. (Just be aware that their data for South Asia has some slightly different characteristics, especially when it comes to recording evangelical numbers. Better to use "Christians" if you are including South Asia.) Some people are rightly concerned about the quality of data available to us. But for this sort of high-level, aggregated analysis, we don't need great data precision. Even if the Joshua Project data on a particular country is wrong by a factor of two (e.g. instead of 1,000, it is 2,000 say, or 500) it would make little difference to its position on the chart. It would move less than one third of a grid square.

squares than in the left-hand squares. For example, among unreached peoples in Ethiopia there are a thousand times more people waiting for the gospel than among unreached peoples in Equatorial Guinea.

Now where are the workers the fewest? Countries at the top of the chart have *a million* times fewer workers available to reap their harvest than those in the bottom grid squares (relative to the harvest available).

This begins to tell us a number of things of strategic importance. The first thing to consider is simply the amazing diversity of the situation. It is likely to be very different trying to reach the unreached in Rwanda (bottom left), Mayotte (top left), Somalia (top right) and Nigeria (middle right). Our tactics may be similar. Surely the tactics of prayer, faith, self-sacrifice, love, learning new cultures and translating the Bible will all be involved. But our strategy may need to be very different. Who are we going to mobilize and motivate to reach the unreached in Mayotte? Should we mobilize the church in Rwanda to reach the unreached in their own country, or abroad? We will come back to that question in a moment. Before we do, let's just note the significance of a particular line across the middle of the chart.
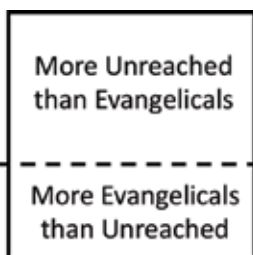
The line is labelled "1", meaning that there is just one evangelical for every unreached person in that country. Above this line the countries have more people among the un-reached than evangelical Christians. Below, there are more evangelicals. That is an interesting milestone.

In fact, we could characterize the chart in three fuzzy horizontal bands: "More Reason to Come," "More Reason to Stay" and "More Reason to Go."
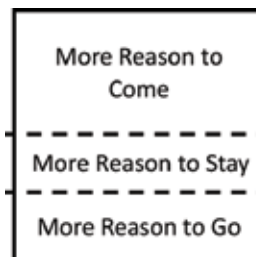

The core of the central band is probably formed by these ten countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sierra Leone. Their ratio of workers to unreached is not far off the global average[2]. So, in terms of reaching the global unreached, there is not much to be gained by sending in lots of foreign workers to these countries, nor by asking them to send many abroad. The need and resource are well balanced. Of course, if one of these countries has a particularly vigorous church, let them develop international sending structures! If one of them has a church lacking vision or vigor, we may need to send people in. But in general, it is to countries below this band that we must look for international workers, and to countries above this line that we should expect to send them.

> Surely the tactics of prayer, faith, self-sacrifice, love, learning new cultures and translating the Bible will all be involved. But our strategy may need to be very different.

I have colored the dots by latitude. The northern third of countries are represented with an orange dot, the middle with blue and the southern by green. Notice that most of the northern countries are in the top of the chart, most of the blue in the center and most of the green near the bottom. This vindicates and supports the basic validity of a current prophetic message from the African Church to the African Church—"GO NORTH!". There are some exceptions, most notably with Mayotte and the Comoros. But in general, in Africa, NORTH is where the harvest of the unreached lies.

2 I used data from Operation World 2010 for this. Page 3 gave me the total number of evangelicals and page 25 the total population of the unreached peoples. Dividing one by the other gives a rough factor of five. Five unreached to one evangelical. On our vertical scale that would be 0.2, just below the 0.1 line.
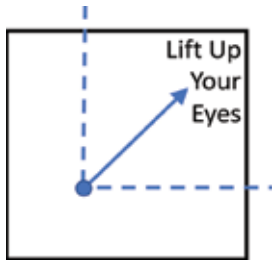
I have referred to Jesus' comment about the workers and the harvest. At a different time, Jesus said, "Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields because they are white for harvest" (John 4:35) and we might use information from this chart to help Christians in a particular country where to "lift up their eyes". On this chart that means, wherever your nation is on this chart, you can "lift up your eyes" toward the top right. Those are the countries where the harvest is more plentiful and the workers are fewer than in yours.


My thinking is this. While the Holy Spirit may direct specific individuals "from anywhere to anywhere," it doesn't make sense for us to encourage large numbers of people to move at random around the world, even less to pray for that! Shouldn't our prayer to the Lord of the Harvest be to throw out workers *from* countries where harvest is meager and the workers, many, *into* countries where the harvest is more plentiful and the workers are fewer? And shouldn't our mobilization effort be in the same direction?
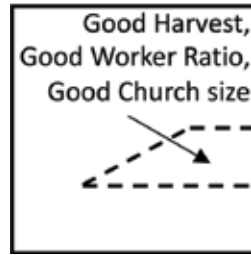
To return to the question at the beginning—if we want to encourage African countries about using data, and about their own research into their own unreached peoples—where should we start? We are still working on it, and a lot depends on personal relationships. Nevertheless, there IS an area of the chart that interests us most. We are looking for countries where there is a good harvest in the country *and* a good-sized church that can tackle the research, the data management *and* good reason to use that data to mobilize that church … to reach their own nationals. These are not countries where the workers are few, nor where they are very many, but somewhere in the middle!

Endnote: For simplicity this article uses a chart of the majority of countries in Africa. There are a few countries quite literally "off the chart". We can "zoom out" to show one more country at the top and a few to the left of the chart. Western Sahara has 100 times fewer workers than Tunisia, although the harvest is smaller too. For this chart I have imagined that somewhere in each of the six countries on the extreme left there is at least one person from an Unreached People Group, although there are none in the Joshua Project data. (MF)

Toward the Edges
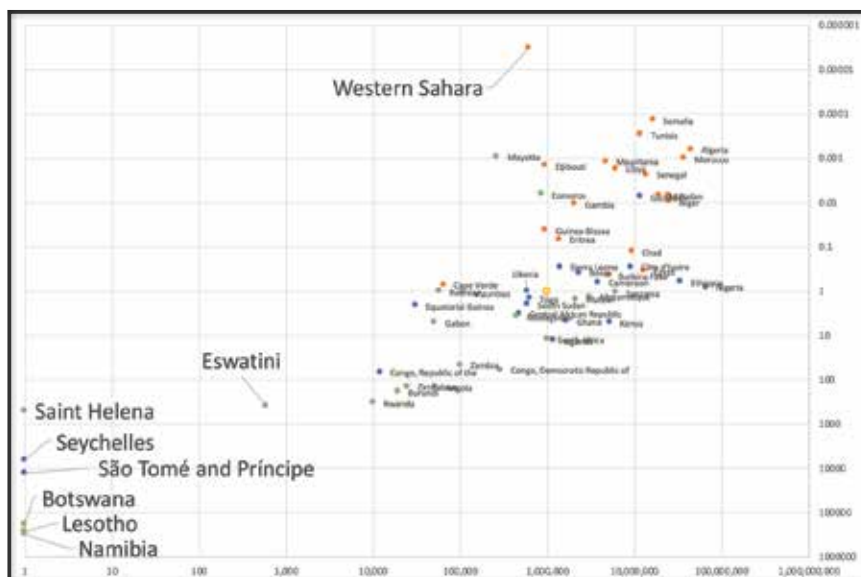
BY **KEVIN HIGGINS**

Kevin Higgins is General Director of Frontier Ventures (FV). He has a PhD from Fuller in Intercultural Studies with a focus on Translation Studies. He is married to Susan and is the grateful father of Rachel, Sarah and Emma and the proud grandfather of Henry.

The theme of this edition of *Mission Frontiers* is a topic dear to my heart. It is at the very heart of our purpose here at Frontier Ventures, and it is dear to the heart of Jesus: "The Changing Shape of People Group Strategy."

I want to begin with a special mention. I am grateful for Len Bartlotti's clear discussion related to Rethinking People Groups. I have known Len for a long time. He has been on the ground among the unreached, and on the ground here in Pasadena. He knows whereof he speaks.

I will talk first about the three hearts: mine, ours, and Jesus'. Then I will talk about the two halves of this edition's theme: people groups and strategy.

Three Hearts

Since 1980, I have in various ways been personally learning about people groups and about strategies. I am still involved with movements at a ground level among unreached peoples, and among peoples now on their way to being "reached," thanks be to God.

Susan and I have our own sweat equity in the whole effort, you might say. Therefore, this topic is dear to my heart.

It is dear because for us we know and love real *people,* so we don't approach this as an abstract about "peoples."

But this is more than personal. This is close to the heart of Frontier Ventures, right at the heart of who we are, why we began, why we still exist, and why we are moving forward into the future.

For more than 40 years, raising awareness about unreached peoples has been at the center of who we are. The vocabulary we use has shifted, certainly, from hidden peoples to unreached peoples to frontier peoples. But inside of all that

is the same concern, to join in God's invitation as God fulfills the abiding purpose of blessing all the families of the earth.

Which brings me to the heart of Jesus.

While my readers will certainly be familiar with Jesus' heart for nations as expressed in say, Matthew 28 and the command to disciple all nations, I want to dig further back in Jesus' words for a moment.

Just today I was re-reading Luke 4. After Jesus speaks of fulfilling Isaiah 61 when He is in the synagogue, there is an initial surge of enthusiasm, as all the people present express their joy at those words.

They were, as the context shows us, joyful because they thought this was for them, and apparently, only for them.

So Jesus continues. He does not say "thank you." Instead, He draws out other portions of the Old Testament. He could have selected many, many passages. The two He selects tell us a lot about His heart.

First, He refers to a widow. A woman. A non-Jewish woman.

Then He refers to a man, a leper, a non-Jewish man.

Two unclean people. Non-Jewish.

From the mass of Old Testament texts He could have selected, He picks these two at the launch of His work. This shows us His heart for the nations, and thus for the least reached.

> For more than 40 years, raising awareness about unreached peoples has been at the center of who we are.

People Groups and Strategy

What is there to rethink? We have lists of people groups, don't we? And every edition of *Mission*

Frontiers records progress on movements among the unreached, right? Doesn't this suggest we know who the unreached are, and we know what to do to reach them?

Yes, and no to both questions! First: people groups.

In an age of globalization and migration, and in an era in which we continue to discover the nuances and complexity of how people, how peoples, see themselves, we are realizing that the more we learn, the less we know about people groups!

That does not mean that Joshua Project, for example, is wrong, or that the lists of unreached peoples there need to be reworked. But it does mean that as any pioneer cross-cultural team gets engaged and begins to love and learn about and with the people with whom God has put them into relationship, they will begin to see things that no list can show.

How does this people's language, religion, culture, location and current history shape how they see themselves? And how does that need to shape how we work among them, or to use another term, how does that affect strategy?

There is much to say about strategy and strategies. I am grateful for everything we are learning today, from the fruitfulness of many workers and organizations and about things that are working among the least reached. Discipleship, church-planting, cultural sensitivity, orality, new insights into Scripture translation and much more.

However, in an age of globalization and migration, and in an era in which we continue to discover the nuances and complexity of how people, how peoples, see themselves, we are realizing that the more we learn, the less we know, not only about people groups, but about the strategies for reaching those where we are yet to see movements emerge!

There is a lot to learn about why this or that strategy works in this or that people group, but seemingly not in another. Is it the people? The team? The strategy itself?

Back to the Heart

This brings me back to why this is all at the heart of who we are and why we exist. From our beginnings, there has been a focus in Frontier Ventures on not only unreached peoples, but on understanding and seeing the barriers, the reasons why some are reached, and others not, why in some cases an approach bears fruit, and elsewhere it does not.

I pray and trust that in some small way, this edition of *MF* will help to stimulate new questions, and ultimately fresh answers, so that least reached peoples may experience more and more of the fullness of life in Christ! MF

24:14 Goal

Movement engagements in every unreached people and place by 2025 (48 months)

Use of Outside Funding In Multiplying Disciples and Churches

BY **STEVE PARLATO**

Steve Parlato has equipped church movement pioneers to multiply disciples and churches among some of the least reached people groups of SE Asia since 1993. He and his wife Amie have served with BEYOND (previously Mission to Unreached Peoples) since 2011. Their passion is to see Jesus' name great among every people and in every place. (Malachi 1:11)

I was leading a meeting of about 30 local national church leaders from various different ethnic groups. I asked everyone, "What's the biggest struggle you're facing?" One leader from the Hmong tribe stood up and said their biggest problem was that salaries had been cut and *the ministry of the church was suffering*. He explained that the national denomination office had been sending a salary subsidy each month (received from foreign donor sources) for the leaders of his local church.

"Thank you, teacher," I replied. "Allow me to ask a few questions, to understand how the local church ministry is suffering. I know in your tribe you train up Theological Education by Extension (TEE) small group leaders each year. When the subsidies were coming, how many TEE small group leaders did you train up each year?"

He said, "Two or three new leaders each year."

I continued, "In the year since the subsidy was cut, how many TEE small group leaders have you trained."

"We have trained two or three leaders."

"Let me see if I understand correctly. You have trained the same number of leaders, with or without subsidy."

"Yes," he agreed.

My second question, "In the typical week when subsidies were given, how much was the weekly church offering?"

He answered an amount. Then I asked, "Since the subsidy was cut, what has been the typical weekly offering?" He said the offering had more than doubled!

"How can that be?" I asked.

He replied, "It's very obvious why: because everyone realized that this church depended on the local members to make it work." They showed their ownership of the church by giving.

"Teacher, please indulge me with one final question. How many people did you baptize each year while receiving the subsidies?"

He answered, "Typically one new baptism a year."

"How many baptisms a year, since you cut the subsidy?" He explained that there were about 10 people baptized during that year. "Oh that's wonderful! What accounts for this significant increase?"

"Oh, that is very easy to explain. Before, when we received the salary, the central denomination specified which villages we were to do outreach and then only in our local area. When the salaries weren't being given, we could go wherever the Spirit of God led us. We could go visit our relatives and friend connections in other districts and they were much more open to us and the message of Christ."

> This spontaneous interaction illustrates some ways the use of outside funding can undermine kingdom growth and hinder true generational disciple-making and church multiplication.

"So let me re-cap to see if I understand correctly. Since the salary was cut, you have been able to train the same number of small group leaders each year, double the offerings in your church and you are 10 times more effective in evangelism. Can you explain to me how the *ministry of the church has suffered* by not receiving salaries?"

This spontaneous interaction illustrates some ways the use of outside funding can undermine kingdom growth and hinder true generational disciple-making and church multiplication. Though it embarrassed the leader involved, it profoundly impacted many of those present.

Outside funding of local church leaders to carry out the normal operations of a local church undermined the connection between the local members and their local leadership. Outside funding reduced local giving as people did not see the need to give when easier-found money could be had.[1] Local ownership of the church's ministry life was reduced by the presence of outside donors. Not mentioned in that

meeting was the additional fact that the pastoral support came with conditions and expectations on the denomination and the local church.

I have observed these and other negative dynamics caused by outside salaries at the local church level in dozens of churches around that country. No one pretends money has no role in ministry and the launching of many churches. However, the source of money and the way money is used will have a profound impact on what happens. Introducing outside funding to local churches for those churches to carry out their basic functions as a church will nearly always undermine movement.

Other movement catalysts around the world have reached similar conclusions, concerning some good ways and some bad ways to use outside money in catalyzing movements. David Hunt, based on his research and close connection to movements in Africa, points out that outside funding can easily introduce foreignness into a ministry. That, in turn, can undermine a movement and local ownership.

> If the church receives support, either in the form of support for the *local* church planter or pastor, … then the model of church carries a foreign element. Foreign funding of church buildings has meant the community received something they could not produce *all by themselves.* For the church to replicate this in the next community, it must wait for additional support from outside.[2]

A second example comes from Wayne Allen's doctoral research on the impact of subsidizing national church workers in Indonesia. He concluded that "the growth of the national church plateaued or halted when the mission began to subsidize the national church workers."[3] This presents a sober warning to all who are serious about the multiplication of churches.

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1 Stout, Ken (2008). MA Thesis: *Fostering Sustainability & Minimizing Dependency in Mission Finances.* 1-2.

2 Hunt, David F. (2009). Doctoral dissertation: *A Revolution in Church Multiplication in East Africa: Transformational Leaders Develop a Self-Sustainable Model of Rapid Church Multiplication.* 114

3 Allen, Wayne. "When the Mission Pays the Pastor." *Mission Frontiers*, January-February 1999.

Some uses of outside funds nearly always undermine the potential for a movement. These should be avoided:

1. Salaries or salary subsidies for pastors or church leaders so they can carry out the basic functions of a local church (Acts 2:36-42). Such basic functions include but are not limited to evangelism, discipleship and regular worship services.

2. Funding local church buildings, including constructing extensions to the homes of house church leaders to increase the meeting room size.

3. Renting facilities for local churches to meet.

4. Sending church leaders for multiple years of residential Bible school or seminary in another region or another country. Most of those who do this have been trained out of their usefulness in the village pioneer work where they came from, and a large number never return to their unreached area to pioneer new works, but rather seek out paid church staff positions, for which their seminary training prepared them.

5. Activities which a local church has already funded themselves, but a donor wants to see done more quickly or more widely. We have found it much healthier to allow ministries to grow at a rate that local leaders can handle. Funding done to accelerate activities has resulted in short-term gains, but unfortunately, this establishes a pattern of thinking that things can only happen when an outside donor is driving things along.

6. These five funding activities have at times given a short-term boost, but in every case we know of, set down unreproducible patterns, undermined local churches' ownership and responsibility, and created unsustainable patterns in the multiplication of disciples and churches. Put another way, the DNA of these funding efforts runs counter to real multiplication of disciples and churches.

Some uses of outside funds have consistently helped movements start or expand.

Based on interviews with movement leaders and personal experience, here are some uses of outside funding that have proven to help catalyze movements:

1. Training in the core paradigms and practices of disciple and church multiplication. When funding multiplication training, always require a local contribution. For example, a local host church could provide housing and food, and participants could contribute food or funds. Movement leaders should be trained locally and on the job. Short term extension learning, which keeps movement practitioners in their context and actively engaged in ministry, has also proven helpful.

2. Travel money and some incidentals to help area or regional community of practice groups meet on a regular basis for training input, problem solving and encouragement. The cross pollination at these sharpening times has consistently been a boost to seeing movements launch and expand.

3. Low-cost equipment such as small speakers used with SD cards, audio oral Bibles, and printed Scripture or Scripture portions.

4. Simple reproducible entry strategies to establish relationships in unreached areas or communities where there is no prior connection. Movements expand primarily along relational lines but will also need to discover access entry strategies into areas where there is no prior relationship. Connecting with communities in pioneer settings in order to share the gospel may require some funding. Care is needed not to create expensive or complex entry approaches which cannot be reproduced by others. Reproducible entry strategies are those that average local believers and simple churches can copy and utilize in many locations.

5. Disaster relief funds for specified activities *and* for a limited period of time. After a disaster such as famine, tsunami, earthquake, war,

or epidemic, many needs and opportunities arise that can become very fruitful for finding Persons of Peace and establishing new groups and simple churches. Many movements report that the heroic efforts of their members, which were funded largely from local funds and some outside funding, during the COVID-19 pandemic, have led to greater fruitfulness than in previous years.

6. Pioneer settings may present a need to place workers to catalyze movement. One fruitful approach has been one-time funding to send mature movement leaders and their families to establish business start-ups. These not only support the family but have generated profits to help establish other similar pioneer start-ups.

7. Projects that support catalyzing movement, but clearly lie beyond the skill level and/or finances of a local simple church or church network. Some examples would be Bible translation, producing media such as the Jesus film, or creating online media for movements. Effort is still needed to foster initiative and ownership by any local churches that will benefit from such a project.

8. Financial subsidy and travel money for proven *church multipliers, multiplication trainers and regional catalysts*. These three roles are described in the "five levels of leadership" often seen in catalyzing movements. See Steve Addison[4] and Nathan Shank's[5] writings which have developed these concepts. We have found outside funding helpful at these three levels. However, introducing funding for local people to do evangelism and gather a church in their local area (*seed sowers* and *church-planters*) has consistently been detrimental, as this article's opening story illustrates.

9. From lessons learned in Bangladesh, Richard Reach[6] shares that it is essential to establish a local committee for financial accountability when outside foreign funding is used. The outside liaison or donor needs to develop and maintain close personal relationships with those receiving funds, and to insist on accountability. Accountability needs to be adapted to the local cultural context rather than just exporting strict Western standards of finance, lest the relationships involved derail.

> Movements thrive when local disciples, by the power of the Holy Spirit, spontaneously take the gospel to family, friends, neighbors and coworkers.

Movements thrive when local disciples, by the power of the Holy Spirit, spontaneously take the gospel to family, friends, neighbors and coworkers. In order for the kingdom to expand through spontaneous initiative, an outside catalyst needs to allow space for local insiders to pursue God's mission. Spontaneous multiplication of disciples happens best through the abilities and financial resources of the local church and believers. For that reason, we need to *seriously avoid* uses of outside funding which undermine potential for a movement, and limit funding to uses which have shown potential to help a movement start or expand.

For further reading:

Corbett, Steve, and Brian Fikkert. *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor and Yourself.* Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2012.

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Lupton, Robert D. *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help, And How to Reverse It.* San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2012.

Saint, Steve. *The Great Omission: Fulfilling Christ's Commission Completely.* Edmonds, WA: YWAM Publishing, 2001. See chapter 7: "Money Matters More than You Know."

Schwartz, Glenn. *When Charity Destroys Dignity: Overcoming Unhealthy Dependency in the Christian Movement.* Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2007.

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4 Addison, Steve. *Pioneering Movements: Leadership that Multiplies Disciples and Churches.* Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2015.

5 Shank, Nathan. "5 Levels of Movement Leadership" *Mission Frontiers,* March-April 2016. 25-27

6 Personal interview, January 2016

Can You Make Disciples Without Accountability?

BY **C. ANDERSON**

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

"My job is to honestly preach the Word, not to hold people accountable," said the slightly defensive Christian leader to my friend. It is a common perception among us pastors. A hands-off approach lets us off the hook. We say things like; "I will do my part, God will do His." Or "Everyone has free will. Our job is to give them the gospel (information), they choose what they want to do with it."

There is truth to these statements. Where we go wrong is when we label the above as discipleship. Is the idea of "live and let live," a biblical approach to discipleship? Is a "you do you" worldview taking precedence over living and ministering like Jesus?

It's not easy to hold people accountable for obeying Jesus' words. Rather than hearing, knowing, and being able to say the right Christian things, God calls us to be doers of His Word (James 1:22).

I sometimes struggle to be accountable, even to myself. I set goals that are quickly thrown out. New Year's resolutions are forgotten by the second or third week of January. If we can't hold ourselves accountable, how can we hold others accountable for obedience? There are no easy, pat answers.

Friendly Accountability

I choose to use the term "friendly accountability." Our efforts to call to obedience must not be heavy-handed. Disciple-making should be friendly and based on relationships of love and safety. This friendly accountability, however, is critical to seeing a movement grow deep and fast. It is biblical. It was how Jesus made disciples. Let's dig a bit deeper.

Engaging Crowds vs. Making Disciples

When Jesus taught the crowds He said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." Our Lord didn't preach many sermons. When He did, it was up to those who heard Him to decide if they wanted to put those things into practice. The same was true when He told short stories or parables. People chose to follow and learn more…or not.

When engaging a crowd, it's tough to provide accountability. If you are preaching to 3,000 it is humanly impossible to know how they are applying your messages. This has never been more true. Many Christians are listening and learning through podcasts, online services or sitting in a large auditorium listening to a professional preacher. This is becoming not only Western but a global trend. We need to be careful not to mistake what is happening in those contexts for discipleship.

Teaching and preaching are not the same as disciple-making. They can be a part of the big picture of a person's spiritual growth, no doubt. They do not replace the vital task of making disciples. Without disciple-making, we cannot fulfill the Great Commission. And without accountability, disciples will not be made. Disciple-making requires deep, close-up relationships of trust, vulnerability, and safety.

Where Did Jesus Invest Most of His Time?

Pastoral ministry today focuses on preparing a weekly 30-40 minute highly professional, polished speech. If you get that right, you'll draw crowds. Oh, and don't forget: you also need to know how to manage social media, create a platform and hire a top-notch worship leader who can pull together a quality band. As lead pastor you manage all of this, much like the CEO of a company does.

This is not necessarily the way we aspire to do ministry. At times it feels as if we have little or no choice. If we don't do this, how will we fill the pews

and get people to pay their tithes and offerings? It seems to be what people want and expect. Is there a different way?

Even as we supposedly pursue Disciple Making Movements, these pressures and mindsets easily slip in. We must look to Jesus and how He worked. Where did He invest time? Was it in running programs, managing staff, creating His persona and platform, and fine-tuning the delivery of His speeches?

Jesus invested the majority of His time in two things: interacting with lost people and training His disciples. I wonder why we don't follow His example.

> Jesus invested the majority of His time in two things: interacting with lost people and training His disciples.

Train Them To Do What You Do

The topic of this article is friendly accountability in disciple-making, so we won't look too much more here at how Jesus interacted with the lost. Suffice it to say that He did. He spent much time with them. Most of His miracles, parables and ministry were focused on reaching lost people. He went out among them, walked with them, visited them in homes, met them in the marketplace and called them to follow Him.

After they started following Him, what did He do? He trained them to do what He did. Jesus invested in deep relationships, long conversations, and took His disciples with Him to watch, learn and participate in what He was doing.

How often do we bring someone along with us? Because much of our "ministry" is writing emails, creating sermons and doing administration, it's not that easy to "bring someone along." If we want to make disciples, we need to change what we put our focus on. We must find ways to develop and mentor, to let others watch, then assist us. Then we can send them to go and do on their own, reporting back.

Model For Training Disciple-Makers

In Luke chapters 9 and 10, Jesus sent out the disciples to the surrounding villages. They were to go ahead of Him to prepare the way. They were to look for Persons of Peace and to heal the sick and cast out demons. Afterward, they were to return to Him and give a report. In doing this, Jesus provided a model for us of how to train disciple-makers.

Jesus first showed them how to do these things. The twelve followed Him, watching Him heal the sick and cast out demons. They saw Him minister peace and hope to those He met.

The time came when they needed to stop watching and start doing it themselves. Jesus then sent them out.

At what point do we send people out? Let it be sooner, rather than later. We wait far too long to invite people to go and do. If obedience-based disciple-making is our practice, it involves much sending. We train a little and send a lot.

Disciple-Making Approaches Multiply Trainees

After the disciples returned and reported back, they were sent out again in greater numbers. One would assume that some of those who went in Luke 10 (the 72) had come to follow Christ as a result of what had happened in Luke 9. Take note. The multiplication of committed disciples is taking place, not only of crowds.

Jesus calls them to deny themselves (Luke 9:23-26 and 57-62) and to a higher level of accountability to proclaim the kingdom to others.

Five Problems With Our Current Discipleship Model

1. We are afraid to call people to become disciples.

Jesus wasn't. He boldly confronted the casual follower who proclaimed allegiance. "I will follow you wherever you go," they said. Jesus answered by making clear the cost involved in becoming His disciple.

Our Lord didn't try to make it easy. He wanted potential disciples to count the cost. Our focus so often is on church attendance. It is the metric used to measure success. When we use that as our standard, what people do with what they hear is

not our concern. This must change. Jesus' kingdom is not made up of church adherents or Instagram followers. It is built on committed disciples of Christ who walk in obedience to His commands and are consistently growing in their allegiance to Him.

If we call people to be accountable, to actually "put into practice" what Jesus taught, some may leave. They might not like us or come to our church anymore. This is a risk we must be willing to take to obey Christ's command to make disciples of all.

2. The church-building-based model lends itself to walk-in, walk-out Christianity.

In pre-covid days, mega-churches provided the perfect place for a casual Christian to feel comfortable. You could go to church, park in the parking lot, slip in, sit in the back few rows of a darkened auditorium, slip out, and go for lunch. You barely needed to do more than greet the greeters at the door.

Post-covid (can we even say that yet?), it's even worse. Online sermons suffice. You can even skip the worship if you want and go straight to the message (or vice-versa). I'm not accusing, just stating the facts about our current situation.

In our "new normal" where does disciple-making happen? We walk in and do our weekly Christian duty, and walk out emotionally stirred or entertained, but with no accountability to apply what we have heard. Sadly, this model, so common in the West, has been exported across the globe. It is having devastating effects on discipleship. We must rethink our models if we want to see movements multiply. Resist the influence of the models around you and look to Christ's example.

3. We don't make time to model ministry and train disciples.

Seminary and Bible college training has been focused on knowledge more than ministry skills—including disciple-making. If you know the right thing you will be able to do the right thing, we assume. It's not so. Again, this model of training ministers has influenced Christianity worldwide.

Jesus trained His disciples up close and personal. They walked with Him, talked with Him, ate with Him, and joined Him in healing the sick, casting out demons and proclaiming God's kingdom to the lost.

> **Our Lord didn't try to make it easy. He wanted potential disciples to count the cost.**

Christian clergy, myself at times included, are too busy with ministerial duties to train disciples this way. We settle for something less…the transfer of knowledge. How do we change?

Is there a young person you could invite to walk, talk, eat and do ministry by your side? A new believer you could show how to share their testimony with a person at the gas station? Then perhaps you could ask them to go share with the next person they meet while you watch, pray and encourage? Let's get out of the classroom transfer of knowledge and train disciples to obey Christ.

Are there times when you would normally teach, that you could instead practice ministry skills with those you are training? Or perhaps open the door for others to teach part of the lesson/message rather than being the "sage on the stage" all the time?

Those who see Disciple Making Movements (DMMs) are those who learn to train, not only teach, their disciples.

4. The emphasis is not on the priesthood of all believers, nor our responsibility to train all to minister.

This cannot be overstated or too often repeated. We must train all to reach all. Every Jesus follower must grow in confidence and competence in disciple-making. Why? Because Jesus' command is for all who follow His way. It's not only for us as ordained clergy.

We get stuck in an Old Testament pattern of operating. The clergy/laity divide is almost as strong today as the separation between Levites and ordinary Jews was in the Old Testament. Jesus came to change that, to establish a New Covenant. Let's embrace and operate in a New Testament

> "What is one key thing you can do this week to increase the level of friendly accountability in the way you make disciples?"

understanding of the priesthood of all believers. That means we have a responsibility to pass on what we know to others, to develop and make room for the practice and exercise of their spiritual gifts.

In DMMs, every believer is given opportunity and responsibility. Because groups and churches meet in homes or shops these groups are small. Everyone gets a chance to talk, to pray, to interact with Scripture. They exercise their spiritual gifts and are constantly stretched to trust God to release those gifts to them.

5. Friendly accountability is essential, but how do we get there?

Turning the tide is difficult. Our Christian culture is strongly established. We have trained people to sit in pews, to be entertained rather than teaching them to obey. Because we don't expect application from those we teach, we don't get it. Seriously, when you preach a sermon, what percentage do you expect to even remember it a week later? Let alone apply it and pass it on to others? It may be difficult, but we have to start somewhere. The ship has to turn.

Suggestions for Turning Our Discipleship Model Around

Following are a few ideas for how we could *begin* to turn what we have called discipleship into effective, multiplicative disciple-making.

A. Find two new believers or young people and commit to spending time with them regularly.

Look for ways to invite them into your life and home. Open doors for them to minister beside you. Take them along when you visit a neighbor or relative's house. Let them watch you start a spiritual conversation or initiate prayer for someone who is sick. Show them how to do the work of the ministry, rather than just teaching them more about it.

B. Teach, preach and train with accountability.

I am blessed to be from a wonderful church in Minnesota. Our pastor uses the phrase "Now what?" with each message. There is a built-in application. I love this! The only thing missing is the accountability loop.

The following week, before starting into a new topic, we'd see more obedience if we started by sharing with our neighbor what we did with last week's "Now what?" Then, if only a handful had applied it, maybe the message should be repeated rather than going on with more head knowledge that hasn't been put into practice. That would be discipleship, not just preaching.

C. Develop places for safety and experimentation in ministry.

Cultivate small group life and community in your church or DMM. Train group leaders to share their struggles in vulnerability and humility. Model this yourself. Find a way to make it safe to be authentic, while also upholding a culture of accountability to obedience.

In disciple-making groups, be they DBS or T4T style groups, everyone is heard and everyone learns together. These groups only work well if there is safety. Accountability to applying and sharing the story or passage must be there, but it has to feel safe to say, "I didn't share with anyone this week." This can be tricky.

One of the best ways to do this is to be accountable as the leader. When you fail, be honest about it, and ask for prayer to go do better next week. Demonstrate that you are obeying, sharing, and being transformed by God's Word. As you do this, others will follow.

We started this article with the question. *Can you make disciples without accountability?* I hope you found an answer. Answers are not what we need, however. We need to go and do things differently.

What is one key thing you can do this week to increase the level of friendly accountability in the way you make disciples? **MF**

Toward a Biblical Missiology of Mobilization

BY **RYAN SHAW**

Ryan Shaw is International Lead Facilitator of Global Mission Mobilization Initiative (GMMI), a resourcing ministry equipping the Church for mission mobilization through tools, teaching, training and strategies. A fourth-generation message bearer, Ryan graduated from Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, CA) with a Master's in Intercultural Studies. He has traveled in a mobilization capacity to over 65 nations and lives with his family in Chiang Mai, Thailand, where GMMI has its Global Mobilization Institute.

What is God doing in mission mobilization around the world? I believe the global Church is on the cusp of an explosion of focused mission mobilization across denominations, organizations and individual local ministries. More mobilization-focused ministries, courses, tools and trainings have sprung up globally in the last decade than ever before in history.[1] We are in a changing world—where a globalized Church is positioned as never before to reach a globalized world through globalized mission mobilization.

The in-depth study of mission mobilization has generally been a neglected subject in missiology. In fact, informal searches turn up next to no literature on a theology or missiology of mobilization. This is primarily because we tend to define mission mobilization in a limited, individualistic manner rather than a holistic, corporate way intended through Scripture. Thus, it is vital to clarify a biblical missiology of mobilization. Much work has been done in the name of mobilization while often failing to adequately root that work in an overarching, big picture missiological viewpoint, informing the global Church of her mobilization responsibility beyond recruiting.

Mobilization's Western Roots

Because much of global mission and mission mobilization efforts have historically derived from Western cultures, the individual recruitment emphasis has become normalized. Western cultures generally see the world through individualistic lenses while non-western, majority world cultures see the world through a communal, group-centered lens.[2] Thus, a biblical missiology of mobilization informs local ministries as a whole, not merely recruiting a few individuals as message bearers[3] (alternative term for missionary). We tend to overlook the theological truth that every believer is meant to engage, in some function, in Jesus' Great Commission—whether they ever leave their hometown or not.

Reading the Bible Through A Mobilization Lens

It is possible to read the whole Bible from the viewpoint of the global mission of God, as Christopher J. H. Wright reveals.[4] God's global mission, realized through the delegated mission of His people, binds the Bible together from beginning to end. By rooting ourselves and local ministries in the purposes revealed in God's word, we recognize the singular truth, suggested by David Bosch, that global mission is not merely an activity of the global Church, but an attribute of God Himself.[5] God is a missionary God, Jesus is a missionary Messiah and the Spirit is a missionary Spirit. Therefore, mission mobilization starts with God Himself, who is on global mission, aligning His corporate body with the priority purpose on His heart. This is why mission mobilization matters. We do not mobilize the Church to merely good works, but to come into alignment with the heartbeat of God, where He is taking history in the culmination of His redemptive purpose (Genesis 12:3; Matthew 24:14; Revelation 7:9).

The nature of God is to consistently invite every believer and local ministry into agreement with His will—living for Jesus' glory on earth. The late Dean Gilliland,

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1 Some of these include Let's Mobilize His Church (Latin America), Mission Campaign Network (Kenya), Global Mobilization Network (International), Center for Missionary Mobilization and Retention (USA), Global Cast Resources (International) and many more. While many more have been around longer then a decade and continue to gain clarity and focus in mobilization. Some of these include Center for Mission Mobilization, Simply Mobilizing, Perspectives, GMMI and more. In addition, almost all of the major global mission networks like the Lausanne Committee, COMIBAM, MANI, WEA Mission Commission and more now have mobilization tracks and departments which they did not have before.

2 Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Ministering Cross-Culturally*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986, p. 19

3 Ryan Shaw, *Spiritual Equipping For Mission: Thriving As God's Message Bearers*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014, p. 18-19

4 Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010, p. 38

5 David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991, 389–390

professor of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Seminary cites, "Global mission can be said to be founded on the self-revelation of God."[6] There is no God besides Him. He alone is Father, Creator of all things and for whom we live (1 Cor. 8:5-6). If there is one God, then He is God of all peoples. He desires every believer to recognize the universal nature of the gospel, not merely individualizing it for themselves, as is so common in the global Church. God's redemptive purpose throughout history at its core could be considered a mission mobilization effort among His people.

Jesus' calling of the twelve disciples can be seen as foundational mobilization. He trained them over a three-year process to lead the Church forward in the Great Commission upon Jesus' ascension. Jesus was training the apostolic leaders who would *"turn the world upside down."* (Acts 17:6) His earthly ministry was primarily focused on teaching the gospel of the kingdom, paving the way for His followers to take His multi-dimensional message to all the ethnic peoples. This is a core principle of mobilization. Greg Parsons relates, "Jesus didn't focus on planting churches, on evangelism, or theological training. Rather, His ministry concentrated more on the big picture than anyone."[7] The global Church is called to emulate Jesus in this way.

Paul also had the primary calling of a mission mobilizer, possessing the conviction that God was the God of all peoples, laying on the Church the inescapable obligation to mission.[8] Paul adamantly stated, *"God through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation…God was in the world reconciling the world to Himself…so we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us…" (2 Cor. 5:18-20).* For Paul, God took the initiative to redeem humanity, causing those reconciled to in turn become His message bearers of grace.[9] Paul was mobilizing the churches with the vision of God's glory among all nations.

All Paul did was focused on planting communities of believers who would multiply themselves outward in concentric circles. His apostolic teaching had mission mobilization at its core. He was constantly pushing the boundaries of where the kingdom was already known,

looking to the "unreached" of his day (2 Cor. 10:16). His followers and churches did so as well (Acts 19:10). Paul revealed the nature of the Church with multiplying and reproducing as its core identity, not something peripheral (Romans 1:5). Mission mobilization, then, includes calling the global Church to the totality of all God meant for local ministries. This requires a clear biblical view of the essence, nature, purpose and identity of the global Church as being God's missionary community.

The Birth of the Church at Pentecost

Acts 2 is the root of the great tree of the Church that has sprung up in every nation over the last 20 centuries. The global Church was birthed through the coming of the Holy Spirit as a completely new, unique entity. A simple interpretation of the Spirit's filling is for the purpose of revealing God. Wherever a believer goes, whatever they do, the primary purpose of the Holy Spirit's filling is enabling us to reveal and manifest God to others. Using this simple definition, we conclude the primary reason for the Holy Spirit's coming is empowering a corporate people who reveal God to the world.

The global Church, God's 'missionary,' Spirit-filled people, exists to reveal God to all the ethnic peoples of the world, bringing glory to Jesus as He draws millions to Himself. It is the purpose that God has put within us. This spiritual expansion principle is in our DNA, the natural outworking of a healthy organism. To be a stagnant local ministry is an oxymoron, counter to divine and natural order. Local ministries becoming ablaze with mission vision, mobilizing and equipping their own through the implementation of mobilization principles within, culminating in influencing unreached people groups are God's primary strategies in mission. Every local ministry, no matter its size, possesses a responsibility before God in the Great Commission.

Defining Mission Mobilization

In recent decades, "mission mobilization" has become synonymous with individualized missionary recruiting, a far cry from the big-picture viewpoint of Scripture. Because we believe the Lord is inspiring a surge in biblically rooted mission mobilization across His global Church, it is vital to pursue shared understanding of what we mean by these words.

Let's consider a few definitions as building blocks toward a comprehensive whole. Fred Markert, YWAM Strategic Frontiers leader, says, "Mobilization is the process of envisioning and educating God's people about His

6   Dean Gilliland, *Pauline Theology and Mission Practice*, (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1998), p. 50.

7   Greg Parsons, "Why Stay Here? Mobilizing the Home Front," *Mission Frontiers*, January–February (1995), http://missionsfrontiers.org.

8   Ibid, p. 51

9   Ibid, p. 56

strategic plans for the world. And it is the means of keeping them involved and moving forward until they find their specific place and role in world evangelization."[10] Larry Reesor adds to this mobilization outlook by asserting, "Mobilization is teaching believers in a local church to understand God's global plan, motivating them to a loving response to God's Word, and providing opportunities for them to use their gifts, abilities and resources individually and corporately to accomplish His global plan."[11] In addition, Steve Shadrach helps draw attention to what he calls the "unsent" suggesting, "The 'unsent' are the hundreds of millions of Bible-believing Jesus followers around the world who have little or no mission vision."[12]

Building on these helpful definitions, while rooting ourselves in a biblical viewpoint of the Church's purpose, we can thus define mission mobilization from a global perspective in two separate ways - from a macro, body of Christ-wide perspective, as well as from a micro, individual local ministry level.

At a macro level, *mission mobilization is the strategic process through which the global body of Christ is empowered by the Spirit of God to emphasize the message, vision and strategies of the Great Commission within local ministries in every nation, activating every member in their assigned roles, toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission.*

At a micro level, *mission mobilization is the strategic process of an individual community of believers moving along the journey of being educated, inspired and activated in the Great Commission, every disciple engaged and fulfilling their assigned roles in the Great Commission.*

The Laborers Are in the Harvest

A favorite verse among mission mobilizers is Matthew 9:37-38, *"Then He said to His disciples, "the harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."* Who are these laborers? Where do they come from? Over the last 50 years, there has been an unprecedented move of the Holy Spirit globally, thrusting millions of people

into the kingdom of God. According to Todd Johnson, director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, a majority of these are in non-western, majority-world countries throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America.[13] So much so that Johnson affirms, "Christians can be found today in every nation of the world."[14]

A friend once told me, "the laborers are already in the harvest." What he meant was these significant "harvests" (coming to Christ within currently unreached peoples and nations) in time, produce the kingdom laborers who themselves become "scattered," crossing cultural barriers, among the remaining unreached peoples within their own countries (near culture) and beyond (distant culture). The vast majority of newly scattered message bearer teams are part of previous "harvests" bringing them into the kingdom. This process relies on effective mission mobilization implemented within the local ministries planted through the present "harvests" across the nations coming to Jesus.

Mission mobilization, then, is meant to directly empower local indigenous ministries in every nation, full of these harvested laborers. This massive harvest force, from all nations, is made ready to be "thrust out" primarily among near culture peoples sharing language, traditions and customs, yet being from a different tribe or ethnic group, directly around them. They are mostly lay leaders and lay people—regular disciples growing in experiential knowledge of God, empowered and anointed by the Spirit, acting as conduits among every unreached community.

The Natural Response— Three Levels of Scattering

Renowned mission practitioner and author, Roland Allen, suggested God has put within every believer a natural instinct to communicate and influence others with the gospel of the kingdom using their own initiative.[15] This isn't forced upon them or even something that necessarily needs to be encouraged. It is innate to a follower of Jesus because the Holy Spirit has taken up residence within that person. Effective mission mobilization is dependent upon helping believers embrace this natural inclination, not squelching or resisting it. This inner drive is powerful, even moving the people of God to risk their lives to

10 Article in *Mission Frontiers* Magazine (January-February 2000) titled "A Fresh Perspective On Mobilizing the Church." http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/a-freshperspective-on-mobilizing-the-church.

11 Steve Shadrach article in *EMQ*, Volume 54, Issue 3, "Mobilization: The Fourth (and Final?) Era of the Modern Mission Movement."

12 Article in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* titled "Status of Global Christianity 2015" https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308361629_Status_of_Global_Christianity_2015_in_the_Context_of_1900-2050

13 Todd Johnson and Sandra Lee, Article in *Perspectives Reader Fourth Edition* titled "From Western Christendom to Global Christianity", p. 387

14 Shaw, R. Daniel. 1990. "Culture and Evangelism: A Model for Missiological Strategy." *Missiology* 18:291-304.

15 Allen, *Spontaneous Expansion*, p. 9

impart life-giving faith to others. The hope of the gospel and the experience of its power within a believer cannot be held in for long without grieving the Holy Spirit. So, what happens when a local ministry (no matter how big or small), made up of such believers, acts on this inner impulse and is mobilized into action as a community? They are *scattered out as laborers (Matthew 9:37).*

"Scattering" has multiple layers.[16] It is safe to say that biblically speaking every disciple in a local ministry is meant to "scatter" in one way or another. This can be understood as *Level One Scattering.* This predominantly means within the natural environments near the local ministry that God has put them in - their workplace, neighborhood, school, relatives and more.

Level Two Scattering is when a team of believers (lay leaders and lay people) from a local ministry, previously faithful to *Level One Scattering,* respond to the Spirit leading them to a near culture unreached people within a 50-200 mile or so vicinity of the existing local ministry. In order to raise our vision, I suggest a goal of at least 15% of members of every local ministry being scattered in this near culture way.

Level Three Scattering takes us into the more traditional approach of mission sending and is when a team of believers (lay leaders and lay people) from the local ministry embraces God's leading to a distant culture unreached people. These may be within the same geopolitical nation; in a neighboring country; or even further away, crossing continents. If around 15% of church members have been called to *Level Two Scattering,* it is consistent to suggest 5% of members from a sending local ministry are called to *Level Three Scattering.*

The Common Unnatural Response

Contrary to the above, what is common today is for believers to remain to themselves, hidden in their cluster of Christians, taking the position that the Church is to be isolated from society at large. Believers in Indonesia, for example, may rarely interact with their Muslim neighbors, coworkers or peers in the university. This is largely due to the societal divide among Christians and Muslims and the fear sown related to the other which has been enforced over generations. This could be repeated over and over among minority Christian communities and yet is never the intent of Scripture. God wants to be right in the midst of society, relating with the broken, the worldly, the religious, revealing Himself through wholehearted disciples.

Seeing mission mobilization in this missiological light requires taking off some blinders. Although it can seem a bit far-fetched and unrealistic, it is because the global Church has tended to minimize the biblical emphasis of the Great Commission, overlooking our core identity. The global Church's view of mission has generally been lowered from the New Testament's. Thus, it is necessary to regain a high view of God's plan of redemption history, calling others to it and sparking the contagious fires of mission mobilization in our spheres of influence.

*Author's Note—This article has been adapted from the author's new book being released in March 2022 called *Rethinking Global Mobilization: Calling the Church to Her Core Identity.* The book seeks to lay foundations of a biblical missiology of mobilization while providing a practical framework to mobilize and equip the global Church in mobilization. The publisher, IGNITE Media, has given permission for portions of the book used in this article. (MF)

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16 Ralph Winter, in his breakthrough presentation at Lausanne 1974, labeled three types of evangelism to three different groups – E-1 is evangelism from one person of the same culture to another; E-2 evangelism is from one culture to a near culture to their own; E-3 evangelism goes from one culture to a distant culture. These three levels of scattering are based on this E-Scale. Perspectives Reader, Ralph Winter, William Carey Library, p. 347-360

Understanding *Our* Time

BY **GREG PARSONS**

Greg Parsons has been on the staff of Frontier Ventures (formerly USCWM) since 1982, and currently serves as Director of Global Connections. He and his wife Kathleen have two children and three grandchildren.
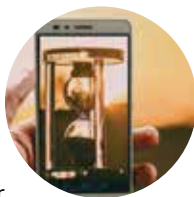
As I noted in the last issue of *MF*, we are each a product of a mixture of influences. The answer to the age-old question "was it nurture or environment" is: **yes** – both. And lots of other things come to mind when we consider what environment means for us. In this issue, I'd like to apply the idea to how we strategize for mission.

When we, as believers, seek to reach others who don't know Him yet, our underlying values come through strongly. They have impacted who we are, how we think and they feed our vision and strategy.

We are all exposed to leaders as models – good and bad. Some are held up in each culture as those who can be admired as good examples – though not perfect of course. People like Steve Jobs (co-founder of Apple), or those of a previous generation like George Patton (WW2 General), or Lee Iacocca (CEO of Ford and later Chrysler) are just a few examples. These were no nonsense visionaries, strategists and/or managers who pushed hard through barriers of different kinds to accomplish their goals. Phrases like "Damn the torpedoes," or "So what do we do? Anything. Something. So long as we just don't sit there," or "Our job is to figure out what they're going to want before they do."

These kinds of leaders and the way they lead impact the cultures that lift them up as examples. So we should not be surprised that some in the western mission world cast vision like a western CEO. We are told that leaders must have a simple, clear, oft-repeated vision, not to mention a focused branding! When it gets down to a local or even national missions event, it can be expressed in phrases such as: "we can do this" … "get 'er done" … "the task can be completed" … and there is truth in those ideas.

Almost 40 years ago, when I first joined the staff of the U.S. Center for World Mission (now Frontier Ventures),

we began to shift how we talked about our vision. Before, we talked about a massive task, using an illustration of a huge iceberg – where the task was represented by the 2/3 of the ice that is under water – we can't see it fully. In the 80s we popularized the phrase "Church for every people by the year 2,000." While there is truth in the idea that we can't see or understand the task clearly still, as we saw more of what God was doing around the world, we began to be more positive. There were books published such as *On the Crest of the Wave* or *Catch the Vision 2,000*. Even as we reconsidered our approach in those early days, we did not know about the massive growth of the House Church movement in China, for example.

As we grow in our understanding of God, His Word and the work of the Spirit, we must:

1. See our own blind spots.
2. Reflect on how that impacts how we think, and act in relation to the world.

As I reflect, I realize there were events in my own nation which are not part of my "education." Our treatment of the 1st Nation's Peoples was a form of colonialism within our boarders. It was *real* right here, and, as with other aspects of our background, it has shaped our mentality. We are forced to consider how Jesus approached life, leadership and the powers of His day. He demonstrated love and humility, which flowed in and through His life as He served and appropriately challenged the systems of His day. I find it interesting, that it was the serious religious people for whom He reserved His greatest criticism.

But even if we approach people like Jesus, we must consider that those we are serving expect people from the West to be like everyone else in the West – whatever their stereotype is. Often, that includes a colonial past and a sense that while we are no longer trying to colonize the countries of world, we are still seen as those who come to bring a foreign religion. We know that biblical faith is not Western, but they may not.

As we strategize to reach least reached peoples, we must consider what the people sitting with us think. I'm glad to say that I see evidence of this in an increasing number of global workers today. We come with a mentality of coming alongside as witnesses of what has happened in our lives because of Jesus.

I hope we've learned lessons from the lessons we need to unlearn. (MF)

Note: Scripture references are from the *English Standard Version* (ESV). Images in this guide (marked with an asterisk *) come from the International Mission Board (IMB). We thank the IMB for their exquisite images, taken by workers in the field.

JANUARY

1 Shaikh in Bangladesh

According to one account, the word Shaikh is a general term of courtesy equivalent to the English term of esquire. According to another account, the name is applied to people of pure Arab descent. Much prayer is needed for the Shaikh, as they fear followers of Christ as an invading threat to their families and communities.

Genesis 1:1 | *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

- Pray that this people group will be in awe of the Lord for His creation and realize that He is the only one worthy of worship and devotion.
- Pray that as the Shaikh read the Koran, they will be drawn to Jesus and to the Bible.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among Shaikh families.

2 Japanese in Japan

Racially, culturally, and ethnically, the Japanese are one of the most homogenous people groups in the world. They identify themselves in terms of biological heritage, birth in Japan, a shared culture, and a common language. Shintoism is the native religion of Japan; its many gods or spirits are known as Kami. Today, most Japanese claim to be both Shintoist and Buddhist.

Genesis 1:27 | *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

- Pray that this people group will realize that they were meant to be in God's image, and they need to change their ways to get back to Him.
- Pray the Japanese will increasingly realize their great need for a Savior.
- Pray that material wealth will not satisfy.
- Pray for a spiritual awakening that will result in a movement to Christ.
- Pray for believers to share their faith.

3 Burmese in Myanmar

The Burmese are the political, economic, and religious leaders of Myanmar, formerly known as Burma. Burmese homes often have altars for the spirits, as well as a statue of Buddha. Farmers may spend more in a year on their religion than on education, health, and clothing for their families.

Genesis 12:2-3 | *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.*

- Pray for many leaders in today's people group to seek and find God's blessings, which He intended to give to them since the beginning of time.
- Pray that the few followers of Christ among the Burmese would live holy lives, being zealous to grow into the image of Christ.
- Pray they would be kind and compassionate to their neighbors, drawing them to the Savior.
- Pray for peace tempered by justice in Myanmar.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Burmese.

4 Brahmins in India

Brahmin pride and the perception that Christianity is only for outcast "untouchables" are serious obstacles to Brahmin families and communities' accepting God's blessing for families through Jesus. They also believe that missionaries pay people to become converts to win a cultural and political war with Hinduism.

Genesis 15:5-6 | *And he brought him outside and said, Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them. Then he said to him, So shall your offspring be. And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.*

- Pray that members of today's people group will understand that they can become part of God's holy family and experience His goodness.
- Pray for Brahmin families and communities to discover and embrace the free gift of life found by trusting in Christ and his finished work.

■ 5 Yadav in India

The Yadav caste group shows great leadership—politically and socio-economically—especially in the two largest states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Fear that Christianity aims to turn individuals from their families, communities, and traditions hinders Yadav families and communities from considering the gospel.

Genesis 12:2-3

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.

The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. Exodus 15:2

- Pray that members of today's people group will look to the Lord alone for strength and victory.
- Pray for a movement of God's blessing to flow through Yadav families so that they can discuss and apply God's Word.

■ 6 Bania in India

"Bania" is something of a generic term, and there are many Bania communities. The Bania trace their history back about 5,000 years, and today we associate them with trade and business.

Exodus 15:11

Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?

- Pray that today's people group will understand that glory, holiness and power come only from our Lord and king.
- Pray for discovery Bible studies to spread rapidly and bless Bania families and communities.
- Pray for workers and that a strong movement to Jesus will bring whole Bania families and communities into a rich experience of God's blessing.

■ 7 Rajput in India

The name Rajput is derived from the Sanskrit word rajputra, meaning son of a ruler. The Rajputra constitutes a class of nobility. The Rajput clans emerged as a dominant community in north and western India in the colonial period. Economic data suggests that the majority of Rajput are landowners.

Exodus 18:11

Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people.

- Pray that non-believers among this people group will be convinced to follow the Lord because of His miracles.
- Pray for the few Rajput believers to be effective at engaging their families and communities in discussing Bible stories and experiencing God's blessing.
- Pray that a strong movement to Jesus will bring whole Rajput families and communities into a rich experience of God's blessings.

■ 8 Najdi Arabs in Saudi Arabia

Najdi is one of the varieties of the Arabic language spoken by Saudi Arabs. Saudi Arabia is completely off limits to any kind of indigenous Christian presence, and there are almost no followers of Jesus among the Najdi Arabs. However, there are few, and they need outside prayer support.

Exodus 20:3 | *You shall have no other gods before me.*

- Pray for this people group to understand and obey this essential and central command.
- Pray that Najdi Arab believers would learn to live in the power of Christ's Spirit.
- Pray the Najdi Arabs would hunger to know forgiveness of sin, found only through faith in the work of Christ on the cross.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among this Muslim people.

9 Sunda in Indonesia

The Sunda are the largest Indonesian unreached people group. In many areas, Islam is mixed with Sunda traditional customs. They have a legend that God incarnated a little of Himself in the world in order to protect the life of man. Data from the West Java Statistical Department shows a high rate of poverty among the Sunda. There is a need for agricultural investment and modernization and in development of small to medium-sized businesses.

Exodus 23:25-26

You shall serve the LORD your God, and he will bless your bread and your water, and I will take sickness away from among you. None shall miscarry or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.

• Pray that many from this people group will serve the Lord and receive His abundant blessings.

• Pray for the Lord to use His children to bless the Sunda financially and spiritually, and that the Sunda will give God praise.

10 Persian in Iran

The government of Iran is strongly opposed to anything they perceive as Western, including the gospel. The government of Iran tries its best to stop the spread of the gospel, but that country has the fastest growing church in the world, largely thanks to their government-dictated form of spirituality. Now is God's time for drawing the Persians to Himself.

• Pray that as members of this people group become part of God's holy family that they will also find His purposes for them.

• Pray for Persian believers to be so filled with the love and joy of having a relationship with Christ that others would take whatever chance they need to belong to Him.

• Pray for the spread of the gospel in Iran to continue to be blessed by multiplying house church movements. Pray for entire families to come under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and understand that Jesus Christ died for them.

11 Uyghur in China

Millions of Uyghurs live in China, a nation that imprisons well over one million Uyghurs in brutal "re-education" camps. Although almost all Uyghurs are Sunni Muslim, they mix their Islam with folk religion. Ask that suffering Uyghurs would experience God's comfort from within re-education camps and broken homes.

Exodus 34:8-9

And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. And he said, If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.

• Pray that members of this people group will soon have as rich an understanding of the need for God's presence as Moses did. A small but growing number of Uyghur believers live in nearby Central Asia.

• Pray that they would be strengthened in their faith and filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

• Ask God to disciple Uyghur believers to start a Disciple Making Movement for Uyghur communities throughout China.

12 Daasanach in South Sudan

The Daasanach, who are sometimes called the Marille, are a people with fairly recent history. Known for their fighting prowess, these exiles from other groups have come together to survive against the rough environment they live in. The Daasanach are very hard to reach due to their wariness of outside people and their lack of technology.

Exodus 40:34-35

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

• Pray for many from this people group to experience the glory of the Lord and allow Him to transform them forever.

• Pray for the Daasanach to have all the food and resources they need.

• Pray for them to have peace in their lives and with each other.

• Pray for the few believers to stay strong and live their lives by example to others.

• Pray for a powerful movement to Christ among them this decade.

■ 13 Arabic-speaking Algerians in Algeria

People groups change through the centuries. The Romans conquered Algeria and the Berber peoples who lived there. In the seventh century, the Arab Empire was in full swing, and they conquered and settled that same land. Though Algeria is culturally Arab, their form of Arabic has borrowed a number of words from the earlier Berbers. Thus, the nations of North Africa have their own forms of Arabic.

Leviticus 19:1-2

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

• Pray that new believers among this people group will seek holiness by allowing the Holy Spirit to transform them from the inside out. Pray that the uncertainties of life would open Algerian Arab Muslims to seek Jesus as the answer. Pray that the JESUS Film and audio materials would be used effectively among them.

■ 14 Arabic-speaking Moroccans in Morocco

In 670, Umayyads of Damascus completed the first Islamic conquest of the North African coastal plain, settling in what is now Morocco. Arabs have ruled this region ever since, which includes the original Berber tribal groups of North Africa, some of whom were Christians before the Arab invasion. This cultural mix resulted in scholarly advances in science, mathematics, astronomy, geography and medicine.

Numbers 6:24-26

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

• Pray this blessing on today's people group.

• Pray that a strong movement to Jesus would bring whole Moroccan Arab families and communities into a rich experience of God's blessing.

■ 15 Nigerian Fulani in Nigeria

Scattered mostly in Nigeria and Cameroon, these semi-nomadic people fiercely reject anything they perceive contrary to their lifestyle of roaming with their cattle herds. This includes education and permanent homes. One businessman and member of a ruling party has established two large cattle ranches, forcing the Fulani tribal people from their historic grazing land. They were given no compensation.

Deuteronomy 10:21

He is your praise. He is your God, who has done for you these great and terrifying things that your eyes have seen.

• Pray that many from this people group will make the Lord their only God, and thank Him for His miracles.

• Pray the Fulani would be able to care adequately for their families, better prepared for the rapidly changing conditions of the 21st century.

• Pray they would see the need to make schooling a priority for their children.

■ 16 Mushunguli in Somalia

The Mushunguli people are said to have descended from fugitive slaves who escaped from their Somali masters in northeast Tanzania around 1840. Many migrated to Somalia in search of security from the slave-trade, and mainstream Somalis look down upon them because of their slave origins. Somalia is not a hospitable place for Christian outsiders to live and work.

Joshua 1:8

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

• Pray that many from this people group will not only study but apply what God teaches through His word.

• Pray these people would be able to care for their families, living in safety and peace.

UNREACHED OF THE DAY

■ 17 Tunisian Arabs in Tunisia

In the first few centuries after Christ, a strong church was established in present-day Tunisia despite intense persecution from the Romans. Disunity, factions and a failure to translate the Bible into the local languages weakened the church. When Arab invaders arrived in the 7th century, Islam spread rapidly and Christian roots were forgotten.

Joshua 4:24 | *So that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever.*

- Pray that the "nation" we are praying for today will know that the Lord's hand is powerful and will give Him praise.
- Pray for Tunisian Arabs to become aware of their spiritual bankruptcy before God.
- Pray for dreams and visions that would open Arab eyes and show them that Jesus is the only way to God.

■ 18 Shuwa Arabs in Chad

Populated with independent adventuresome nomads, Chad lies at the crossroads of a major trans-Saharan trade route and Africa's second largest wetland, Lake Chad. For years, various tribes and terrorist factions have fought for control of this region. The Shuwa Arabs of Chad are mostly nomadic, but some live in the villages and towns. Shuwa Arabs play a minor role in Chad's political arena. Many missionaries have left Chad because of the numerous conflicts, political upheavals, and harsh living conditions.

Ruth 2:12 | *The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!*

- Pray for today's people group to seek and find refuge with the Lord and be rewarded.
- Pray that they would be able to provide adequately for the needs of their families.
- Pray for a Christ-ward movement that will bless the Arabs of Chad.

■ 19 Muslim Jats in Canada

After 1858, under the British Raj, the Jats were known for their service in the Indian Army, being categorized as a "martial race" by the British. Today the Jat peoples are one of the most prosperous groups in India on a per capita basis. As a general rule, it's the more prosperous and well-educated peoples from South Asia who are allowed to immigrate to Canada. Jat farmers are also known to be experts at producing a high yield, so these people are also welcome in other parts of the world.

1 Samuel 2:2 | *There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.*

- Pray for influential members of this people group to understand that there is no solid rock like our God!
- Pray for a movement of Jesus to heal and strengthen Jat communities.

■ 20 Karapoto in Brazil

Though many Brazilian tribes are still undiscovered by the outside world, some have been in contact with the Portuguese speaking majority for a long time. Among these are the Karapoto people, who are somewhat assimilated. They have their own language, which is being replaced by Portuguese. They are sedentary farmers and herders. In their minds, they think that another way of worship (Christianity) disconnects them from their traditions, ethnicity and society. Many have not had contact with those who put Christ's teachings into practice.

1 Samuel 5:4 | *But when they rose early on the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off on the threshold. Only the trunk of Dagon was left to him.*

- Pray that many from this people group will understand that their gods have failed them, but God never fails!
- Pray for an unstoppable Disciple Making Movement among the Karapoto people.

21 Sarnami Hindi in Curacao

This people group originated in the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar before they went as indentured servants to Curacao, just north of South America, to work in salt mines and plantations. Oil, shipping, and tourism are important industries in Curacao, and most likely, the Sarnami Hindi people are involved in these industries. The majority of the Sarnami Hindi people in Curacao are Hindu, and only about one percent of them are Christian of any kind.

1 Samuel 17:45

Then David said to the Philistine, You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.

- Pray that the nations will know that they cannot defy the Lord.
- Pray for spiritual receptivity among these Hindus. Pray for a Disciple Making Movement to emerge among the Sarnami Hindi people.

22 South Ucayali Asheninka in Peru

The South Ucayali Asheninka live in the central jungle areas of the Peruvian Amazon. They have suffered greatly at the hands of outsiders and terrorist groups. They are subsistence farmers, and the men go hunting and fishing in the evenings. They have an animistic worldview, and they rely on shamans to appease wicked spirits. There may be few true believers in this people group.

1 Kings 18:21

And Elijah came near to all the people and said, How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people did not answer him a word.

- Pray that today's people group will indeed see the vast difference between the Lord and any other deity.
- Pray that they will follow Him.
- Pray for their growth and the courage to share Christ with their families and communities.
- Pray for those trying to improve the lifestyle of the Asheninka group to make great strides in the 2020s, resulting in a people movement to Christ.

23 Hindi in the US

Hindi is the language of India's densely populated and highly unreached northern states. Almost all Hindi speakers in the US hold high-paying positions and they come from the prestigious castes that are bypassed by the gospel in India. Wealth is an obstacle to the knowledge that one has spiritual needs.

1 Kings 18:39

And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God.

- Pray that today's people group will understand the vast power and goodness of the Lord.
- Pray for Hindi speakers to overcome spiritual barriers and accept Jesus' finished work on the cross as the only payment for sin.
- Pray that North America would be fertile ground for a movement to Christ among Hindi speakers.

24 Kogi in Colombia

The Kogi people have lived in the mountains of Colombia for hundreds of years. They wear white, homespun, plant-based clothes. Living in round huts made with stone, mud and palm leaves, they bar outsiders from their ancestral lands. "Aluna" or "The Great Mother" is the creator goddess they worship. Colombian believers can take Christ to the Kogi people, but they will need to take precautions to ensure they are not introducing new diseases. The Kogi tribe must make necessary changes to cope in modern society.

2 Chronicles 7:1-2

As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD's house.

- Pray for today's people group to be in absolute awe of the Lord when they hear of His glorious presence.
- Pray the youth would learn to read and gain valuable skills.
- Pray the tribe would not be exploited by those inclined to take advantage of them.

UNREACHED OF THE DAY

25 Tajik in Uzbekistan

Tajiks are one of the major people groups of Central Asia. Tajiks have repeatedly been invaded and conquered throughout their history. The armies of Alexander the Great, the Arabs in the seventh century, Genghis Khan, the Turks, the British, and the Russian empire have all had a profound impact on these people.

2 Chronicles 7:15 | *Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place.*

- Pray that you will be encouraged to pray, knowing that the Lord will hear your prayers that are in accordance with His will.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger among the Tajiks in Uzbekistan.
- Pray that many among these hospitable people would receive Christ's ambassadors as well as the Lord's blessings.
- Pray for a movement of Tajik households to study the Bible and accept the blessings of Christ.

26 Northern Thai in Thailand

The Northern Thai community has followed Buddhism for 1,000 years, and like other Theravada Buddhists, they mix their beliefs with numerous animistic rituals. Protestant missionaries have worked in northern Thailand for about 150 years, but response from the Northern Thai has been painstakingly slow. Their understanding of sin is very different than that of Christ followers.

Nehemiah 1:6 | *Let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned.*

- Pray for the Lord to raise up believers from among today's people group that will faithfully and fervently pray for their people.
- Pray for Thai families to be drawn to Jesus and to the Bible to find out more about Jesus.
- Pray the Thai would increasingly desire a solution for their sin problem.
- Pray they would desire a Savior, someone who can provide forgiveness for sin and power to live this life victoriously.

27 Azeri Turks in Iran

In Iran, this people group is known formally as Azeri. Informally, the Azeris and other Turkic speaking Iranian groups are commonly referred to as "Tork" (Turk). Despite conflict in the past, the Azeri are now well represented at all levels of the government and military, as well as in the religious community. The living conditions of Azeris in Iran closely resemble that of Persians.

Nehemiah 2:4 | *Then the king said to me, What are you requesting? So I prayed to the God of heaven.*

- Pray that you will not pass up the chance for short, but effective prayers when you intercede for the nations.
- God is moving in Iran; pray that God will lead Azeri families and communities into a movement to Christ.
- Pray that the Azeri families of Iran will increasingly be drawn to Isa al-Masih (the name Muslims use to refer to Jesus) and to God's Word.

28 Vietnamese in Cambodia

The Vietnamese living in Cambodia today are a people without a country. They are not citizens of Cambodia. They are not allowed to take jobs that could be filled by a Cambodian. Buddhism and animism are deeply ingrained in the Vietnamese and Cambodian cultures. If a Vietnamese person becomes a believer, he or she risks being alienated by his or her family and neighbors.

Nehemiah 8:5-6 | *And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.*

- May this people group have Holy Spirit reverence for the Lord when they hear His word.
- Pray that Cambodian Vietnamese believers would grow strong in the faith and be able to meet the needs of their families.
- Pray that God raises up a Disciple Making Movement among this people in this decade.

■ 29 Hui in Malaysia

The Muslim Hui people who live in Malaysia originally lived in China. Many left China to establish businesses in Malaysia or to escape religious persecution after the communist takeover in 1949. Even though they share the Muslim faith of the majority of the Malaysians, the Hui are not seen as Malaysians because their family language and ancestry are Chinese.

Nehemiah 8:1

And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel.

- Pray for an eagerness to hear and heed God's word among this people group.
- Pray that each Hui in Malaysia would have the opportunity to hear the gospel.
- Pray that the Lord would raise up a Disciple Making Movement among the Hui in Malaysia in this decade.

■ 30 Tai Lue in Laos

The Tai Lue dwell in villages near rivers. Most make their living growing and selling wet rice and other crops. Other Tai Lue fish and make jewelry from silver, and their women are expert weavers and embroiderers. The JESUS Film and God's Story video are both available in the Lu language. The Tai Lue are primarily an oral culture, so these would be good resources for them.

Nehemiah 8:8

They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

- Pray for this people group to understand God's word when they hear it.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to soften the hearts of the Tai Lue so that they will be receptive to the gospel.
- Pray that the gospel will spread rapidly throughout the Tai Lue people and that Christ will be glorified.

■ 31 Vanniyan in India

Does your ancestry include royalty? The Vanniyan believe theirs does. They claim to be descendants of medieval kings who ruled South India. Today Vanniyan are the most politically mobilized and well-informed caste in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Their main language is Tamil. Most Vanniyan engage in agriculture and animal husbandry for a living while educated Vanniyan are politicians, engineers, administrators, scientists, and university professors.

Nehemiah 9:3

And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made confession and worshiped the LORD their God.

- Pray that hearing the word will lead to deep repentance.
- Ask the Lord to enable Indian believers to share Christ with the Vanniyans and help them begin their own Disciple Making Movement.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to soften their hearts of the Vanniyan towards Jesus.

FEBRUARY

■ 1 Kist in Georgia

In the 18th century, ethnic Chechens came from Chechnya to settle in Pankisi Gorge. These Chechens were named "Kist" by the Georgians. Over time, the Kist people have adopted Georgian last names and Georgian as their secondary language.

Nehemiah 9:6

You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.

- May the hearing of God's word lead to this people group understanding who God is and the fact that He gave them life.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would guide the Kist people into a movement to Christ.
- Pray that they would understand the gospel, that Jesus saves us by grace through faith in him and that salvation is not based on good deeds.
- Pray for the few believing Kists.
- Pray that the Lord would give them strength, courage and love to share the gospel with those around them.

■ 2 Crimean Tatar in Ukraine

The Crimean Tatars are Turkic people who have inhabited the Crimean Peninsula for over seven centuries. During World War II, the entire Tatar population in Crimea fell victims to Stalin's oppressive policies, and they were deported to other parts of the Soviet Union. Today, most live either in Russia or Ukraine.

Nehemiah 9:29

And you warned them in order to turn them back to your law. Yet they acted presumptuously and did not obey your commandments, but sinned against your rules, which if a person does them, he shall live by them, and they turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not obey.

- Pray that when this people group hears the word that they will respond with heart-felt obedience.
- Pray for resolution of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine as to the "ownership" of Crimea.
- Pray for a Holy Spirit-generated movement to Christ among the Crimean Tatars that will lead to a Disciple Making Movement.

■ 3 Sylhetti Bengali in the UK

Driven by poverty and drawn by ambition to see the world, many Sylhetti Bengali left Bangladesh and joined the English merchant fleet during World War II. After the war, they settled in various cities of the United Kingdom.

Psalm 2:8

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.

- Ask now! Ask Him for this people group to become part of His family.
- Pray that the relatively few believers would honor the Lord with their lives and represent him well to family and friends.
- Pray the Bengalis in the UK will understand what it means to know and follow Jesus.
- Pray the Lord will give them faith to believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that He offers eternal life and power for living this life well.

*

■ 4 Pomak in Bulgaria

The name Pomak means "people who have suffered," which is an accurate description. Throughout history, they have been considered the outcasts of Bulgarian society. The Pomaks are virtually all Muslim, and their religion makes up an integral part of their identity. It will be difficult for them to accept Christ without feeling like they are turning their backs on their people, something that has been damaged during the last 100 years.

Psalm 8:1

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

- Help this people group to know from the heart and the head that the Lord is great! Ask the Lord to send forth laborers to work among the Pomaks.
- Ask God to create a hunger within the hearts of the Pomaks to know the Truth.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Pomaks that will result in many blessings for this ethnic group.

■ 5 Yazidi in Germany

The Yazidi religion borrows ideas from five different faiths. They have been persecuted and misunderstood by Muslims who controlled them for centuries. In 2014, many of them fled the persecution by ISIS in Iraq and Syria, finding refuge in such places as Germany. A handful of Yazidi have come to faith in Christ.

Psalm 9:1

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.

- Pray for many from today's people group to tell of God's marvelous deeds to their families.
- Pray Yazidi-background believers would be free to practice their faith, as the Yazidi have historically persecuted and even stoned to death those who convert. ISIS sympathizers have attacked the group even in Germany.
- Pray for true peace among these displaced and traumatized people.

6 Min Nan Chinese in New Zealand

In the mid 19th century, the Min Nan were among the Chinese who immigrated to New Zealand because of a gold rush. After WWII, another wave of Chinese immigrants fled the communist takeover of China, making their home near Auckland. The primary religion practiced by the Min Nan Chinese is ethnic religion which is deeply rooted in a people's ethnic identity. They believe that conversion equates to cultural assimilation or even betrayal.

Psalm 16:2 | *I say to the LORD, You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.*

- Pray that this people group will understand that they have many good things, all of which came only from God the creator.
- Pray for Chinese groups in New Zealand to disciple those who are spiritually hungry in the ways of Jesus.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Min Nan people to flourish in New Zealand.

7 Kanarese in New Zealand

Many states in India have their own language and Karnataka is no exception. The Kanarese are Kannada speakers who blend in well with other South Asians who have migrated to New Zealand. South Asians tend to come together as one group. However, Kannada speakers did establish their own association to preserve the language, culture, and religion in New Zealand.

Psalm 16:11 | *You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

- Pray that many from today's people group will find joy in the Lord, and the pleasures of being with Him for eternity.
- Pray that those who follow Christ among the South Asians in New Zealand would honor the Lord and draw others to him through their words and actions.
- Pray for believers to lovingly reach out to the Kanarese in New Zealand.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement to flourish among them.

8 Cocos Islands Malay in Christmas Island

The land of coconuts, Christmas Islands, is the home of the Cocos Malay people. It was part of Singapore until there was a business deal in 1958 with Australia. The Cocos Malays have established an identity for themselves despite their disparate origins. The majority of the group is Muslim and they are deeply committed to their religion. This people group needs workers skilled in outreach to Muslims.

Psalm 19:1 | *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

- Pray that many from today's people group will look to the sky, see God's artwork, and commit themselves to following this awesome savior!
- Pray for the Lord to raise up such people.
- Pray for the word of Jesus to spread among the Cocos Malays until there is a massive harvest among them.
- Pray for their spiritual and physical needs to be met.

9 Afghan Tajiks in Afghanistan

When does a Tajik speak Dari instead of Tajik? When he lives in Afghanistan! The Tajiks make up about one-fourth of Afghanistan's population. Because they do not have a high literacy rate, the gospel can probably best come to them using oral means. A few possibilities are videos, recordings, radio, skits, and stories from Scripture.

Psalm 19:7 | *The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;*

- Pray that this people group will find the word of the Lord to be trustworthy and look to it for wisdom and spiritual guidance.
- Pray for followers of Jesus in Afghanistan to be effective in demonstrating how Jesus blesses and heals families and communities.
- Pray for peace in Afghanistan, for a stable and effective government and for improved living conditions.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Tajiks of Afghanistan that will bless them abundantly.

UNREACHED OF THE DAY

■ 10 Southern Uzbeks in Afghanistan

The Uzbeks are descended to a great extent from Turk-Mongol invaders. Uzbeks come from a predominantly Sunni Muslim background. They need to overcome misunderstanding about who Jesus is and what he has accomplished on our behalf.

Psalm 20:7 | *Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.*

- Pray that many from this "nation" will boast only in the name of the Lord.
- Pray for laborers to sow God's Word to persons and households of peace, which would in turn catalyze movements to Christ among the Uzbeks.
- Pray the Uzbeks will increasingly see Jesus as the only way to salvation and will hunger to find out more about this man.
- Pray for a movement to Christ.

■ 11 Gorani in Albania

The Gorani are a folk Islamic people who live in small villages in the rugged mountainous regions of what is now Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. Herding and agriculture are their main form of livelihood. Their hard life, war and determination to maintain their folk Islamic identity has caused many, especially the young, to migrate to other countries. Their remote geographic location contributes to making it hard to reach them.

Psalm 21:1 | *O LORD, in your strength the king rejoices, and in your salvation how greatly he exults!*

- Pray that leaders from this people group will look to the Lord, and only Him for strength and guidance.
- Pray that God would cause the Gorani to trust God's servants and be open to knowing God through his voice found in his Word.
- Pray for their family heads and community leaders to lead the way to a movement to Christ.

■ 12 Ziban Bedouin in Algeria

Since the Arab Conquest in the seventh century, the Ziban Bedouins have roamed the vast Saharan Desert of Algeria in small family clans. If they break the rules of their society each clan selects a sheik to determine whether or not they are guilty. If a person is found guilty, they use the laws of the Koran as their guide. Their nomadic life, strong sense of independence, and Islamic identity have made them unwilling to accept outside ideas.

Psalm 21:13 | *Be exalted, O LORD, in your strength! We will sing and praise your power.*

- Pray that this people group will rejoice in the Lord with singing and celebration when they see His mighty acts of mercy and salvation.
- Pray that leaders and individuals of the Ziban clans will be reached, so they can lead their people to the Lord.

■ 13 Tajakant in Algeria

The Tajakant are sedentary, engaged in small-scale trading and farming. They mainly live in Morocco and the Moroccan administered territory of Western Sahara, but some live in Algeria. In past years, the Tajakant were known as traders and warriors, and held a strong position in the trans-Saharan trade between sub-Saharan Africa and Morocco. They are Muslims.

Psalm 23:1 | *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.*

- Pray that this people group will be satisfied with the Lord alone and turn to no other god.
- Pray for good quality radio broadcasts in their language.
- Pray that changes within the Tajakant culture would include the lordship and blessings of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for a Christ-ward movement.

■ 14 Nubri in Nepal

In one of the most isolated areas in the Himalayan region bordering Tibet, the Nubri people live in scattered villages throughout the Nubri Valley where they herd their animals, make beer, grow wheat, welcome a few tourists, seek out a location for their cell phone signals, and celebrate their traditional Tibetan Buddhist festivals. Each village has a temple, and the lamas do rituals to bless houses and fields, heal the sick, and appease local mountain spirits with offerings.

Psalm 23:3 | *He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

- Pray that this people group will accept and follow the Lord's direction and thank Him for giving them strength.
- Pray for spiritual hunger that would lead the Nubri people to the foot of the cross and the empty grave.
- Pray that they would hunger and thirst for righteousness.

■ 15 Chinese in Angola

In the last couple of decades thousands of construction workers, engineers, doctors, cooks and petroleum engineers have migrated from China to Angola. They are extracting oil and developing Angola's damaged infrastructure after many years of war. Angola is one of China's largest suppliers of oil. The Chinese companies are using local materials, but hiring Chinese people from the People's Republic of China (PRC). This is not providing jobs for the Angolans, so the Angolans resent this situation.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4

• Fear is a liar! Pray that this people group will be fear-free when they decide to follow the Lord.

• Pray for Chinese and African believers to work together to make sure that the Chinese in Angola have the chance to worship him.

• Pray for a Disciple Making Movement to grow among the Chinese in Angola.

■ 16 Northern Yemeni Arabs in Yemen

A couple of decades ago Yemen was split into two countries. Though it is united today, there is an ongoing war that pits various religious and ethnic communities against one another. The northern tribes of Yemen may be referred to as the Sanaani Arabs, and they are highly unreached.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Psalm 23:6

• Pray for leaders of today's people group to put all their hope in the Lord just like King David did when he wrote this Psalm.

• Pray for a just peace to come to Yemen.

• Pray that Northern Yemeni families would increasingly experience the righteousness and forgiveness found only in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

• Pray for the Lord to visit Northern Yemeni family leaders with dreams and visions that will set their hearts towards the Savior.

■ 17 Tihami Arabs in Yemen

The Tihami is the narrow western coastal region of Yemen on the Red Sea and home of the Tihami Arabs. In addition to poverty, literacy is one of the problems in the Tihami. One prevalent tradition in all of Yemen is qat, a mildly narcotic leaf that is chewed for hours at a time. Qat holds a strong grip on the peoples of Yemen. The predominate culture in the Tihami centers around Islam, but sometimes tradition or cultural customs supersede Islamic law.

The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, Psalm 24:1

• Pray that many from today's people group will recognize that they belong to the Lord, and they can rejoice in that fact!

• Pray that those disillusioned by all the problems in Yemen would search until they find the Truth that can set them free.

• Pray for a growing interest in Jesus among all the peoples of Yemen.

• Pray they would begin searching for forgiveness for their sin and for power to live this life.

• Pray for a movement to Christ among the Tihami Arabs.

■ 18 Turk in Argentina

By the year 1299, the Turkish-dominated Ottoman Dynasty began ruling over what would become a vast empire, greater in area than the Roman Empire. It was the last Caliphate, an Islamic political state. During the time of the Ottoman Empire, a small number of Middle Easterners migrated to Argentina including a few Turks. Most of the Turks in Argentina live in the capital city of Buenos Aires.

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. Psalm 25:1-2

• Pray for many from today's people group to give their entire lives to God.

• Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Turks in Argentina that would spread to Turkey.

• Pray for Argentine believers to be salt and light to these Turks.

■ 19 Kababish in Sudan

The term "Kababish" is usually used to describe anybody who is half Arabic and half black. The Kababish are a loose tribal confederation of Arabic people of mixed origins who live in a region of desert scrubland. They are traditionally Muslim. Access to these people is very difficult. Many are nomadic and Sudan is harsh.

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long. Psalm 25:5

- Pray that this very year many from this people group will seek the Lord for the right path to true righteousness and guidance.
- Pray for peace in Sudan, and for adequate food and water for the Kababish people and for their livestock. Ask God to give the Kababish hearts to hear the good news of Jesus and to seek him in the Bible.
- Pray for a movement to Christ.

■ 20 Azeris in Armenia

Armenia was the first nation to become officially Christian. Today, there are Muslim Azeris that live in Armenia, and there was recently a war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Although the Azeris' original occupation was agricultural, most Azeris today live in apartments in cities. The long-standing hatred between Azeri Muslims and Armenian Christians keeps Azeris from giving Christ a chance to transform their lives.

Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. Psalm 25:8-9

- Pray for many from today's people group to have the humility to learn from the Lord and follow His ways.
- Pray for the Lord to call long-term missionaries to go to Armenia and share Christ with the Azeris.
- Pray for prayer teams to be raised up to break up the soil through worship and intercession that will draw Azeris to Jesus Christ.

■ 21 Northern Kurds in Armenia

The Muslim Kurds are the largest people group without their own homeland. They are spread across Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Armenia, and Georgia. This oil-rich area is known as Kurdistan. The Kurds of Armenia enjoy a relatively high standard of living, and they have good quality homes.

All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies. Psalm 25:10

- Thank the Lord that He leads with love and faithfulness!
- Pray that many from today's people group will discover that and act upon it.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to soften the hearts of Muslim Kurds toward Jesus as Lord.
- Pray for God to strengthen, encourage and protect the few known Kurdish believers.
- Pray for a strong church planting movement to be raised up among the Kurds of Armenia.

■ 22 Lashari Baloch in Pakistan

The Lashari Baloch people live in the southernmost region of the Iranian Plateau, and they are mostly a tribal people, following tribal customs. They are predominantly Sunni Muslims, although some are Shia.

For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my guilt, for it is great. Psalm 25:11

- Pray for many from today's people group to understand that they are sinful and need God as their savior.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to call missionaries to go to the Lashari Baloch people in Pakistan.
- Pray for God to open their hearts when they hear the gospel.
- Pray for God to provide workers who speak the Balochi language to work with the Baloch people until they have an unstoppable movement to Christ.

23 Hmong Njua in Australia

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, various Hmong groups, including the Njua, had to flee Southeast Asia. They were perceived to be against the emerging communist governments, especially in Laos and Vietnam. Though most Hmong Njua left Southeast Asia 40 years ago, there are still small waves fleeing to safe countries like Australia. The primary religion practiced by the Hmong Njua is ethnic religion.

My foot stands on level ground; in the great assembly I will bless the LORD. Psalm 26:12

- Pray that many from today's people group will allow their spiritual lives to be transformed by the Lord, and that they will begin to publicly praise Him.
- Pray for a powerful move of the Holy Spirit that will affect Njua leaders and families, resulting in a growing discipleship movement.
- Pray for other Hmong groups in Australia to disciple those who are spiritually hungry in the ways of Jesus.

24 Mandaean in Australia

The Mandaeans are descendants of Jewish-Christian Gnostics and may be the only sect to identify themselves as Gnostics. Sometimes, Mandaeans are called "Christians of Saint John," because they venerate John the Baptist, and baptism is their central sacrament. In actuality, Mandaeism is based more on a common heritage than on any set of religious creeds and doctrines. Until recently, Mandaeans lived mainly in Iraq and Iran, but many have now settled in other countries such as Australia. Their reverence for John the Baptist is a natural bridge to the Savior he proclaimed.

One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple. Psalm 27:4

- Pray for eternal salvation to many from today's people group.
- Pray the Mandaeans will be open to new world views.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among them in Australia.

25 Chechen in Austria

Austria holds the fifth largest Chechen population outside their homeland to the east in the Caucasus Mountains of Russia. Virtually all Austrian Chechens are trilingual, fluent in Chechen and Russian, and competent in German. The majority of Chechens in Austria often reside in urban centers, with the rest working as farmers in rural areas.

You have said, Seek my face. My heart says to you, Your face, LORD, do I seek. Psalm 27:8

- Pray that many from today's people group will crave fellowship with the One True God.
- Ask almighty God to call workers who are trained in the Chechen language to help these Muslims begin a movement to Christ.
- Ask God to soften the hearts of the Chechen people in Austria, especially the local elders and family heads.
- Pray for Chechen disciples to grow and bear spiritual fruit.

26 Afghans in Austria

Ever since the USSR invaded Afghanistan in 1979, there have been waves of Afghan refugees fleeing for safety. Most of them have settled in neighboring Pakistan or Iran, but some have made their way to the more peaceful shores of Europe. One of these European destinations is Austria. There are still no known Afghan believers in Austria.

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD! Psalm 27:13-14

- Pray for many leaders from today's people group to put their confidence in the goodness of God and wait faithfully for His deliverance.
- Pray for Western believers filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit to go to the Afghans and other Muslim communities in Austria.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to move in Afghan communities in Austria so that they would tire of the old ways of violence and seek holiness, which they will only find in the person of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for workers, and for a Disciple Making Movement among Afghans in Austria.

■ 27 Avar in Azerbaijan

Avar People are the largest linguistic group of Russia's Dagestan region and historically the most powerful. Honor/shame is a high code, deeply ingrained in the Avar cultural psyche. This is true throughout all 34 of the Dagestani people groups, but perhaps most pronounced in the Avar. Some of them live in nearby Azerbaijan. The cultural affinity for revenge prevents them from forgiving or repenting, two things essential for a relationship with the Living God. There are now more than 50 Avar believers!

The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him. Psalm 28:7

- May this be the attitude of many from today's people group. Thank Almighty God for these new believers!
- Pray for blessings upon God's Word in Avar.
- Pray for men and women of peace in each Avar town and village to be keys to welcoming the love of God, the grace of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit into each Avar household.

■ 28 Bahraini Arabs in Bahrain

Bahrain is the smallest Arab state, being an island country in the Persian Gulf. Its strategic location has brought rule and influence from the Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Persians and finally the Arabs, under whom the island became Muslim. Until Bahrain adopted Islam in 629 AD, it was a center for Nestorian Christianity. Oil was discovered in 1932 and has brought rapid modernization to Bahrain. Wealth often stands as an obstacle to faith in Christ since it blunts the sense of need.

The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever. Psalm 29:10

- Pray that many will understand that God is the undisputed King of kings, and beside Him there is no other.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger that would lead them to the cross.
- Pray for believers to take Christ to Bahraini Arabs.
- Pray for an unstoppable movement to Christ among Bahraini Arabs.

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Motus Dei The Movement of God to Disciple the Nations

Discover Your Place in the Movement of God

An incredible breakthrough in missions history is taking place as disciples of Jesus make more disciples of Jesus around the globe, particularly among the least-reached. But what exactly are these church planting or disciple making movements? Where are they occurring and what are their unifying features? How are they manifesting in diverse populations? *Motus Dei*, Latin for "movement of God," seeks to answer these questions and more.

Warrick Farah has expertly synthesized an extensive conversation between mission practitioners, scholars, and seasoned movement leaders from around the world. *Motus Dei* locates the current Church Planting Movement (CPM) phenomenon within modern history, while tracing its roots back to the first century, and articulates a missiological description of the dynamics of Disciple Making Movements (DMMs) in Asia, Africa, and diaspora contexts in the Global North.

God is moving in unprecedented ways! Kingdom movements have happened throughout history, but in the last thirty years God has started more than 1,400 movements with more than eighty million disciples in many unreached peoples and places. Motus Dei is an invaluable effort to evaluate and learn what God is doing in movements.

Stan Parks, PhD | cofacilitator of the 24:14 Global Coalition; VP of Global Strategies, Beyond

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