

Mobilization to Strategy: A Personal Journey

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My wife and I arrived here in the summer of 1982. We took an intensive version of the course *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* and then attended the staff orientation/recruiting week of the U.S. Center for World Mission (now Frontier Ventures). In August of that year, Ralph D. Winter invited us to join the team. As we drove away to raise our support team, we were filled with vision.

We shared that vision with anyone who would listen—and a few who probably didn't want to! Faithful brothers and sisters joined our team for prayer and giving—many of whom are still with us! What we shared was a passion for the people from Unreached People Groups, who woke up every day and went to bed every night not having heard that Jesus—the only hope of the world—had visited the earth and loves *them*.

We also remember telling people that, as an organization, we were going to “work ourselves out of a job.” As I was reminded about that idea recently, I pondered some of the reasons we said it. One, was that we were focused on “closure” or seeing a Church Planting Movement among every people group.

Another was that we saw that some missionaries stayed too long once the church reached a people. So, we encouraged them to stay where they were and shift to mobilize those existing churches to reach unreached peoples like they had. We believe that one of the most important roles for a mission worker in a reached group, is to multiply workers to the unreached. I'm sure I've written about that idea here in *MF* in the distant past.

But in a very real way, we have worked ourselves out of the job of mobilization, which was our main organizational focus at the beginning. Perhaps it would be better to say that we have been part of getting a

bunch of others involved in mobilization—which is what mobilization is all about! Of course we still have vision and passion, but now, for me, it is further informed by profound and meaning-filled relationships globally. These relationships have given wisdom to our vision and deepened our resolve to stay at this task.

Mobilization is needed in every generation and culture. It is amazing to see that *many* others have picked up the mobilization mantle globally. And they do that in fresh ways which fit their specific context better than we ever could. Great friends of mine are doing an amazing job of mobilization in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Churches, in at least some places, are effectively reaching out to the refugees near them, who are from unreached populations.

Over the years, we have learned a lot about what it means to see the gospel take root in places where it hasn't been before. We are still learning and growing. And, we have greatly clarified what remains to be done in Frontier Missions.¹ We know a lot about what doesn't seem to work, so we work hard to provide strategic tools and resources for those God is calling to a similar vision. We want them to avoid unnecessary mistakes which are costly to the spread of the great good news that is the gospel.

So I have shifted to the broader role of Global Connections Strategist—encouraging everyone I can who works, or wants to work, among the unreached. I do that by being a friend, mentor and encourager to leaders and to younger global workers. It may be a westerner, or some rare believer among an unreached group.

We continue to call every believer who will listen to get involved in the task. That includes *you!* Are you and I engaged as wisely and as much as God is calling us to? That is a question we should all ask ourselves regularly. How might I *engage* more with the unreached who—increasingly—are all around us? Should I *give* more to those who are engaged in this kind of work? How can I *pray* more specifically that God will move to extend His love to cultures where that has not been fully demonstrated yet?

The pages of the *Unreached of the Day* which follow, can help you do that. Keep them near wherever you pray. And remember James 4:2c “you have not because you ask not.” Our “asking” should be that God will break through with the gospel among every Unreached People Group.

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¹ See the November/December issue of *MF* for a full issue on the remaining task at www.missionfrontiers.org