

A close-up photograph of a nurse in blue scrubs smiling warmly at a young child. The nurse has a white star sticker on her cheek. The child is looking up at the nurse with a curious expression. In the background, there are shelves filled with various bottles of medicine in a pharmacy or hospital setting.

How Perspectives Changed My Perspective

By REBECCA L. MEYER, PHD, MSNED, BSN, RN

Rebecca Meyer has been a nurse for more than 35 years. In the hospital setting, she worked in the PICU/CVICU and as an educator, charge nurse, and manager. Becoming a full-time professor in 2010, her clinical focus shifted to community development and academic service learning. She trains students to serve cross-culturally and is the curriculum coordinator and co-author of *Christian Global Health in Perspective*, part of Health for All Nations.

How Do I Serve “Over There”?

I didn't go to college right after high school. When I did, I had no clue what to do with my life. I just knew I needed to start fresh with all the general education courses, and then, hopefully, the Lord would lead me in the right direction. I had a vague notion about serving overseas, maybe with the Peace Corps, but I had no idea how to get “over there” and didn't know about cross-cultural missions opportunities. The Lord was faithful and led me into the nursing field. At first, I worked with adults and resisted working with children since I thought it would be too hard. I can relate to Jonah, running from what the Lord wanted me to do. I finally gave in to the Lord's prompting and found my niche in pediatric intensive care, caring for the sickest and most vulnerable littles. It was exactly where he wanted me to be, working there for more than 20 years. I got married, had children, and still felt a tug on my heart to serve “over there,” but I still didn't know how.

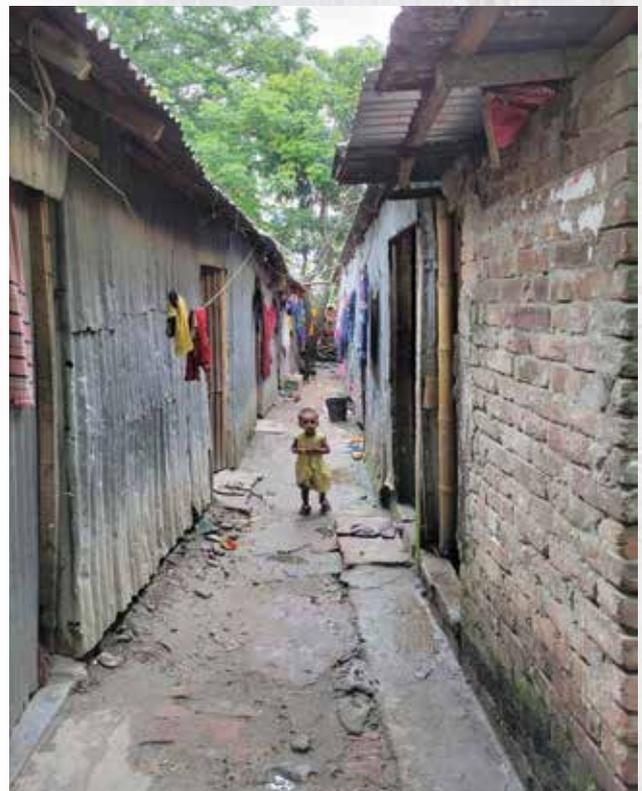
For so long, I searched for meaning in my life. Realizing that I can glorify him in everything I say and do was an important idea for me to understand.

The routine of life and raising three children took over. I served in various ways in my church and community. Sometimes, I functioned as the camp nurse for hundreds of kids in places like Ensenada. I still felt like there were more ways to serve the Lord using my discipline. But I didn't know what or where to look. Eventually, I realized the Lord was calling me to teach. Of course, he had a plan and purpose all along. He led me to teach full-time at a faith-based university that sends hundreds of students to serve overseas every year. Students who want to participate in overseas service are trained to share the gospel and show the love of the Lord to everyone they meet. I also discovered that even though this was a faith-based school, most students are not believers. The Lord brought me to a different mission field than I had imagined.

Paradigm Shift

This same university offered faculty the option of taking the Perspectives course. This was the first time I'd heard of the course. Being new to the organization, I decided to take it. I was amazed as I started reading the workbook, completing the lessons, and referring to the reader. I had been a Christian for a long time, yet had no idea the Bible told the story of missions from Genesis through Revelation. *Why had I never heard this idea before?*

Talk about a paradigm shift in my way of thinking about the Word. Statements like “We are blessed to be a blessing” and “Missions exist because worship doesn't” changed my perspective on my part of God's story. I had never thought of being blessed so that I in turn could bless others. I wrestled with the idea that missions exists because worship doesn't. As a long-time member of my church's worship team, this was a brand-new way of thinking.



Another turning point for me in the course was a discussion centered on why God created us. I did not realize that we were created to glorify him. I somehow missed this important part of the Word. Reading Psalm 96 and learning that believers are to declare his glory among *the nations* was a new way of thinking for me. Many friends would say they love Psalm 46:10, only quoting the, “Be still and know that I am God...” (NIV) portion. That phrase is even found on posters and bookmarks. I was in the same boat. Yet, I didn’t know the rest of the verse: “I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” No matter what, the Lord will be exalted. For so long, I searched for meaning in my life. Realizing that I can glorify him in everything I say and do was an important idea for me to understand.

One week, our Perspectives facilitator showed a video of the missionaries who died in Ecuador. Not having grown up in a Christian home, this was the first time I heard their story. We had an exciting discussion afterward about “counting the cost” and whether it was worth it for them to go. We found out their families went back and continue to this day to serve in that area. That was a turning point for me. The Lord used that situation to bring more people into his kingdom. I started reading biographies of missionaries like William Carey, Hudson Taylor, and Lottie Moon, to name a few. I read more about redemptive analogies and numerous books by Don Richardson such as *The Peace Child* and *Eternity in Their Hearts*.

Missions and His Kingdom

As a nurse, I wanted to learn more about healthcare missions, so I read books such as Greg Seager’s *When Healthcare Hurts*. I attended mission conferences such as Urbana and the Global Missions Health Conference to learn more about mission opportunities. Suddenly, the Lord provided connections and opportunities beyond my imagination.

I found a place to serve overseas and share the gospel while teaching. Because the Lord led me to a faith-based university, I started training with and leading students on service-learning opportunities while

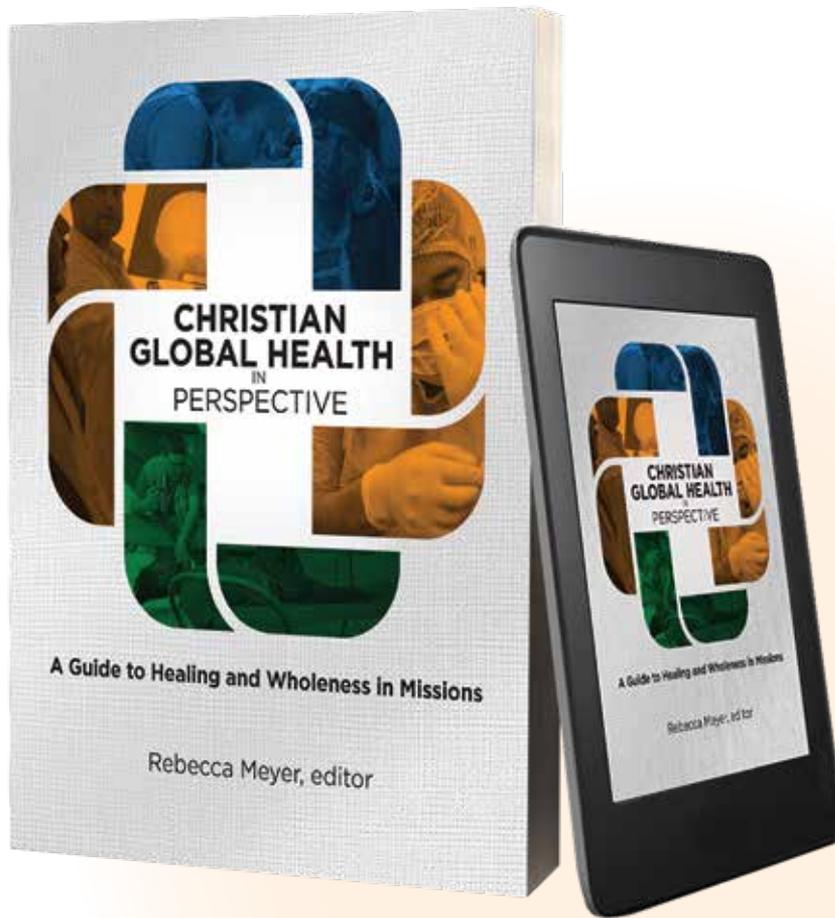
taking the Perspectives course. These experiences reminded me that the Lord wants his Word to be shared with all peoples. The notion is expressed in one of my favorite Bible verses, “There before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb” (Rev 7:9, NIV). What a wonderful picture of heaven!



Conclusion

Through the Perspectives course, I realized that the Lord uses us no matter where we are, whether “in Jerusalem, and all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NIV). As a professor, I have taken students overseas and partnered with long-term workers. I’ve been blessed to share the gospel with the unreached in the slums of South Asia, the hill country in Southeast Asia, and the cities of Europe. I also have been blessed to be a sender for those serving long-term. I finally understand my place in God’s story and how to use my discipline and the Word to love everyone, no matter where the Lord has me. MF

Healing the Nations. Restoring Shalom.



Christian Global Health in Perspective fills a critical gap in the healthcare missions ecosystem. The course combines theologically sound missiology with responsible and sustainable medical practice. It provides a unique and well-curated biblical and historical perspective while also leading participants to thoughtfully consider future models and paradigms.



DOUG LINDBERG MD
FAAF Director, CMDA Center
for Advancing Healthcare Missions

The world is grappling with complex health challenges and disparities, forcing us to confront many pressing questions. How do Christians understand and practice healthcare? What is the biblical view of health and healing? This workbook unravels these queries, offering deep insights into the Christian approach to global health issues.

Christian Global Health in Perspective delves into the biblical foundations of health, historical perspectives of Christian medical missions, and strategies for integrating faith with modern healthcare. Health is wholeness in body, mind, and spirit. The authors, seasoned experts in theology and medicine, guide readers

through an exploration of how the church can innovatively respond to current global health concerns.

This resource is essential for healthcare professionals, church leaders, development workers, and anyone interested in the intersection of faith and health. Reading this book may result in a paradigm shift for some who view remission of disease as the sole focus for healing, when from a biblical perspective, wholeness and shalom form the basis for promoting health. *Christian Global Health* invites you to join this transformative mission, where faith and healthcare converge for global well-being.

We Were There

Looking Back 50 Years Ago!

By BRUCE AND CHRISTY GRAHAM



Bruce and Christy Graham have served with Frontier Ventures as Senior Associate General Director and within the Personnel Department, respectively. Bruce currently focuses on the biblical story with Frontier Ventures' 2HC collaborative in India. Christy assists the Pasadena School of Supernatural Ministry in developing satellite courses in churches and ministries outside of Pasadena, including in other nations.

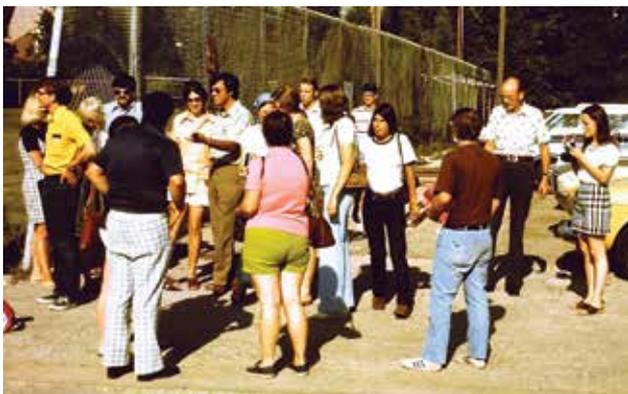
Our experience in the early years of the Perspectives movement germinated several new initiatives. These were the fruit of the vision, inspiration, and commitment planted in us through the 1970s and 1980s. We were a group of young people, hungry to know how to fulfill God's purpose in our generation. Ralph Winter, his family, and an older generation of mission leaders inspired us, believed in us, and gave us a vision for various projects and initiatives.

The year was 1974. I had just finished a master's degree in Aeronautics and Astronautics at MIT in Boston. Park Street Church's mission program inspired me to consider taking a year after graduation to attend Gordon-Conwell Seminary. During that year, Winter led a one-month course at Gordon-Conwell on the world Christian movement. Our common background in engineering quickly connected us.

Shortly after he returned home to Pasadena, California, I began receiving phone calls from him and his daughter Beth. They encouraged us to attend the first Summer Institute of International Studies (SIIS) to be held that summer (1974) at Wheaton College in Illinois. Winter saw a significant jump in response to the commitment cards distributed at the 1973 Urbana Convention. College students signed a card at the end of Urbana '73 in much higher numbers than in previous years, saying they were "willing and desirous to learn more about world missions" or to "become foreign missionaries." So, he created a new program to help students make an informed decision about their future involvement in missions. Having been stimulated by Park Street Church's strong mission focus, we decided to attend that first class at Wheaton College.

That summer, we learned from seasoned missionaries. Each speaker spent a week with us. We had class in the morning, studied in the afternoons, prayed, and heard stories as we sat together in the evenings. That communal experience and the teaching content week after week greatly inspired us. Many of us in that first class were convinced that we ought to pursue world missions as a life calling.

In 1975, Christy and I returned to Park Street Church. We shared much of what we learned that summer with others in the college group. This led to recruiting 22 from Park Street Church to return with us to Wheaton the next summer for the second SIIS program. By then, Winter added to the content of the first course so that a second-year module was available for returning students.



SIIS 1975 led by Charlie Mellis

The coordinator of the program that year was Charlie Mellis, who studied at the Fuller Seminary School of World Mission under Winter. He had recently written a book called *Committed Communities: Fresh Streams for World Mission*. The idea of communities engaging in mission together captivated our hearts during that summer.

Multiple new initiatives grew out of the program that summer. The first was a trip to Guatemala to visit the communities among whom the Winter family had worked for 10 years. Twenty-two SIIS students piled into seven old cars and drove non-stop from Wheaton to Guatemala. Along the way, we visited a “committed community” somewhere near the Mexican border.



Car caravan to Guatemala

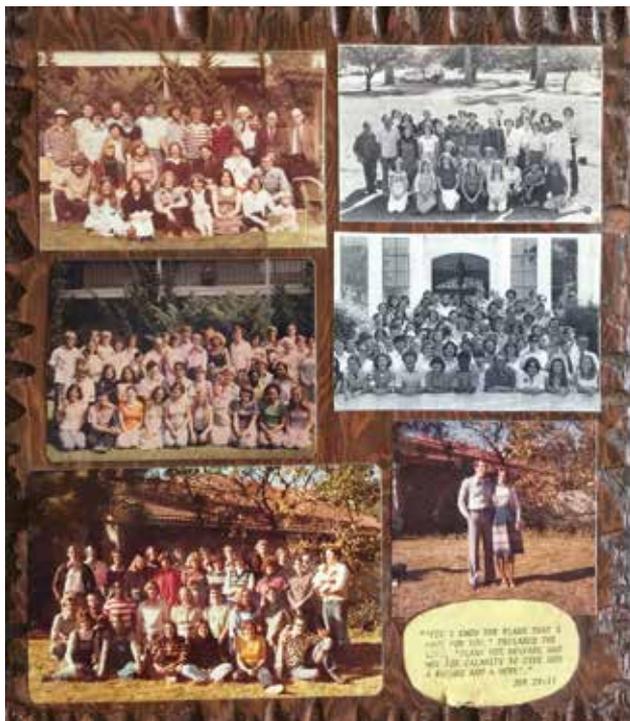
During this time, Winter contemplated leaving his position at the School of World Mission at Fuller Seminary to start a committed community. That dream would become a reality a year later when he established the US Center for World Mission (USCWM). Several of us SIIS alumni joined him in that effort. That year, we moved to Pasadena to attend the School of World Mission at Fuller while continuing to recruit for and help plan the next year’s SIIS at Wheaton. We started the Fellowship of World Christians and what we called the Haggai community (a committed community with 12 of us living at one point in a large house near what became the US Center campus).



Haggai community retreat

We returned to Wheaton for the third class in 1976. David Bryant was the coordinator that year, and the class increased in size every year. Students were involved with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Campus Crusade, and Navigators. The movement was growing! During this time, the USCWM was being launched. It was a place where our growing “World Christian” vision and commitment found

many avenues of expression. We set up a Perspectives desk at the center and continued to mobilize global-minded Christians.



Early PSP classes at USCWM

During January of 1978, Winter held a concentrated course at the US Center office building. We called it the Institute of International Studies. Christy and I became coordinators of that class for the next two years as it continued to develop at the USCWM.

During that 1978 January class, we invited Sam Kamaleson (an Indian and vice-president at World Vision International) to teach one of the lessons. We were greatly stimulated by his mission initiatives in India and decided to launch the Advanced Institute of International Studies. Over the next two years, we took SIIS/IIS alumni to India, giving them first-hand exposure to cross-cultural ministries among unreached peoples. Many who went were launched into the nations, even as it launched our family into missions in India.

Looking back, we can see how significant it was that an older generation invested in us, a younger generation impacted by spiritual vitality across the USA in the early 1970s. We found a way to study world missions in community for concentrated periods.



Haggai community India team



First Advanced Institute of International Studies



Advanced Institute of International Studies 2

We had avenues for starting projects and participating in them. The projects gave us ways to express the commitment and vision we had received. Among the most significant of them was the continuation of IIS, which soon became the Perspectives Study Program. The USCWM (now Frontier Ventures) sustained the program through a committed community, rooted in frontier mission vision, based in Pasadena. It was a very significant part of our and many other lives. MF

A Perspective on Perspectives

By GARY PETERSON

Gary Peterson serves with Wycliffe Bible Translators on a team of “specialty networkers” doing targeted recruitment for specific high-priority needs for Wycliffe Global Partners. Their goal is to provide Scripture to those still without a Bible in their heart language.

I grew up in a very mission-minded home. My mom even considered full-time missions. Missionaries visited our home all the time, and I loved their stories. I attended very mission-minded churches. Weeklong mission conferences were the norm; we’d attend as many of the meetings as we could. Again, I loved the stories—these missionaries were amazing people who lived amazing lives. I also graduated from a very mission-minded Bible college. Some professors were former missionaries. You could tell because they always had the best stories, and we all had to take mission classes.

But I wasn’t going to be a missionary. I felt I had another call. I was going to be a youth pastor, which I did in several churches. Let someone else do the “missions thing.”

As part of my preparation for youth ministry, I had three goals: (1) work at a Christian camp, which I did for a summer; (2) see the mission field for myself so I could learn if what I believed was a result of being an American or because I was a Christian. (I did that for two summers in Central America. I returned from my second summer with dysentery *and* the mission bug. I got over dysentery but not the mission bug); (3) see the United States, which I finally did after becoming an overseas missionary.

I joined Wycliffe Bible Translators for a two-year assignment. I came in as a mobilizer (church relations staff) with the intention of going into translation when I completed my linguistic training. But God had other plans. I’ve mainly worked as a mobilizer ever since (42 years!).

It was 22 years into my career when I was asked to teach a Perspectives class. I knew of the course, having been offered scholarships to take it over the years, but I could never put 15 weeks together. So, I let the opportunities slide. Yet, how could I teach missions not having taken it? My wife and I prayed about it and soon learned there was an “intensive” taught at the US Center for World Mission in Pasadena. Where would I get the money to attend? A supporter of ours, out of the blue, made it possible, and off I went.

I thought I knew just about everything about missions and what the Bible says about it. So did others taking the course with me. We had to have at least nine lessons completed before it started, including the reading. It seemed daunting at first, but wow, I couldn’t get enough! I often found myself reading way beyond what was required. The class included Fuller seminary students as well as lay people, pastors, and missionaries. What I learned during that course was revolutionary to me and my role in Wycliffe. I discovered many things totally new to me. Some things were reinforced; other things had to be unlearned. Throughout the course, I kept hearing from other participants like me who felt it was mind-blowing!

Perspectives helped me to see the big picture of what God has done, is doing now, and will do in the future. It has flavored every talk and conversation on missions I’ve had since, and I read the Bible with new eyes.

I’ve had the privilege of being an instructor for nearly 60 classes. Each time I teach, I study the lesson again as if it were the first time, and I continually get something new from it. 



Reflections from Wycliffe Staff

A few Wycliffe staff were asked about their thoughts on Perspectives outcomes. They include **Stacy Lee** (Perspectives Team Manager), **Chris Sheeran** (Perspectives Relationship Coordinator & National Administrator for Perspectives), **Andy Minch** (Recruitment Strategy Specialist), and **Ben Thornley** (VP of Church Engagement). Here are their responses.

How has partnering with Perspectives impacted Wycliffe?

Stacy: Many people who have served with Wycliffe over the years have been greatly impacted by their Perspectives experiences. Some, like me, point to Perspectives as the main catalyst for their journey with Wycliffe, while others took Perspectives after serving with Wycliffe for many years. Several of those people were surprised to learn how much they still had to learn. Now, we have a team dedicated to supporting Perspectives through coordinating classes, instructing classes, administrative help, area teams, and even editing the 5th edition *Reader*.

Chris: Partnering with Perspectives has vastly increased our connections and relationships with local area churches. As we got to know the students (and as they got to know us), there were plenty of opportunities to share about Wycliffe's work. Some of them joined Wycliffe; others became ministry partners with us! We have the opportunity through Perspectives to pour into the lives of these special people, many of whom are very sensitive to God, feeling that they were "made for more" than what they were currently involved in. We had many occasions to tell our story and how God uses even people like us in his service.

Andy: Mission agencies need workers not only with the right skills but also the right heart. A mission recruit, convinced that any sacrifice for God's mission is worth the cost, is a valuable recruit. As with most mission agencies that ask recruits to name the most influential factor in their becoming a missionary, Wycliffe consistently hears, "Perspectives." Perspectives classes put our instructors in front of audiences that our best recruitment events cannot match.

Perspectives alumni are given the proper foundation and the right questions to ask when considering joining God's global mission. This is so important that Wycliffe has a team dedicated to supporting and partnering with Perspectives. Wycliffe's rich experience with Bible translation has been front and center in modern missions and touches all aspects of missions. Wycliffe instructors often tell impact stories about the most necessary tool for evangelism and church planting—the Bible. They not only focus on unreached people groups; they also can speak to the use of current technology, as well as how Bible translation unites local churches and sometimes becomes a catalyst for people movements.

For those who want to be used by God in great ways, Perspectives classes identify such people and prepare their hearts for a life of faithfulness. Wycliffe and other agencies enhance the Perspectives curriculum with stories and a vision of how to join God's great mission.

How has Perspectives impacted you?

Chris: For me, the course right away filled in a lot of holes in my missions thinking. We took the course after we had been in missions for 20 years. But, oh, how I wished we had taken it at the start of our journey!

The first thing that hit me was how God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12 shows his heart for the peoples of the earth. I was then struck by how often the Old Testament mentions the nations. Reaching the nations isn't just a New Testament idea! Other sections of the course connected so many dots with amazing instructors and excellent articles.

Soon after taking the course, we became involved in helping with the class. It was only a short step to coordinating a class, which we did for many years. As a class coordinator, it was precious to see people respond to God's call to serve him globally. Many life trajectories were changed through the course. Some students served in overseas missions. Others became involved in international student missions. Most stayed in the home area, with some of them becoming more involved in missions and outreach through their churches.

Stacy: Perspectives opened my eyes to how big God is. I had no idea of his mission to *all* peoples from the very beginning of Scripture. I read the Bible with new eyes, unable to unsee the thread of God's heart for the nations and his desire to be glorified in all the earth. I had worked as a nurse for 10 years when I took Perspectives. Unhappy and dissatisfied, feeling I had made a mistake in my career path, I didn't know what else to do.

Perspectives helped me see God had a bigger purpose for my life. I connected with people from Wycliffe during the course and, over a 12-to-18-month period, learned how I could serve in the work of Bible translation from where I live. Only God could have written my story over these past few years. Now, I serve as the liaison between Wycliffe and Perspectives!

Andy: The Perspectives course gave me a clarity of purpose. To view Scripture, history, and life from God's perspective provided a paradigm shift that screamed that God is not content with the status quo. Understanding God's consistent mission since the beginning of time left me with an unavoidable choice. My purpose in life could be wrapped up in what *I* thought was good, or I could faithfully join God in *his* global mission.

Give an example from your experience when you learned something new about God while attending Perspectives.

Chris: For me, it would be God's tremendous heart for the nations. I am not sure how I missed that growing up

and in my early Christian years! As a visual, I looked up all the verses in the Bible that referred to the nations and put the references on little strips of paper. I stapled each strip to a long piece of yarn and inserted it in my Bible on the proper page, then on the next strip, and the next strip, and so on. Once during class, I showed them this Bible with a bunch of yarn loops hanging out of it and explained that the yarn connected each verse about the nations. We then carefully pulled out the yarn, reading a couple of the verses along the way. The length of the yarn from beginning to end was over 30 feet!

Give an example of how you've witnessed the impact of Perspectives on the lives of others (especially those joining Wycliffe).

Chris: When we started coordinating classes, Jeanette and I worked as a team. Jeanette's teaching background made her amazingly effective in organizing and facilitating the class. I helped with administration and technology. Our initial classes were very large, so after the first week, Jeanette split the students into table groups to mix things up.

Occasionally, she played matchmaker, too! In one class, Jeanette assigned two young single people to the same table, and during the class, they found they both desired to serve God in missions. They pursued God's will together and attended Canada Institute of Linguistics (CanIL) to study linguistics, got married, joined Wycliffe, and eventually went to Papua New Guinea as translators! After that, we enjoyed telling people we were "full-service" recruiters.

Ben: A friend of mine, Mike, attended Perspectives with his wife. Halfway through the course, a light bulb went off in his head: he didn't have to move overseas to join the missions movement; he could use his skills here in the US to support missionaries. This radically changed his life. He has personally raised a lot of money for Bible translation and other missions efforts!

Stacy: I've seen how Perspectives brings churches together. No less than 10 churches are represented in local classes here in Huntsville, Alabama, each time. I love seeing the body of Christ come together like this! Fellowship, friendships, partnerships, and collaborations for kingdom advancement all find a place to start and grow in Perspectives classes. 



The Fruit of Perspectives in Local Churches

By **MATTHEW ELLISON**

Matthew Ellison has served as president and coach at Sixteen:Fifteen since 2004, helping churches and agencies develop strategic missions engagement and partnerships to reach the unreached. Learn more at 1615.org or email matthew@1615.org.

The Apostle Paul begins his epistles to the churches with warm greetings and inspiration, but it seems he reserved his most encouraging words for the Philippian church. With every remembrance of this church, Paul's prayers overflowed with thanksgiving and joyful petition. Why did the thought of this church evoke such joy and celebration in the heart of one of the greatest missionary saints of all time? Well, they were partners in the spread of the gospel: "Because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now" (Phil 1:5, ESV).

People use the word "partnership" so frequently today that I fear it has lost its saliency, but we must understand that Paul's partnership with the church in Philippi was far more than a shallow pat on the back. This deep bond of fellowship results from God's people participating together, at immense cost to themselves, in the greatest movement in history; namely, the ingathering of worshipers from every

nation, tribe, and tongue for the everlasting fame of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

At Sixteen:Fifteen, every remembrance of the Perspectives family evokes joy within our hearts. Prayers of thanksgiving are offered up because of our nearly 20-year partnership in mobilizing God's people into his mission. Perspectives has helped create a movement of churches with divine discontent, with a clearly defined purpose and dauntless passion to see Jesus worshiped by all peoples in eternal delight.

Divine Discontent

Since founding Sixteen:Fifteen in 2004, we have coached hundreds of US churches to unleash their God-given potential to reach the nations. These churches are not content to do missions by proxy. Instead, they desire to actively engage the hearts, hands, minds, and imaginations of all their members. These churches moved from a reactive to a proactive approach to doing missions. They are communities for whom the thought of unreached peoples is simply unacceptable. One might say that these churches have divine discontent, a frustration with the missions status quo.

Perspectives has helped create a movement of churches with divine discontent, with a clearly defined purpose and dauntless passion to see Jesus worshiped by all peoples in eternal delight.

When we begin coaching a church, we start with some diagnostic questions to help them understand their current missions reality. How did you arrive at a place where you recognized a need to rethink and retool your approach to missions? What forces, decisions, choices, and circumstances got you to this place?

In essence, we ask people why they saw a need to enlist the help of Sixteen:Fifteen. Countless times, I have heard, "Perspectives got us here." A church member, leader, or pastor experienced Perspectives. This inflection point filled them with longing to see the unreached reached. They desire to see their church become active participants in God's grand narrative. We come alongside them to help them discover, design, and deploy their church's unique

gifts in partnership with others to make Christ known among all nations.

Definitions

Two important questions churches need to consider is, "What is missions, and why does it matter?" This is especially critical today because numerous churches in the West have adopted a philosophy that says every good, altruistic, or evangelistic work is a missions work and that every follower of Christ is a missionary. But are these biblical concepts? Are they helpful? Do they lead to more missions work being accomplished or less? Calling everyone a missionary and every good work a missions work are likely well-intentioned notions. Still, they have unintended consequences. Such declarations obscure or minimize the priority of taking the gospel to all peoples, especially the unreached ones.

In March 2018, a Barna survey revealed that 51% of North American Christians did not recognize or know of the Great Commission. Here is the more alarming statistic: Of those 49% of Christians who recognized the Great Commission, only 37% could identify Matthew 28:18–20 from a list of five Scriptures. That means only 17% of Christians identified the Great Commission from multiple choice options. Houston, we have a problem.

Without a biblical definition of *missions* informing and shaping churches' missions decisions and actions, they may find that much of what they call "missions" is not missions work at all. Sixteen:Fifteen believes that a primary reason many churches struggle to do missions well is because they have thought about missions poorly.

Perspectives puts poor thinking about missions in its crosshairs, clearing the fog of confusion. Churches that engage Perspectives emerge with an understanding of missions, what it is, and what it isn't. This leads not to a mere redefinition of missions but to a rediscovery of the Bible. Jeff Lewis, long-time Perspectives instructor and Sixteen:Fifteen team member, wisely said, "May our missions definitions be driven not by our personal interests, prejudices, and preferences but by the passions and purpose of the God of all nations."¹

¹ Jeff Lewis, "Foreword," in *When Everything Is Missions*, ed. Matthew Ellison and Denny Spitters (Orlando, FL: Bottomline Media, 2017), 13.

So, not only are we beneficiaries of Perspectives but we return the favor by connecting churches to the course. We believe wholeheartedly that if churches do not have a firm grasp on the biblical basis for missions and if they do not have a passion for God's name and renown, they will find it difficult, if not impossible, to sustain an enduring commitment to reach the nations.

Churches who engage Perspectives emerge with an understanding of missions, what it is, and what it isn't.

I tell students that Perspectives is not a missions course; rather, it is a journey into the very heart of God.

Dauntless

If churches we coach have not experienced Perspectives, we, without fail, point them to the study program because we believe a big world missions vision begins with a big vision of God. When I teach the biblical section, I tell students that Perspectives is not a missions course; rather, it is a journey into the very heart of God. The aim of the course is for students to encounter him in such a profound and powerful way that the impact will be permanent and life-changing.

I've heard it said, "Knowing comes before doing, and it shapes and informs the doing." For a local church to be effective in the Great Commission, they must be gripped by the greatness of Christ. They must have a motivation that sustains enduring commitment. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:18-19). Perspectives helps churches understand that our mandate to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations" is based upon the authority and greatness of Christ.

A passion for God in worship must precede the offer of God in missions. This is precisely why we strongly encourage churches to incorporate the Perspectives Study Program as a part of their missions education strategy. Reaching the unreached is incredibly costly; thus, churches must be dauntless. Jeff Jackson, a pioneer church planter in Southeast Asia, said

something 30 years ago that I've never forgotten. "Matthew, it was a love for lost people that got me to the mission field, but it was a love for Jesus that kept me there." Perspectives kindles a deep love for Jesus in churches, without which they will merely dabble in missions, at best.

Delight Now

Several years ago, Sixteen:Fifteen was privileged to walk alongside church leaders at Calvary Murrieta in Murrieta, California, helping them to clarify their global mission, vision, and strategy. Because the leaders at Calvary experienced Perspectives, we stepped into a rapidly flowing missions current. One of their Great Commission convictions, no doubt influenced by Perspectives, was "Church-Wide Participation: Mobilizing everyone at Calvary Murrieta to embrace their unique role in the Great Commission."

They determined that they would provide multiple ways for congregants to engage the Great Commission, using something they call "vision handles." These handles are broad sets of opportunities that allow the whole church, regardless of age, income, or even missions experience, to grab onto the vision for themselves.

While visiting Calvary Murrieta not long ago, I decided to see if this value was just a platitude or something more. I talked to many people over a few days, across age groups, both staff and lay. Without exception, they all not only knew about Calvary's vision to engage two unreached people groups, but they had a supernatural delight born from their participation. A passion to see Jesus known and loved throughout the world permeated the church's atmosphere, from the janitors to the nursery volunteers.

J. Campbell White was the first secretary of the Layman's Missionary Movement who mobilized countless lay people to fund and resource the Student Volunteer Movement. He said it best: "Most men are not satisfied with the permanent output of their lives. Nothing can wholly satisfy the life of Christ within his followers except the adoption of Christ's purposes toward the world he came to redeem. Fame, pleasure, and riches are but husks and ashes in contrast with the boundless and abiding joy of working with God for

the fulfillment of his eternal plans. The men who are putting everything into Christ's undertaking are getting out of life its sweetest and most priceless rewards."²

By rallying everyone at Calvary Murrieta to actively and sacrificially engage in the Great Commission, church leaders simultaneously invited them to experience some of the best and highest delights available on this side of heaven and to anticipate even greater delight to come. The first part of their mission vision statement captures the heart of the Perspectives movement so well: "We see a vision so awe-inspiring where we witness God's fingerprints and not just our own efforts. We see [two] people groups being discipled, and in turn, discipling their neighbors. We see all of Calvary Murrieta being changed by anticipating these nations standing before the throne of God."³

Delight Later

"After this, I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" (Rev 7:9–10).

In this breathtaking passage, the Holy Spirit peels back the curtains of time and space, giving us a glimpse into the trajectory of all history. Here we see the Lamb of God receiving the reward of his suffering. What is his reward? Worship! Worship that is flowing from the redeemed from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages.

This is the resolution of God's story. You could call it the consummation of his Church. It's worth noting in Acts 2 that the Church was inaugurated in a global context and, in Revelation 7, is consummated in a global context. When in heaven, bowing down before

the Lamb, alongside untold numbers of worshipers from all nations, there will be no doubt as to what God's ultimate mission was. We will know then, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that this mission was the greatest movement in history.

On that day, no child of God will think, "I regret that I was so passionate about missions," or "I invested too much time mobilizing God's people into his mission," or "I made too much of missions while on earth, I should have focused more of my attention and energy on other things." No, on that day, those who treated missions as unimportant or as an addendum stapled onto normal Christianity, who thought, "missions isn't my thing," will wonder how they marginalized one of the weightiest and most massive issues in the universe.

God is using Perspectives to increase and elevate the joy and delight of people in churches the world over, both now and later.

To be sure, all of God's children will behold the glorious throne room scene described in Revelation 7. Yet I believe only those who joined the Father in the family business of making disciples of nations, tribes, and tongues will inherit the honor and delight of knowing that God mercifully worked in and through their lives to bring worshipers into his presence. Their heavenly crowns will be brightened with the acclamations that will redound to the Savior from people groups won to Christ, because they lived for the greatest cause.

God is using Perspectives to increase and elevate the joy and delight of people in churches the world over, both now and later. So, in closing, to our friends at Perspectives, I extend a heartfelt thank you. Because of our partnership in the gospel, churches are bearing much fruit among the nations, fruit that brings glory to our Father.

And to you reading this article, the next time you encounter a church passionately engaged in making disciples of all nations, ask them how that passion came to be. I have a strong hunch that if you pull on the thread of that passion and follow it to its source, you'll likely find Perspectives. 

² J. Campbell White, "The Layman's Missionary Movement," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981), 225.

³ Calvary Murrieta, "Global Missions." Accessed February 11, 2024. calvarymurrieta.com/missions



A Perspectivas Class in Central Florida

By NEIL MOYER

Neil Moyer is Perspectives Regional Director Florida+ (Perspectives.org) and Converge (Converge.org/missions) missionary serving on the US engagement team. Neil mobilizes the US church in God's global mission. His email is neil.moyer@perspectives.org.

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”
(Rev 4:11, NIV)

Is this the way to start a class?

It was a hot, humid Thursday night in August 2021, and the COVID pandemic had finally begun to wane. It was time for our first in-person lesson in an all-Spanish Perspectives class in Orlando. Everything seemed to prevent this class from happening. There were only a handful of preregistrations as naysayers repeatedly warned us that this community would not attend classes of this nature. Our first instructor, a strong supporter of Perspectives and pastor of the host church, called to tell us that he tested positive for COVID-19 and would not be with us.

Lord, are you telling us something?

The class coordinator and the team continued to expect God to do great things as we attempted something great. The team had a strong desire to proclaim God's invitation to play an integral role in his story, being a blessing to all peoples.

But God showed us that he had taken care of things. We located an instructor who could make it, though not a Spanish speaker. No problem. Our class coordinator

was fluent in both English and Spanish and was very capable of translating for the class. The classroom doors opened to registration. Students, potential students, and guests began to arrive, and they just kept coming. More tables and chairs were set up as needed until nearly 100 people showed up to hear “El Dios Viviente es un Dios de Propósito Global (The Living God is a Missionary God).” The night concluded with prayer time as the coordinating team circulated about the various tables, praying with the students. God's presence filled the room. Our official records show that 55 students registered for the class. All were registered at the certificate level except for one at the key reading level.¹

Bring on the celebration

After the first night, the class found their routine of instruction, discussions, and prayer. It continued for three months, covering 15 lessons, each taught by a different instructor. After the last class, a time of celebration, commissioning, and rejoicing was scheduled for February 2022.

¹ Perspectives on the World Christian Movement offers three levels of engagement: key reading, certificate, and credit.

The celebration for the *Perspectivas* class was a grand event that lasted nearly three hours. Thirty students received certificates for successfully completing the course (see title photo). Pastor Gonzalez commissioned each of the students to pursue Christ who is worthy. Students were encouraged to give testimony of what they learned and how the course transformed their thinking. Some said they continued through to the end, despite the difficulty, because of the God-given mentor/graders' prayers, encouragement, and helpful responses to their questions. Members of the coordinating team also had a chance to share how God worked in their lives.

My takeaway

My region of Florida+ spans nearly 1,700 miles from the panhandle of Florida, down the peninsula through Puerto Rico, and ending up on the US Virgin Islands. This area of about 70,000 square miles has approximately 26 million people; one-third of that population is Hispanic, whose primary language is Spanish.

God is faithful to bring about things that we never thought possible. I have been a regional director for *Perspectives* for about four years, starting just before the COVID-19 outbreak, and it seemed that everything changed. In this change, I am seeing the need for *Perspectives* to expand into the Spanish-speaking community. But there are challenges with any relatively new endeavor, the lack of nearly everything except vision. We need instructors, coordinators, mentors, graders, and team members who have the *Perspectives* vision of seeing "the Body

of Christ awakened to pursue the fulfillment of God's global purpose within every people for His glory" and are culturally fluent Spanish speakers.

Finally, as an old guy who still struggles with his primary language of English, I have a vision of *Perspectivas* being the primary expression in my region. It will not be because I have learned to speak Spanish fluently or because of my vibrant personality but by the working of the Holy Spirit as he invites others to encourage and mobilize by educating the Body of Christ in the USA to strategically engage in God's global purpose.

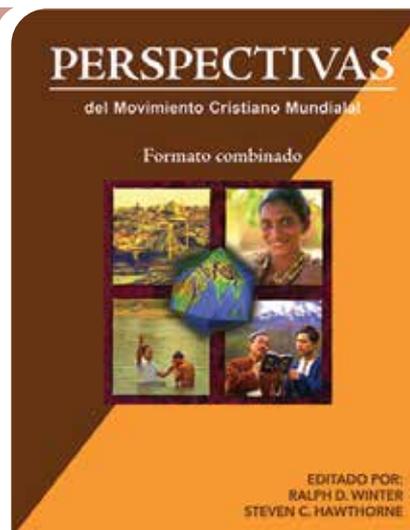
God is passionate about his glory. That is why he wants to make his glory known. As John Piper astutely observes, "God is pursuing with omnipotent passion a worldwide purpose of gathering joyful worshipers for himself from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. He has an inexhaustible enthusiasm for the supremacy of his name among the nations."²

Did I mention that our *Perspectivas* class celebrated well? My heart desires that every one of my classes learns to celebrate well with the students who have seen a different perspective of God and his mission. In like manner, the saints in Revelation 5:9 sing a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood, you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation."

² John Piper, "The Supremacy of God in Missions through Worship," *Mission Frontiers* (July–August 1996).

LEARN MORE

Spanish *Perspectivas* is just one of the many languages that the *Perspectives* course materials is available in. Explore all the options at: www.missionbooks.org.



Transforming the Church, One Person at a Time

Used with permission from CORE4RESEARCH, *The Church Unleashed*, 2010.

Why is it called Perspectives? Perspectives on the World Christian Movement has the goal of transforming the Church's perspective and vision, one individual at a time.

Chris Sheehan was a missionary for 20 years before taking Perspectives. Amazed at how it transformed his view of missions, he describes the course as “filling in a lot of holes in my mission thinking.” Now Chris is on Wycliffe's Perspective team, working with technology, websites, and area classes. He loves the way Perspectives increases his connections with local churches and his impact on students. He says, “We have the opportunity through Perspectives to pour into the lives of these special people who are very sensitive to God and know they were made for more.”

Chris is amazed at the impact a Perspectives class can have. He explains, “As a class coordinator, it was precious to see people respond to God's call to serve him more deeply. Many life trajectories were changed through the course!” Chris saw how some students went on to overseas missions, while others became welcoming to international students. Still others began serving in their hometowns through their churches and local ministries. As a world mobilizer, Chris knows that 19% of alumni who take the Perspectives course end up serving long-term on the mission field. From 2005–2010, that was 7,600 individuals!

Perspectives can transform a student's vision.

Stacy Lee served with Perspectives in many roles before serving as Wycliffe's Perspectives Team Manager for almost seven years. She remembers first taking the class: “I read the Bible with new eyes. I cannot un-see the thread of God's heart for the nations and his desire to be glorified in all the earth.” Stacy had worked as a nurse for 10 years, but her career, which had been her life, was somehow not enough. Plagued by feelings that she was missing something and her career path was a mistake, she didn't see a different road to take.

That's when Perspectives gave her a new vision of the immensity of our God and his desire to see her work with him! Stacy learned that serving God isn't restricted to going

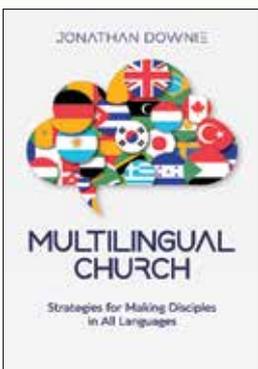
to the mission field. She began mobilizing with Wycliffe from her hometown, working with both Perspectives and Wycliffe to help people find their purpose and path in knowing and serving God. When individuals take Perspectives, they are 21% more likely to recruit others to the mission field. Each of us can heed God's Great Commission call in diverse ways.

Perspectives also brings churches together. One class may have 10 or more churches represented. By uniting area churches to jointly host the course, the body of Christ collaborates for kingdom advancement. Stacy says, “I love seeing the body of Christ come together like this! Fellowship, friendships, and partnerships find a place to grow within Perspectives classes.”

Sometimes Perspectives will transform a student's purpose.

Andy Minch, a Bible translator in Papua New Guinea for 20 years, is an Associate Editor for the Perspectives *Reader* 5th edition. He loves Perspectives and has instructed more than 100 Perspectives lessons over the past 30 years. Andy often helps students experience a transformation in their life purpose. He talks about God's mission since the beginning of time. Students have a choice to make. Andy tells his students, “[Your] purpose in life can be wrapped up in what you think is good or you can view your purpose as faithfully joining God in his global mission.” He adds, “The Perspectives course laid out for me a clarity of purpose. To view Scripture, history, and life from God's perspective provided a paradigm shift that screamed that God is never content with the status quo.”

Perspectives changes churches as students learn to “prepare their hearts for a life of greater service and faithfulness.” 



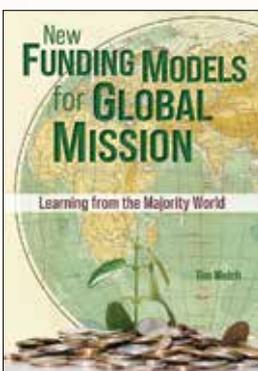
Multilingual Church *Strategies for Making Disciples in All Languages*

Jonathan Downie

Your community is multilingual.
What about your church?

In a world where communities thrive with diverse languages, why should our churches lag behind? As migration increases and technology, like livestreaming, becomes commonplace,

the need for multilingual churches is more pressing than ever. Still, many churches and mission organizations struggle with one-size-fits-all language solutions, while others desperately seek guidance to embrace multilingualism.

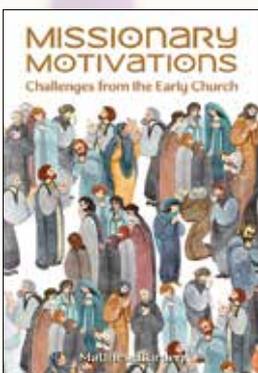


New Funding Models for Global Mission *Learning from the Majority World*

Tim Welch

New Funding Models for Global Missions begins by summarizing how world missions has been funded from the past to the present. It then critiques the common fundraising approach where missionaries raise their own financial support and

suggests possible adjustments. Tim Welch presents seventeen other funding models that are more appropriate options for contemporary missionaries, along with an overview of what the Bible says about missionary funding. He concludes with fifteen practical recommendations for individuals, churches, and mission agencies.



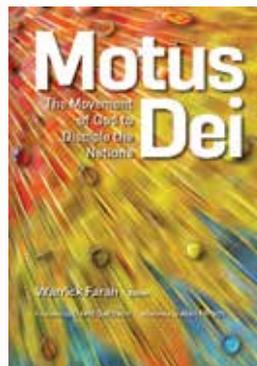
Missionary Motivations *Challenges from the Early Church*

Matthew Burden

Beginning as an obscure sect in a backwater province of the Roman Empire, the Christian faith radiated out in all directions. What drove this expansion? *Missionary Motivations* is the story of early Christianity's startling expansion. From monks to pilgrims to prisoners, early Christian

missionaries filled the earth with their message through the humblest of means, all for the glory of Christ the King. Matthew Burden provides missiological insights by helping the reader rediscover the early church's missionary vision for global mission, which stands alongside, supports, and informs the contemporary models.

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Motus Dei *The Movement of God to Disciple the Nations*

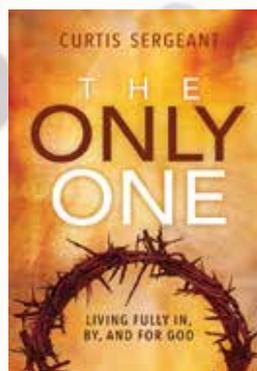
Warrick Farah, editor

Warrick Farah has expertly synthesized an extensive conversation between mission practitioners, scholars, and seasoned movement leaders from around the world. The resulting in-depth analysis of movements provides

a multi-disciplinary academic investigation of an emerging "movements missiology," highlighting the importance of theology, social sciences, ethnology and anthropology, communications theory, leadership theory, and statistical analysis. *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.

Issues surrounding movements have risen to the forefront of missiology, creating a need for a more robust theology of movements. *Motus Dei* is a window into the dynamic discussion that is reshaping how the global church is fulfilling the Great Commission. If there was any one book that provides the clearest snapshot of the current "state of movement missiology," this is it.

TED ESLER, PhD, President, Missio Nexus

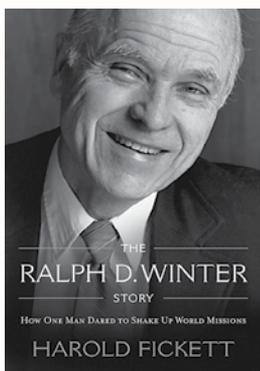


The Only One *Living Fully In, By, and For God*

Curtis Sergeant

Designed to be read, processed, shared, and used to equip others, *The Only One* is a tool to not only grow as a disciple but also to make and multiply disciples. This is about living with a greater impact on the world and the purpose for which God designed you. It's time to

experience life with Him, and others, as a joyful and exciting adventure—available in paperback, ebook, and audiobook formats!

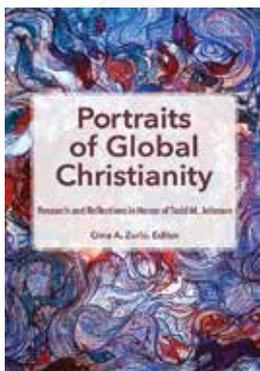


The Ralph D. Winter Story
How One Man Dared to Shake Up World Missions

Harold Fickett

Legendary missionary strategist Ralph D. Winter always provoked strong reactions, one way or another. This book captures both the genius and the controversy of a self-described “social engineer,”

named by *Time* magazine as one of the 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America.

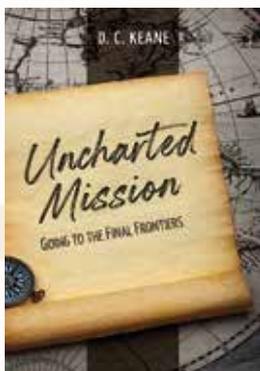


Portraits of Global Christianity
Research and Reflections in Honor of Todd M. Johnson

Gina A. Zurlo, Editor

Most World Christianity books are written for scholarly audiences only. However, *Portraits of Global Christianity* moves beyond that sphere and into the lives of Christians who have learned about

and continue to experience the global church in their everyday lives. No other global Christianity book on the market provides this kind of self-understanding on the relationship between World Christianity and individual experience.



Uncharted Mission
Going to the Final Frontiers

D. C. Keane

Uncharted Mission is a book that is more than the history of the founding of Frontiers. D. C. Keane weaves together interviews with over one hundred missionaries who refused to accept the status quo in missions and were willing to go where no one had gone

before—to the Muslim frontiers. In this inspiring true story, you’ll meet pastors, engineers, artists, pilots, and others whose lives changed course when they discovered that Muslims were largely left out of historic missionary efforts. There are still “frontiers” of mission for the next generation of Christians who want to change the world, because it is too soon to celebrate and too soon to quit.

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Perspectives

An Integrative Approach to Discipleship

By **R. GREGORY DUHART SR.**

R. Gregory DuHart Sr. is an elder at Cherrydale Baptist Church in Arlington, VA. He has been married to his wife Kimberlia DuHart for 42 years and serves the kingdom as the Mid-Atlantic Regional Director for Perspectives USA and on the Board of Pioneers USA.

“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Phil 1:6)

At age 10, I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and was baptized at Grace Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York. I gave my attention in ministry primarily to my church and in the 10–20 block radius around our church. Our pastor worked hard on teaching the Bible, discipleship, and modeling how the congregation should walk humbly before the Lord. My Christian experience did not include reading missionary biographies, going on short-term mission trips, or hosting missionaries for home assignments and mission conferences. I did not hear stories of mass conversions of unreached, unengaged peoples in far-off lands. My Christian experience was being the hands and feet of Jesus to those in need in my community, and there were always many needs that required attention.

So, when I began to understand what missionaries did, how they operated, the people they served, and the money that was spent to serve them, I was outraged and became an anti-global Christian. My thought process was that there were so many needs here in the United States that it was sacrilegious to care for

others before we took care of our own. Even with this attitude, God’s Spirit worked mightily through my church experience, developing in me gifts for teaching, leadership, discipleship, and shepherding.

“For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.” (Phil 2:13)

In 2013, the Spirit used a series of events to reveal to Kim and me that we were to leave our church (having ministered there for 10 years) to go wherever he would lead us. As we prayed, one of my criteria among others for our new church home was that it must have a high regard for the Bible. I also wanted my Sunday to look like the rest of my life—multicultural.

We visited Cherrydale Baptist Church (CBC) and found the teaching met our criteria. The church embraced the Bible’s “all people” concept. When we joined CBC, we had no idea of the significance of missions and the Great Commission within CBC’s DNA; nor did we understand their commitment to reaching unreached and unengaged people groups. In 2014, the missions pastor at CBC, Ed Grudier, asked Kim and me to join his leadership small group. I explained to him that I believed that the American church was in error to spend so much money on

reaching people who did not speak our language, had no desire to seek God, and/or were hostile to Christian presence. Ed replied, “Great! Fantastic. I look forward to working through these thoughts with you.” This was the first major transformation in my Christian journey.

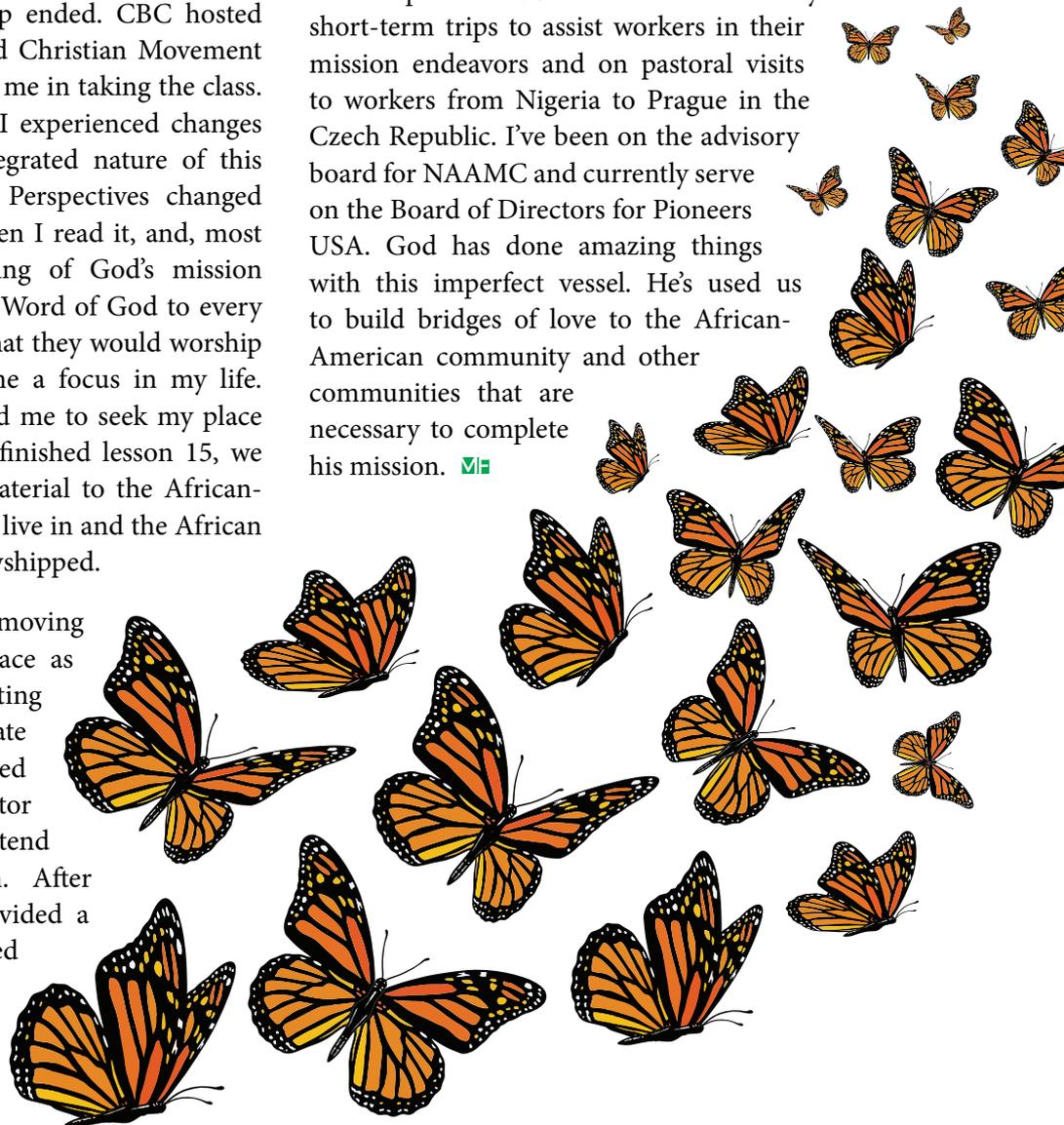
For weeks, Ed allowed me to express my misgivings about missions while he lovingly, biblically, philosophically, and practically refuted all my arguments. One day, he said, “Greg, before we get started, it’s obvious that you’re gifted in teaching, coaching, and discipling. How are you with Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:16–20?” He then read both passages to me. My reply was “Not very good.” At that moment, I felt the ice melt from my heart.

A second major transforming event occurred directly after our small group ended. CBC hosted the Perspectives on the World Christian Movement course, so I asked Kim to join me in taking the class. During the first five lessons, I experienced changes in my spiritual life. The integrated nature of this body of knowledge we call Perspectives changed how I read the Bible, how often I read it, and, most importantly, my understanding of God’s mission (*missio Dei*). Now, taking the Word of God to every tongue, tribe, and nation so that they would worship the Lord Jesus Christ, became a focus in my life. My new understanding moved me to seek my place in his story. By the time we finished lesson 15, we felt compelled to take this material to the African-American community that we live in and the African churches with whom we fellowshiped.

In retrospect, I see God’s hand moving Kim and me to find our place as mobilizers. Upon completing Perspectives at the certificate level, God quickly provided a Perspectives Coordinator Workshop (PCW) for us to attend in the Mid-Atlantic region. After finishing the PCW, God provided a two-day conference sponsored by the National African American Missions Council

(NAAMC), where I met an African-American missionary for the first time. We also met Bishop David Perrin, who has a track record of leading the charge for missions in the African-American community around D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. Bishop Perrin was very familiar with Perspectives and wanted his church to host the course, but the congregation did not have a trained coordinator. Kim and I quickly agreed to coordinate the course. In the fall of 2015, Kim and I hosted our first Perspectives course at Christ Kingdom Church for 51 African Americans.

Kim and I later became loop coordinators for the state of Maryland and have hosted many Perspectives classes around the Mid-Atlantic region. I would go on to become a Perspectives Instructor and currently serve as the Regional Director for the Mid-Atlantic region for Perspectives USA. I’ve been on many short-term trips to assist workers in their mission endeavors and on pastoral visits to workers from Nigeria to Prague in the Czech Republic. I’ve been on the advisory board for NAAMC and currently serve on the Board of Directors for Pioneers USA. God has done amazing things with this imperfect vessel. He’s used us to build bridges of love to the African-American community and other communities that are necessary to complete his mission. 



The View From the Launchpad

By LISA SMART

Lisa Smart is the Director of Communications with All Nations Kansas City. She has served in missions mobilization roles for close to 20 years.



Twenty years ago, God ushered me into the world of mission mobilization through coordinating Perspectives. I've experienced Perspectives from many angles—as a student, class coordinator, instructor (once!), member of the national office staff, and as staff at Frontier Ventures.

I knew that God was using the course in people's lives that whole time (he used it in mine!), but my view was generally limited to what happened in a class and hearing stories secondhand. It wasn't until eight years ago, when I joined All Nations, a missions-sending organization, that I was thrilled to see with my own eyes the powerful role Perspectives plays in mobilizing people to lovingly follow Jesus to the ends of the earth. Darren and Crystal are one such couple.

From Dream House to Dreaming with God

"Darren Taylor, I am not getting on an airplane. You just bought me my dream house!" Those were Crystal's words after sitting through the first night of Perspectives. Her husband Darren had persuaded her

to take the class with him. After hearing talk about God's heart for the world, she assumed he was trying to turn her into a missionary. Darren and Crystal had bought their dream home six months earlier after he retired from the Navy. They were in their 40s, had good jobs, and lived near their children and grandchildren.

What more could she want?

Darren told her he had no such intentions with her taking the class, but they at least could support missions and be good senders. He retired from the Navy looking forward to a season of ministry, and perhaps this could be part of it.

Week 15 changed the trajectory of their lives. Pam Arlund (from All Nations) spoke, bringing fliers about an unreached people group, the Japanese. At the class break, Darren took one of the fliers and put it on the table where Crystal sat. When he got home, Crystal met him at the door. Before he even entered the house, they both agreed that they were ready to go to Japan. "I would leave tomorrow!" she said. And so, this couple in retirement, living a comfortable

life, received further training with All Nations and have now sold their home in preparation for launching to Japan this year.

Pam Arlund's words aptly describe what happened in Darren and Crystal's hearts.

Perspectives helps people to see the entire message of the Bible in a way they never have before. As a result, people fall in love with the amazing God of the Bible in a fresh way. Inevitably when people know Jesus, they will long to be involved with his purposes and plans. Perspectives... is a class for all believers to discover anew how to align their hearts with God's heart.

May Perspectives unleash many more like Darren and Crystal to begin dreaming with God!

A Worthwhile Priority?

Five key leaders from All Nations International and All Nations Kansas City collectively teach over 50 Perspectives classes every year. Whenever possible, these All Nations Perspectives instructors go to classes with another person who is available to talk with students. This is a significant investment of time and resources for All Nations.

Is it worth it? We say YES.

Not only does Perspectives completely change life trajectories but it also supports and connects people who are already on the path to missions.

Mary Ho, All Nations' International Executive Leader, says, "So much of missions can be busy activities unless we can be singular and strategic. Perspectives' strategy section focuses us to aim at the bullseye of making disciples and planting and multiplying churches." These strategic priorities become a filter for students as they choose who sends them to the field, and the class is an amazing place for students to connect with instructors and organizations.

Choosing Who to Hold the Rope

Jordan, now in Sweden reaching refugees, had two All Nations speakers in a class he coordinated. He shared his interests with them, and they recommended he connect with Pam Arlund. Jordan says,

When Pam came, she started sharing about the great need for people to move to cities in Europe to reach out to all the refugees and immigrants that were coming—the very thing my wife and I were thinking about trying to do! We had breakfast with Pam and Peggy the next day, and that was the beginning of our relationship with All Nations. That summer ... we ended up reconnecting with Peggy and traveling with her to Europe for a two-week vision trip. We then did CPx that October and moved to Sweden the next year. This all started when God connected us to All Nations through Perspectives!

This story of connection has happened over and over again. Meredith Johnson, Co-Director of the All Nations Kansas City hub, says, "Perspectives offers me a chance to share my own stories and missional values in a way that helps me identify who in the audience resonates and therefore may be a good fit for our agency's culture."

From 2020–2023, just under half of those who launched to the field with All Nations came to us through Perspectives.

May the Nations before the Throne Increase

This is a tiny glimpse into the stories of lives now woven into All Nations—and thrust into the nations—through God's good work in the Perspectives course. I could tell many more stories of goers and share about the strong sending and praying teams inspired by Perspectives or those who mobilize, like me, because of Perspectives' influence.

I believe I speak for all of us at All Nations when I speak blessing over Perspectives' next 50 years:

May the Perspectives staff be rooted deeply in God, the curriculum solid, and the coordinators and instructors Spirit-filled.

May partnerships for the kingdom flourish.

May those who love the world as God does increase, and may unreached peoples be reached with Jesus' love.

May God's continued blessing be on Perspectives to multiply the nations before his throne! 

Perspectives as Worship

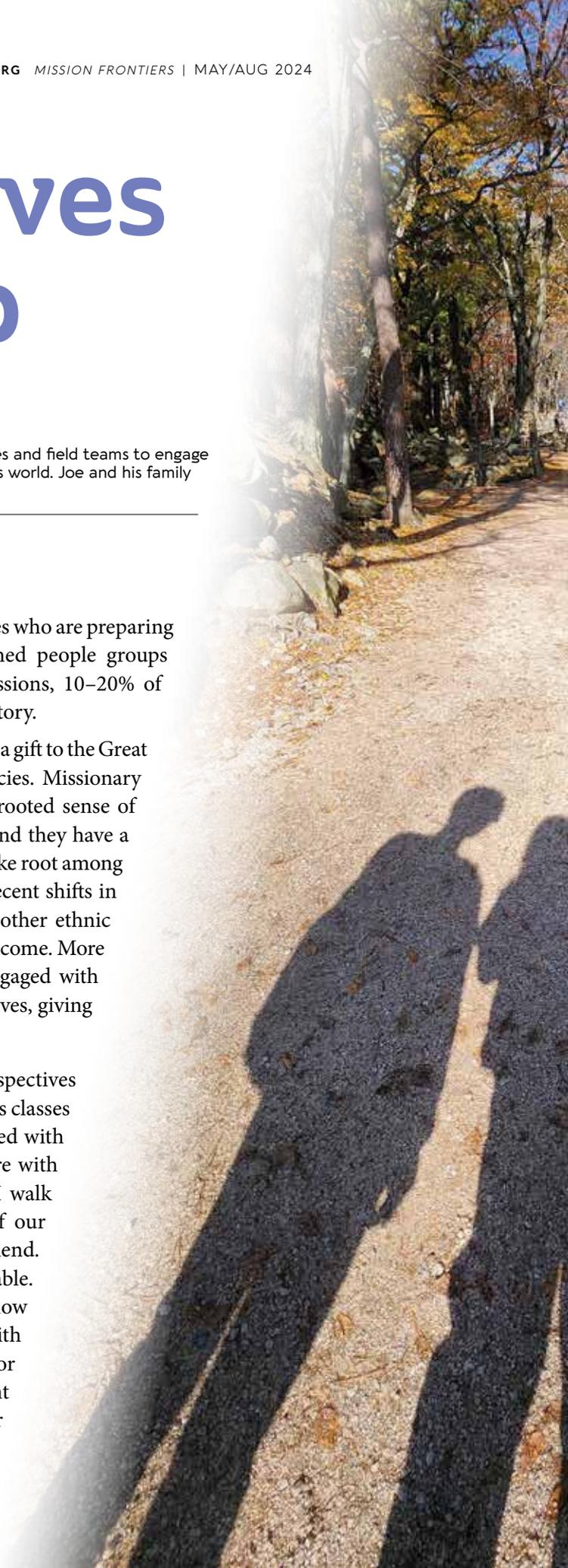
By **JOE GOBER**

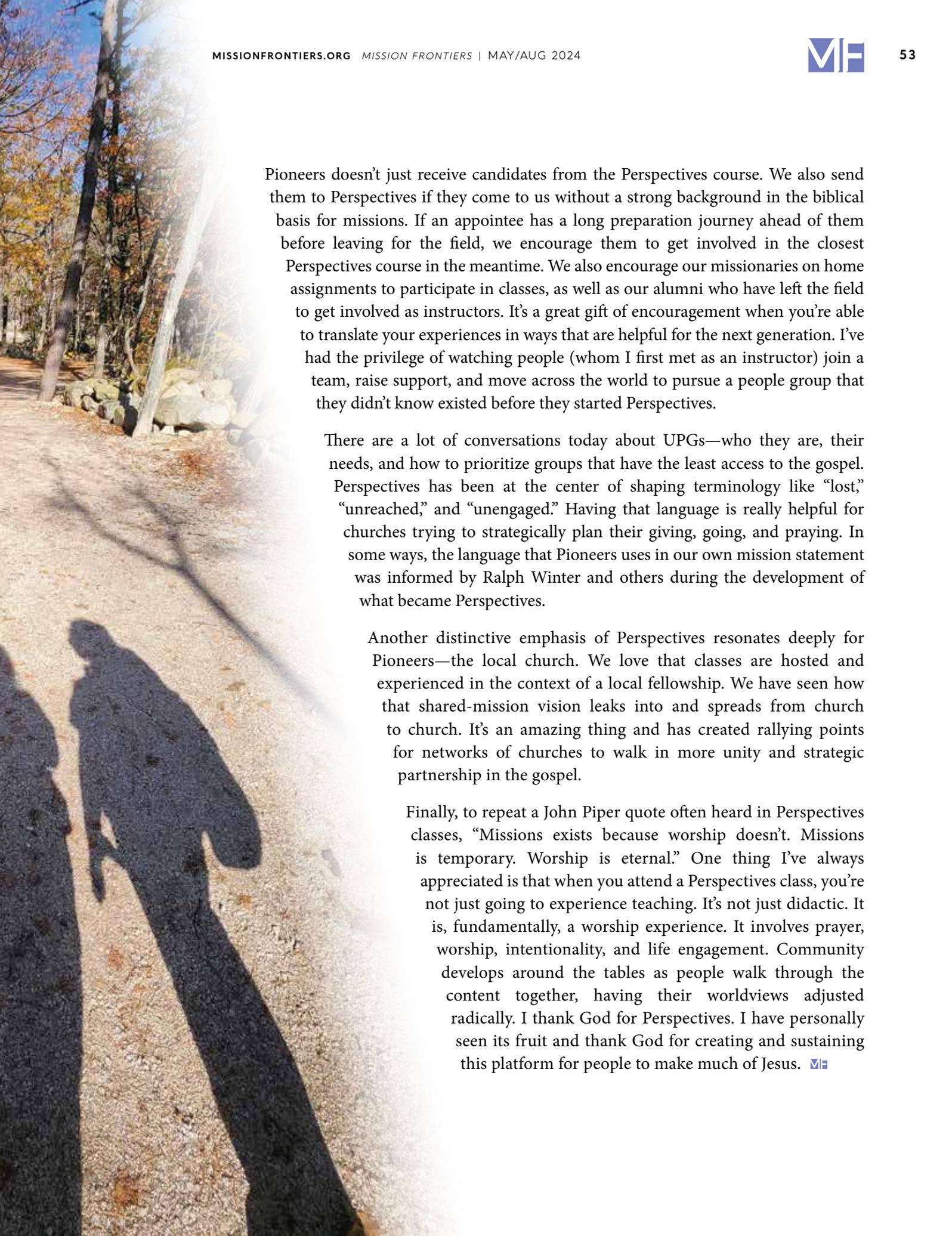
Joe Gober is VP of Global Engagement for Pioneers. He equips churches and field teams to engage unreached people groups and builds partnerships in the global missions world. Joe and his family previously served in Asia South Central.

Every year, Pioneers welcomes 200–250 new missionaries who are preparing for long-term cross-cultural service among unreached people groups (UPGs). When we ask about their journey into missions, 10–20% of them, at a minimum, identify Perspectives as part of their story.

At Pioneers, we have experienced firsthand Perspectives to be a gift to the Great Commission community and particularly to mission agencies. Missionary candidates who take Perspectives have a broad, biblically rooted sense of missions. They have historical examples to look back on. And they have a greater appreciation for the challenges of seeing the gospel take root among UPGs, which helps them develop perseverance and grit. Recent shifts in the curriculum, like encouraging students to engage with other ethnic groups even before they leave home, have been especially welcome. More missionary candidates are coming to us having already engaged with people from other cultures, often at the impetus of Perspectives, giving them greater confidence to step out into global missions.

I still remember many of the lessons I learned in the Perspectives class that I took in 2001 in Little Rock, Arkansas, and various classes I've been part of since then. A dear brother who had worked with nomads for 40 years told our class, "I can drive somewhere with someone and be there in five minutes, but I find that if I walk the road with someone, Jesus becomes a normal part of our conversation." That instructor later became a mentor and a friend. This space to hear from mission practitioners is irreplaceable. Most Christians and most churches do not personally know a missionary and would not know how to engage them with their people. They don't have access to their lives, insight, or wisdom. Perspectives brings wisdom, hard-won in the front lines of kingdom advance, right to the front rows of our churches.





Pioneers doesn't just receive candidates from the Perspectives course. We also send them to Perspectives if they come to us without a strong background in the biblical basis for missions. If an appointee has a long preparation journey ahead of them before leaving for the field, we encourage them to get involved in the closest Perspectives course in the meantime. We also encourage our missionaries on home assignments to participate in classes, as well as our alumni who have left the field to get involved as instructors. It's a great gift of encouragement when you're able to translate your experiences in ways that are helpful for the next generation. I've had the privilege of watching people (whom I first met as an instructor) join a team, raise support, and move across the world to pursue a people group that they didn't know existed before they started Perspectives.

There are a lot of conversations today about UPGs—who they are, their needs, and how to prioritize groups that have the least access to the gospel. Perspectives has been at the center of shaping terminology like “lost,” “unreached,” and “unengaged.” Having that language is really helpful for churches trying to strategically plan their giving, going, and praying. In some ways, the language that Pioneers uses in our own mission statement was informed by Ralph Winter and others during the development of what became Perspectives.

Another distinctive emphasis of Perspectives resonates deeply for Pioneers—the local church. We love that classes are hosted and experienced in the context of a local fellowship. We have seen how that shared-mission vision leaks into and spreads from church to church. It's an amazing thing and has created rallying points for networks of churches to walk in more unity and strategic partnership in the gospel.

Finally, to repeat a John Piper quote often heard in Perspectives classes, “Missions exists because worship doesn't. Missions is temporary. Worship is eternal.” One thing I've always appreciated is that when you attend a Perspectives class, you're not just going to experience teaching. It's not just didactic. It is, fundamentally, a worship experience. It involves prayer, worship, intentionality, and life engagement. Community develops around the tables as people walk through the content together, having their worldviews adjusted radically. I thank God for Perspectives. I have personally seen its fruit and thank God for creating and sustaining this platform for people to make much of Jesus. ❏



24:14

24:14 Goal: Movement engagements in every unreached people and place by 2025 (20 months)

How God Transformed a Devout Muslim and Catalyzed DMMs among UPGs

By DAVE COLES

Dave Coles is an encourager and resourcer of Church Planting Movements among unreached groups, serving with Beyond. He has served among Muslims in Southeast Asia for 24 years. He has more than a dozen articles published (under a pseudonym) on topics related to contextualization, reaching Muslims, and the nature of the church.

Aila Tasse began attending the mosque at an early age. Raised in a strong Muslim family in northern Kenya, he took his Islamic studies seriously and avoided Christians. At around the age of nine, he developed a deep desire to know more about his Islamic faith. He started spending time with the elders after each day's afternoon prayers, listening to them discuss the Qur'an and other issues. But a question gnawed at Aila's heart: Who is Allah?

Through unexpected and terrifying circumstances, God opened Aila's heart to receive the gospel and Christ's forgiveness. Aila describes the details of this radical transformation in *Cabbages in the Desert: How God Transformed a Devout Muslim and Catalyzed Disciple Making Movements among Unreached Peoples*. The following are two excerpts adapted from this book.

Can cabbage grow in this desert?

One day, I [Aila] summoned my courage and boldly asked the Lord, "God, I want to have an appointment with you. I want to hear you. I want you to lead me." A week later, I went to a campsite in the Marsabit forest to pray in solitude. I sat on the ground, leaned against a tree, and closed my eyes to pray, putting my Bible on the ground next to me. Suddenly, I felt such a strong presence of God that the environment around me totally changed. I thought to myself, "God is here!"

I was terrified and didn't dare to open my eyes. I thought, "I asked God to give me an appointment and now he's here! I can't open my eyes because if I see him, I'll die!" While praying in his presence, I had a dramatic vision that lasted for many hours and came in three parts.

The first was like a slideshow. A screen opened before me and to my astonishment, I saw the imam of our home mosque. As I fixed my eyes on him, a kind strong voice said to me, "Forgive him. Bless him and pray for him."

He had hurt me the most when I was persecuted and banished from my family. Now I was being asked to forgive, bless, and pray for him! I couldn't understand the purpose. I struggled in my thoughts and weighed whether to obey the command of that clear voice. I finally chose to obey. I prayed for and blessed the imam until I had no words left. Then his face disappeared, and another took its place. One by one, all who had hurt me appeared on the screen, and I repeated the process for each one. Each time I did, I felt like an arrow, once buried in my heart, was removed and, with it, bitterness and hatred evaporated.

The second part of the vision came like scenes in a movie theatre. But I wasn't just watching; I was a key actor in the drama. I watched the back of a person walk down the road. He turned right before sitting near a potter at work. I didn't see the potter's face, only his hands working the clay. The clay broke in his hand as

he worked and a voice said to me, “You see that? You are the one sitting there watching the potter.” He told me, “I am the Potter, you are the clay, and I will make you.”

The vision then moved to the third part. I saw myself in a place I recognized as the Dida Galgalu Desert, a part of the Chalbi Desert in northern Kenya between Moyale and Marsabit. This desert is so barren that it has only one small tree nicknamed Tigo. This is a point of reference when crossing the desert. In my vision, I saw the vast emptiness of this dry and rocky desert. Then, I heard a question in my ears, “Can cabbage grow in this desert?”

I said to myself, “How could cabbage grow here? There’s no grass, nothing! Nothing grows in this desert!” At that point, the vision seemed to stop. I stood up to stretch and realized almost three hours had passed. I sat back down to pray, and suddenly the vision resumed. I again saw the Chalbi Desert. This time the voice did not ask a question. Instead, a male voice made a statement, “Cabbage can grow in this desert.” Suddenly, I saw rows of healthy cabbages growing in it!

Along with this, Isaiah 43:18–20 came to mind: “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland. The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland” (NIV). The Lord’s words echoed a prophetic application: “I will cause these rivers to grow cabbages in the desert.”

As abruptly as the visions had begun, this third vision ended. As my mind cleared, I realized it was about 5:00 p.m. and elephants were grazing close by me! I had not heard them approach. At some distance, I saw two game wardens watching, probably worried for my safety but not knowing how to alert me without alarming the animals, lest they panic and charge toward me. The elephants, however, were not bothered by my presence and continued breaking branches as they ate. So I quietly took my Bible and walked away, choosing a path away from them and toward home.

The vision of cabbages in the desert stuck in my mind, and I prayed about it for weeks. Finally, the Lord gave me understanding. The arid northern parts of Kenya are home to tribes like the Gabra, Rendille, Borana, Burji, and Daasanach, all classified (currently or until recently) as unreached people groups (UPGs). Reaching them is

difficult because they live in remote, difficult-to-reach areas. Poor infrastructure in that region remains a great challenge, even up to the present. Fourteen of the 26 unreached people groups in Kenya live in *that* desert, the exact desert where I saw the cabbage growing. I began to pray specifically about those people and tribes. It became clear to me that this was my calling. Bringing these people groups into God’s kingdom was the “new thing” God was going to do. I began reaching out to the UPGs in that region.

Who will remain behind?

The Lord orchestrated yet another life-changing experience for me. World Vision asked me to help distribute food to the Rendille people in Lontolio village after rains failed to come the previous year. Lontolio lies outside the town of Laisamis, home to many pastoralist communities, near a sacred hill locally called “The House of God.”



In circumstances like these, safety is paramount. Distributions require good cooperation with local administrative officials. Three of us went ahead to assess the situation before the team and the food truck arrived. In the area designated for food distribution, scattered around acacia trees, huddled in small groups, we found about 200 men and women. They seemed engaged in deep conversation, probably about their predicament.

Looking at the small crowd, I saw an opportunity to preach the gospel to them. I was with a friend who was as zealous as I was in evangelism. We agreed that I would preach. My Rendille friend would translate the message to his tribespeople. This was an exciting moment as we anticipated a harvest of souls for God’s kingdom. We were on fire for Jesus and ready to set the place ablaze with the gospel.

I started preaching but, before long, realized they didn't comprehend the message. In utter confusion, they looked at my mouth and then at my friend's mouth, back and forth, but they seemed not to understand a thing.

I realized that these people had no categories to grasp what I was talking about. They had no prior contact with Christians or the gospel. Even with the translation of my words, we might as well have been speaking Greek!

So I stopped preaching and began simply to tell them the Bible's message as a story. I told them that God created and loved human beings, but mankind fell into sin because of disobedience. I described how God later redeemed us through Christ's sacrifice. They understood this, since in times of tribal distress, their elders offered animal sacrifices to appease their deities at the nearby hill. They also comprehended the Genesis creation story, as it resembles their own creation folklore.

Our interaction became a dialogue, as the elderly men asked questions. The concept of a loving God was not foreign to the Rendille. But they were amazed by the love of Jesus that led him to suffer for our sins at Calvary. They asked, "Why did he do all that?" I told them, "Because he loved you and me!" At the end of the story, I asked, "Who among you would like to believe in this God?"

Before they could respond, the village elder stood up and began walking around addressing his people. He said, "Who among you cannot receive a God like this? This God who gave us his son, who made him a sacrifice? How can you not accept this God, who also has sent these men to bring us food?" My friend busily translated to me what the elder was saying. Overflowing with joy, I thought to myself, "This is just amazing!"

In response to the elder, most present raised their hands, indicating their desire to follow Christ. I was elated and continued to tell them Bible stories as the truck arrived and the food was unloaded.

Finally, our team had to leave. We led the villagers in a prayer of commitment, but I was not confident they truly grasped the meaning of salvation. I had no time to tell them more, as the truck driver was getting impatient, trying to be responsible and get us out safely. He kept honking the horn to motivate us, so we said quick goodbyes and headed for the truck.

Suddenly, one woman stepped in our way. My friend went around her, but I stopped. She said, "You've told us

about this God who loves us, who gave us his son, and also sent you to give us food. So that means he knows about and even cares about us?" "Yes," I confirmed. Then she looked me in the eye and asked, "Now who among you will remain behind to teach us about this God you've told us about?"

I froze, my heartbeat suddenly moving to my throat, my whole body beginning to sweat. We hadn't anticipated such a soul-searching question. But there she stood, waiting for an answer! I couldn't respond. I had no answer! I knew I couldn't stay behind, and neither could my friend.

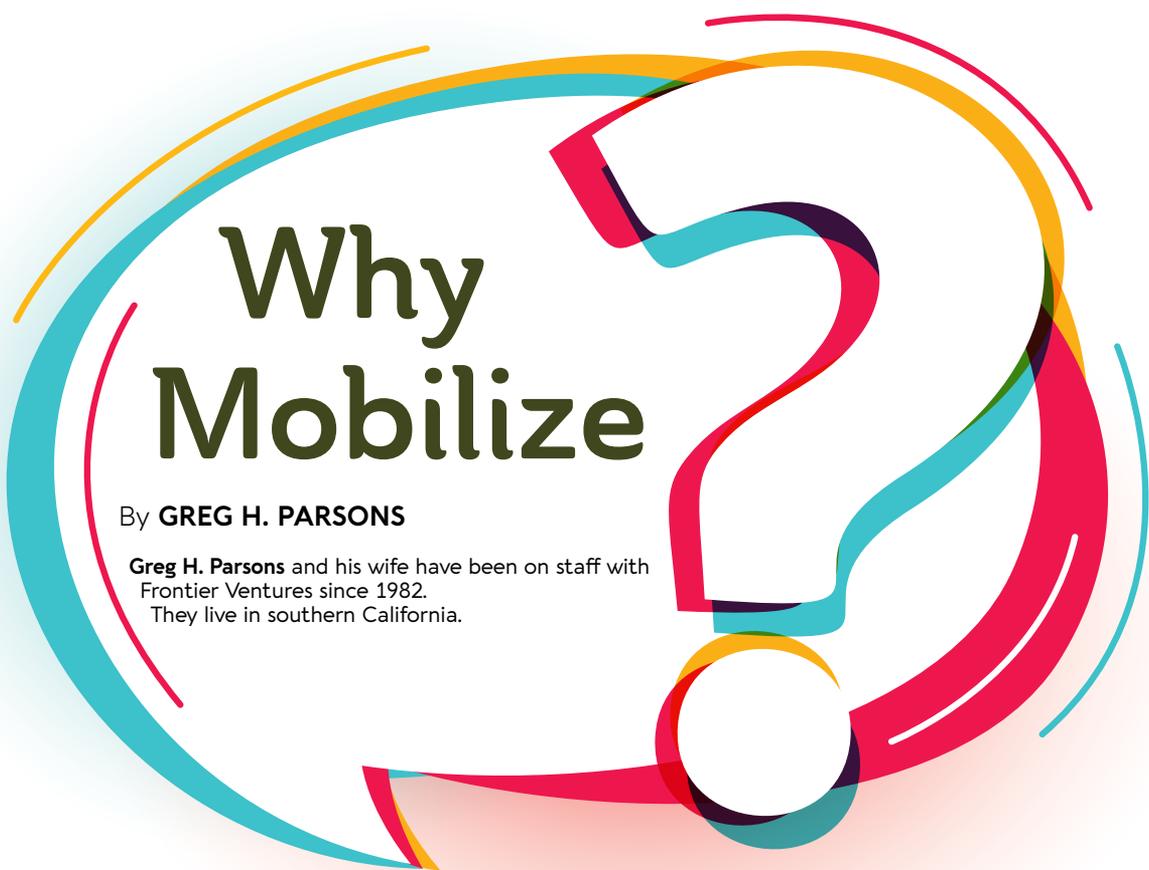
Numbed by her question, I needed to get away from her heart-piercing eyes. As I quietly and sadly stepped past her, she turned and kept staring at me. When I got into the truck and looked back, she hadn't moved an inch. As the truck drove away, her silhouetted form receded into the distance as she continued to stand there looking at me. Her question haunted me.

The others in the truck rejoiced. Men and women were not only fed but also had come to the Lord! Amid animated conversation among my colleagues, I was drowning in deep thought, my heart heavy with grief. Etched in my mind was the image of the woman standing, expecting an answer to her question. "Who among you will remain behind to teach us about this God you've told us about?"

That night I wrestled with grief because I had no answer for that woman. Finally, I concluded that from that point on, whenever I proclaimed the gospel, I would stay on to teach the converts about how to follow God's way. I would move *from decision-making to disciple-making*.

I asked the Lord in prayer, "How will it be possible to do this every time?" The insight I received in response was this: "Multiply yourself in the lives of others, so they do the same things you do. You cannot be everywhere." Like cool water to a thirsty soul, this answer refreshed my troubled mind. With a newly calmed heart, I contemplated the implications of this approach.

Discover more of Aila's journey in *Cabbages in the Desert: How God Transformed a Devout Muslim and Catalyzed Disciple Making Movements among Unreached Peoples* by Aila Tasse with Dave Coles. 



Why Mobilize

By **GREG H. PARSONS**

Greg H. Parsons and his wife have been on staff with Frontier Ventures since 1982. They live in southern California.

Because of the upcoming 50th Perspectives Study Program celebration, I've reflected on the growth of the course around the world. I'm reminded of a *Mission Frontiers* article I wrote called "Why Stay Here? Mobilizing the Home Front."¹ I described what was a novel idea to many in the church: the thought that "mobilization" could be a calling and a full-time, supportable role for a "missionary." My wife and I, along with most of our staff in the early days, caught the vision of mobilizing cross-cultural workers to the unreached. But it was often hard to explain why we were not "going to the field." It still is sometimes.

In the article, I described what happened through a regional staff member (a full-time mobilizer) and his region's impact. Notice how much things have changed since then.

... Bob has seen more than 1,200 students take this full-blown, college-level introduction to missions class in 95 locations all over the southeast.

Behind Bob, helping to make his work possible, is a home office staff of four to five here in Pasadena. That's what it takes to get the 65+ classes going each year (with between 2,000 and 2,500 enrolled nationwide.)

You might be asking (especially if you haven't taken the Perspectives class), what good is a class for mobilizing? What difference does it make?

At least two different times we have formally surveyed those who have taken the course. High percentages say they support missions financially and in prayer—usually attributing an increase to the course. Thirty-six percent of the students say they are preparing for cross-cultural missionary work. That means (if the percentages hold true throughout) that about 833 are planning to go as missionaries; 833 every year!

¹ Greg Parsons, "Why Stay Here? Mobilizing the Home Front," *Mission Frontiers* 17 (Jan–Feb 1995): 9–13.

Later independent surveys tell the same story. Perspectives

helps people have a sense of God's purposes, shown in Scripture, and begin learning how to spread his fame globally.

Ralph Winter wrote about the need for mobilization many times. In one article for *Urbana* in the 1980s, he outlined three different roles: (1) field missionary among unreached peoples, (2) field missionary among reached peoples, and (3) mobilizer.² Without mobilizers, he argued, the number of "field missionaries" would decrease. So, it was also important for those working cross-culturally *with the church* around the world (role 2), to be mobilizers of those "younger churches." Those experienced field workers were in the best place to mobilize national church leaders.

One time, he spoke about the need for more mobilizers who were called to go but willing to stay. A lady asked him how many mobilizers we needed. He said, "1,000!" with a twinkle in his eye since it was just a guess.

In the early years, we didn't have time or resources to serve the needs of mobilizers within *other* sending nations. In 2002, Tim Lewis, Steve Hawthorne, and I started what was first called "the Global Desk" to try responding to requests for help from around the globe. We had a lot of vision but I, for one, didn't have time to dream that, by 2024, Perspectives materials would be translated and modified into nine languages and that programs would be running in 40 nations. Now, there are more than 200,000 alumni, including many in the Middle East and a large country in Asia! In 2015–16, I traveled to that country to

² Ralph Winter, "Which Missionary Is More Important and Why?" rdwrc.wciw.edu (search for "which missionary").

help train coordinators and instructors after their translation was done. They are still running classes through the pandemic and beyond. What a joy!

One big reason that happened is that Perspectives is *not* an "intro to missions course," as many people thought in the early days. It is a *discipleship course with a global perspective*. That is why so many people who take the course help to pass it on. In Brazil, several thousand volunteers help run the course. They see it as something that gives them a sense of purpose and helps to fulfill what is, for many, a new-found faith as well. Be sure to visit the Perspectives Global website (perspectivesglobal.org) to find out more.



We are thrilled with what has happened. Yet, it is too soon to celebrate for those who have not experienced the fullness of Christ. We must remember *what* we are mobilizing people to do! The Perspectives course points out the peoples and places where, as best we can tell, there are no churches or fellowships able to evangelize their own people group. I exhort you to fully engage in prayer. Seek information and be ready to share the global vision, especially a vision for a subset of the unreached called "frontier people groups."³ These groups are less than 0.1% Christian and have no movements among them. Most are in South or Southeast Asia and are usually culturally distant from most believers around them. 📌

³ Learn more about frontier people groups in the March–April 2024 issue of *Mission Frontiers*: "Seeking Movements among Frontier Peoples," 46.2.

THE MISSIONS

What prevents the Gospel
from creating a ripple effect?

a podcast by  FRONTIER VENTURES   

DROP





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