



# Our Mobilization Challenge Is Actually a Discipleship Problem

By RICK WOOD, Editor

Jesus' last words to His disciples and to us in Matt. 28:18–20 were to go and make disciples of all nations (ethne/peoples), baptizing them and teaching them to obey all that Jesus has commanded us, which also includes this command. For 2,000 years, this command to make disciples should have been one of the first things taught to every new Jesus follower after they repented of their sins and put their faith in Jesus for salvation. But unfortunately, this command has, too often, been forgotten and ignored by the Church. This is why we still have over 7,000 unreached peoples according to Joshua Project, and why we still have a challenge of mobilizing the Church today. It is as simple as faithful obedience to what Jesus has told us to do. It is not complicated. It can be done, and it must be done. Almost 2,000 movements of discipleship and church planting, often referred to as Church Planting Movements and Disciple Making Movements, are proving to the world that mobilization of new believers into active obedience to the “Great Commission” can be a normal reality in our day.

On each cover of *MF*, we present the number of “Kingdom Movements” taking place around the world. In these movements, we see disciples making disciples and churches planting churches one generation after another. How does this happen? It happens because as evangelism takes place, the new disciple is taught that the Gospel is not just for him or her, it is for their family members, their coworkers and all those they have contact with. They are taught about the command of Jesus to make disciples of all nations. Mobilization is a

normal part of the discipleship process and the essential DNA of these movements. Because it is, there is multiplication of disciple-making and church-planting one generation after another. In these movements, we have rediscovered from the time of the book of Acts, the “secret sauce” of how movements work and how the Gospel should spread organically as God has designed it.

So, the reason we need mobilization efforts today is because outside of these movements just mentioned, we have lost touch with the biblical essentials from the book of Acts that make obedience to Jesus a natural part of our identity as Jesus followers. The Great Commission should be a central part of our identity as believers. The fact that the majority of so-called “believers in Jesus” in our churches do not know or cannot identify the Great Commission passage of Matt. 28:18–20 is an indication of how far we have missed the mark in our discipleship efforts. To effectively mobilize the Church into God's mission going forward, we need to change the way we do church and adopt the vision and practices of these movements that are doing so well in casting the vision of the Great Commission to each generation of new disciple makers.

## What Are We Mobilizing Jesus Followers to Do?

Whether inside or outside of these Disciple Making Movements (DMMs), we need to help Jesus followers to understand the nature of the unfinished missionary task before us and what Jesus has asked

us to do. Even in DMMs where mobilization is essential to the DNA of these movements, the natural tendency is to focus on those within our own culture versus going cross culturally.

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If we are not careful, mission mobilization can become “everything is missions.” As we pointed out in our Nov/Dec 2019 issue of *MF*, we are all called to live on-mission with God, but that does not make us all missionaries. Every industry has its job classifications and so does the cause of Christ. Reaching out to your same-culture neighbor is wonderful and essential evangelism, but it is not missions. Missions involves going cross-culturally to those with no access to the Gospel. Mobilizing simply to reach our neighbors will not get the Gospel to all ethnics as Jesus commanded us to do. There are currently around 5,000 Frontier Peoples with no access to the Gospel. Specific, targeted cross-cultural efforts are required to reach these peoples. It takes specialized skills and training to reach such people groups. These skills are very different from the ones required to reach your same-culture neighbor in evangelism. You would not equate a first-aid nurse with a brain surgeon, neither should you equate same-culture evangelism with cross-cultural missions to unreached peoples. It is a very different and essential step to go beyond reaching those you already have contact with inside your culture to reach cross-culturally to those with no Gospel access. Every believer needs to be “mobilized” with the vision of going where access to the Gospel does not exist. The missionary task cannot be completed until this happens.

## A Case in Point

When I came to faith in Jesus in 1978 through the ministry of a local church, I was not told about the unfinished task of reaching the unreached peoples or even my unsaved neighbors for that matter. It was all about my personal growth as a believer. I was not taught the Great Commission passage in Matt. 28:18–20. I knew nothing about missions. I first learned about missions through the Urbana '79 missions convention sponsored by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. I attended one of their campus chapters while attending college. At Urbana '79, I learned that as a follower of Jesus, I was responsible to obey what Jesus has commanded us all to do—make disciples of all nations. The reason for sharing this history is to make the point that I should not have needed to attend a specialized “mobilization” event called Urbana '79. I should have been able to be taught this at my local church—as is done regularly in the churches that make up the nearly 2,000 Kingdom Movements that are multiplying all over the world.

Mobilization needs to become a regular part of leading people to Jesus. As soon as people come to Christ, they need to learn that they have become part of the “family business.” This “business” involves both reaching out to our *oikos*, family, friends, etc. in evangelism, but also going cross-culturally to those without access to the Gospel. This may include going cross-culturally ourselves, or supporting those who do. But we must get beyond the status quo in our churches where following Jesus is all about us being blessed rather than obeying Jesus and blessing Him with the worship He deserves from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. That is, after all, the ultimate purpose of our mobilization efforts. 

