



THE NOMAD CHALLENGE

SAY YES TO NOMADS

FEATURE ARTICLE

IMAGINE A PEOPLE ON THE move; a people who have no permanent home; a people whose identity is tied to their animals and whose survival depends on the availability of grass to feed those animals; a people who can live on the scarcest of resources and on the fringes of society...despised and marginalized by many; a people, in many ways, cut off from the gospel, but a people for whom Christ died. Who are these people? They are nomads.

Two years ago I traveled across Africa and saw first hand these precious and often forgotten peoples. Little-by-little God broke my heart for them. As a result I am currently preparing to reach the nomadic Arabs of the Sahara Desert in Niger.

Right now there are hundreds of nomadic people groups around the world, stretching from West Africa to Indonesia. Nomads can be found across the globe. Some believe that approximately 20% of the remaining unreached people groups are nomadic. If the current trend continues, they will be the last to be reached.

In many ways nomads have been overlooked and forgotten by the church and missionaries alike. They live in remote, difficult places and are hard to access, let alone live among. Nomads can't be reached in a typical fashion, and especially not from missionary compounds. Nomads won't come to us. We must go to them. In order to reach them, it will require intentional sacrifices of time, space and comfort. The missionary

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Andrew Day (27 years old) is a graduate of Moody Bible Institute. After graduating, Andrew served with Operation Mobilization for two years before joining Pioneers in 2014 in order to head up a new team focused on reaching Arab Nomads in the African Sahel. Andrew currently lives in Chad, Africa where he is immersed in culture and language acquisition (French and Arabic) in preparation for church planting among Nomads. Andrew is passionate about seeing all the peoples of the world reached with the gospel, especially those that are least likely to hear.

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who wants to reach nomads must to some degree become a nomad himself.

Reaching nomads will not be easy and it is definitely not romantic. We're not talking about some adventure where one rides a camel through the Sahara. Most of the time reaching nomads is plain hard work. Extreme temperatures, dust and brutal conditions are what awaits the wannabe nomadic missionary. But guess what: it's worth it for Jesus!

Nomads may have been forgotten by us, but they have not been forgotten by God.

Did not God call Abraham out of his home to a land that was not his own? Was not Moses a nomad tending sheep when God called him to lead His people out of Egypt? Were not God's chosen people themselves nomads in the wilderness for 40 years? God understands and loves nomads! Are we ourselves not called to be Pilgrims in this present world? We know that this world is not our home; we are just passing through. We are still awaiting our true heavenly home. Every believer is a spiritual nomad!

During my time in Niger, I met the son of a nomadic Arab chief. Twenty-nine years ago, this Arab chief asked for missionaries to come to his people. Twenty-nine years later he is still waiting. Who will go tell that people group about Jesus? If you or I do not go—people

who have been given so much—then who? “To whom much is given, much shall be required” (Luke 12:48).

My vision for this generation is that we would finish the Great Commission; that we would be the generation that sees every last tribe, tongue, and nation reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ; that Jesus would be worshiped in every language and in every nation because Jesus is worthy of all worship. No single language can adequately express his worth. It will take people from every language on earth singing the name of Jesus before the choir of heaven is complete!

In order to reach all the unreached people groups in this generation we must reach the nomads of the world. I'm praying for God to raise up teams of passionate, committed, long-term missionaries to engage every nomadic people group by 2025. I believe by the grace of God it can happen, so that what the Psalmist said in Psalm 72:9 would become a reality: “Let the nomads of the desert bow before him.”

There is a poem that has meant a lot to me through the years. As the story goes, it was written in 1980 by a young Rwandan man who was forced, by his tribe, to renounce Christ or be killed. He refused to renounce Christ and paid the ultimate price. The night before he was martyred he wrote the following creed entitled “The Fellowship of the Unashamed”.

I am part of the "Fellowship of the Unashamed."
The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line.
The decision has been made. I am a disciple of
Jesus Christ. I won't look back, let up, slow down,
Back away, or be still. My past is redeemed, my present
Makes sense, and my future is secure.
I am finished and done with low living, sight walking,
Small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams,
Chintzy giving, and dwarfed goals.
I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position,
Promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I now live by
Presence, learn by faith, love by patience,
Lift by prayer, and labor by power.
My pace is set, my gait is fast, my goal is Heaven,
My road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions few,
My Guide reliable, my mission clear.
I cannot be bought, compromised, deterred,
Lured away, turned back, diluted, or delayed.
I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice,
Hesitate in the presence of adversity,
Negotiate at the table of the enemy,
Ponder at the pool of popularity, or
Meander in the maze of mediocrity.
I am a disciple of Jesus Christ.
I must go until Heaven returns,
Give until I drop, preach until all know, and
Work until He comes.
And when He comes to get
His own, He will have no problem recognizing me.
My colors will be clear.
I am not ashamed of the gospel . . . Romans 1:16

