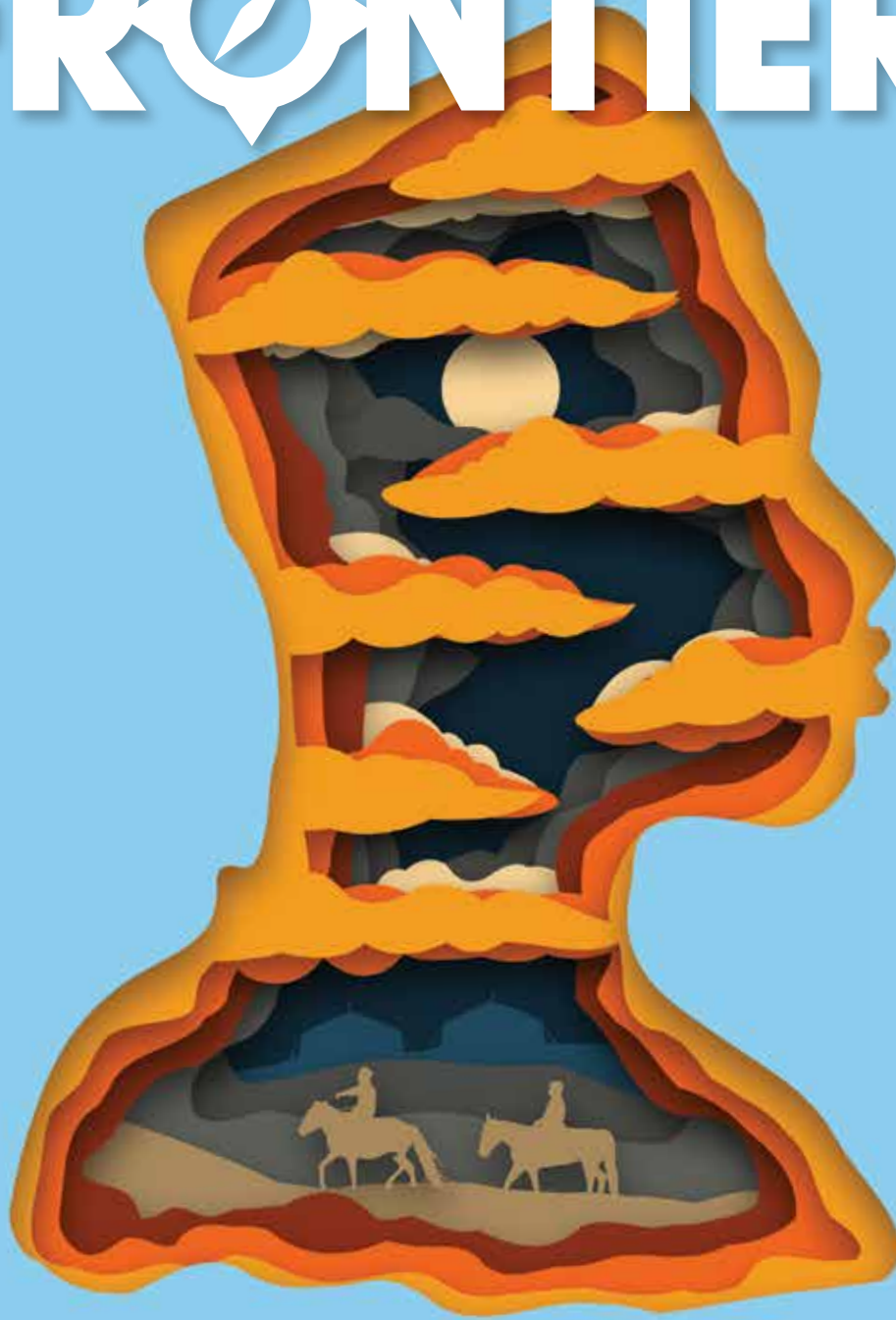


# MISSION<sup>TM</sup> FRONTIERS

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## NOMADS: THE CHALLENGE OF REACHING PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

MISSION  
FRONTIERS

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FRONTIER  
VENTURES

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# REDISCOVERING THE BIBLICAL CHURCH THAT CAN REACH EVERY PEOPLE



BY RICK WOOD  
EDITOR OF MF

EDITORIAL

**HOW DO YOU GO** about making disciples among a people who are regularly on the move and do not show up for meetings at regular times? What does a church look like and act like when a people is never in one place for very long? Nomadic peoples present the worldwide missionary enterprise with one of its greatest challenges as we seek to foster movements of discipleship and church planting among them. These nomadic peoples live in some of the harshest areas of the world—from baking deserts to frozen tundras. Those who would seek to reach them have a daunting task ahead of them. Yet, we know the promise of Scripture says that there will be people present before the throne of God from every tribe, tongue, people and nation. This promise was made to Abraham, who was a nomad. God loves nomads like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, etc. Somehow God managed to establish biblical faith and worship within these nomadic people. We must learn to

do the same, not only in nomadic peoples, but in people groups all over the world, who likewise have unique challenges to establishing movements of discipleship among them.

The harsh reality of the difficulty of reaching nomadic peoples forces us to face the key challenge that the way we do church and mission must change in order to have any hope of reaching all people groups and making the gospel available to every person. The simple reality is that our typical Western way of doing church will not work in reaching nomads and the many other types of unreached peoples. It is also clear that the model of doing church that is so familiar to us in the West is not even effective in reaching our own Western culture. In general, we are not equipping disciples to make more disciples generation after generation. Our churches are not reproducing themselves either. We have inherited many traditional church practices, started centuries ago, which are unbiblical and ineffective in making disciples who go on to make more disciples and plant new churches. This must change in order to reach the unreached peoples.

So what would a biblical church look like in the various unreached

peoples? It will vary from one people to another based on individual needs and circumstances, but one thing is certain; it will not look like the church you go to, nor should it. As Ralph Winter said, “Most of those yet to follow Christ will not fit readily into the kinds of churches we now have.”

## So What Should a Biblical Church-Planting Movement in Every People Look Like?

Every Church-Planting Movement that is established within each people should practice these biblical principles. The methods that are developed in order to fulfill these principles will vary depending on the people group that someone is trying to reach and the specific cultural context within which you are working. But the foundational biblical principles should not change.

1. Churches with healthy disciples will spring up in all sorts of places—homes, workplaces, parks, perhaps even on the backs of camels in the case of Nomads. You do not need a specifically dedicated building. Church planting is not about how many people we can get into a building for an event on

Sunday. It is about how many disciple makers we can equip and send out to make more disciples and start new churches.

2. Disciple making must come first as our highest priority. Healthy disciples will go on to form healthy churches. But if we go out to first start a church or preaching point then healthy disciples will not necessarily develop.
3. Every professed Jesus follower who is willing should be equipped, trained and apprenticed for the work of ministry as a disciple maker and church planter. This is based on the methods that Jesus modeled and the Apostle Paul followed. This training should include being able to share their testimony of faith and the gospel in an effective way for the context in which they are living. This is a deliberate, intentional and well-thought-out process of equipping and training.
4. Every church member should be able to train others in like manner to be disciple makers who are capable of leading others to discover truth from the Bible and lead them to maturity in Christ.
5. The “Great Commission” should be continually taught to every Jesus follower. Every believer should have their identity as people living on mission with God as outlined in Matt. 28:18-20. This should be one of the first things taught to new believers. Every believer should also understand the global implications of Matt. 28:18-20 in reaching the unreached peoples.
6. Pastors should not be largely “preachers of sermons” but equippers of willing believers. Pastors should not just teach people what to believe but to facilitate the discovery of truth by each member.
7. As quickly as possible each faithful and willing church member should be given responsibility to actively participate in the training of new disciples.
8. Obedience to revealed truth from the Bible must be the foundation of all training. We must be doers of the Word and not just hearers. Maturity comes by way of obedience to the truth.


Is there a principle that you would add?

If every church were to practice these basic principles in their ministry efforts then we would likely see thousands of Church-Planting Movements develop all over the world until every people group is reached.

### **It's the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Reformation. Is God Birthing Another One?**

Welcome to the new year of 2017. October 31st of this year will officially mark the 500th anniversary of the start of the Protestant Reformation when Martin Luther nailed his “95 Theses” to the door of the Wittenberg Church in Germany. The process of bringing forth a biblical understanding of Christ, Scripture, grace, faith and the glory of God was, unfortunately, a tumultuous and bloody affair. But in the end, it brought forth many blessings which all of us as believers enjoy today. How precious it is that a majority of people in this world have the Bible in their own language.

It was a scary thing for the church and political leaders of Luther's day to think of putting the Holy Bible and its interpretation into the hands of average people. It meant a loss of control over the people in the church. Yet, doing so has literally changed the world and the lives of millions of lost souls.

Today, we are faced with a similarly biblical but “scary” opportunity of putting the ministry of the church into the hands of average believers. It again means a loss of control for church leaders, but the potential blessings for the growth of the church in every tribe and tongue is wondrous to imagine. This kind of “reformation” in the way we do church is already under way in around 150 peoples or places around the world. We call them Church-Planting Movements or Disciple-Making Movements and they really aren't “scary.” They are a return to the model of ministry that Jesus gave us and Paul employed to great effect until there was “no place left” for him to work. Churches and mission agencies around the world are embracing this biblical means of growing God's kingdom. Movements are becoming the new “yardstick” by which the global church is measuring progress in world evangelization. May we all embrace this latest “reformation” that God is bringing and work together to learn how to make disciples who disciple others even within the toughest peoples to reach, like the nomads. 

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A stylized landscape illustration. The top half features a dark blue sky with a single yellow sun. Below the sky are wavy, layered bands of orange, yellow, and grey, representing mountains or clouds. The bottom half shows a light blue foreground with more wavy bands of orange, yellow, and grey. Two yellow sheep are standing on a small hill in the foreground. In the background, there are dark blue silhouettes of mountains.

# WHY FO NOM

# OCUS ON ADS?

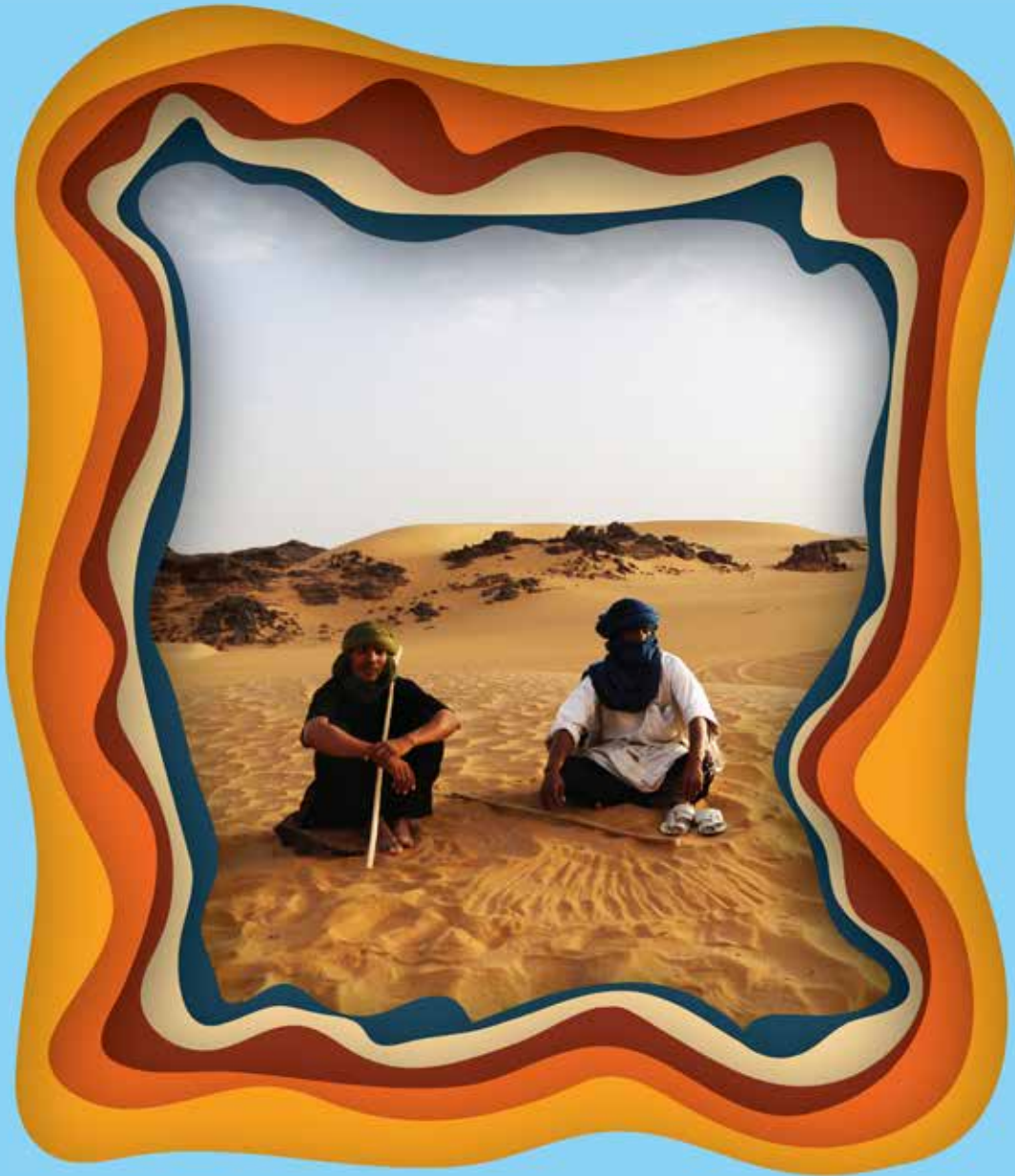
| FEATURE ARTICLE



BY **CALEB ROME**

[kwr@npnet.net](mailto:kwr@npnet.net)

Caleb serves in leadership of the Nomadic Peoples Network. He has worked for 12 years in the Horn of Africa with Muslim nomadic pastoralists and is currently developing ministry opportunities in North Africa.



**IN AFRICA'S SAHEL, 100 PEOPLE** gathered to listen to a well-known presenter on Disciple-Making Movements (DMM). After the teaching, one of the Tamajeq (Tuareg) believers stood and asked, "How can DMM be applied in my setting?"

The translator was befuddled by what appeared to be a very general question. "What was it about the Tamajeq that they could not understand a simple concept like DMM?" he might have thought.

As he began to translate, a rather bold fellow interrupted him and attempted to explain to everyone

the context this question came from. With some confidence he asserted that the question was rooted in the general poverty and great needs of the desert-dwelling Tamajeq people. Then he presumptively rephrased the question this way, "How can DMM succeed when so many Tamajeq people are hungry, needy and dying?" The presenter answered as one might expect, advising that attention be paid to the needs of the suffering before doing DMM.

The Tamajeq man sat quietly but I squirmed in my seat. We settled people have a default that identifies nomads as suffering people who barely eke out a



# Those who study nomadic peoples have learned that there is much more that defines them than the fact that they are on the move. Cultural and worldview similarities abound among nomadic groups all over the world.

living. We believe that nomads would succeed if they would only settle down. The fact is the Tamajeq are great nomadic pastoralists of the desert. They range over vast swaths of the Sahara Desert, living where most of us would likely die.

Neither the translator, the bold fellow, nor the presenter understood that this man was struggling to apply the principles of DMM in a nomadic society. Ideas and strategies like DMM are not imagined or purposed for people who live as they do. How, for instance, was this man to convene weekly meetings with people who are always moving in different directions? He and his Tamajeq colleagues needed answers.

After minutes of hesitation I decided to stand to briefly clarify the actual nomadic context of the Tamajeq people. I explained that the original question was entirely valid coming as it did from these great nomadic pastoralists. I was stepping out on a limb but the Tamejeq believers nodded with approval. The presenter scratched his chin and conceded that he had not thought about how to apply DMM in a nomadic setting. He had nothing to offer them.

It's clear to many nomadic workers that something needs to change. Nomads are not lost because they are nomads. They are lost because we don't send many workers to reach nomads with the good news, and when we do, they often get caught up trying to 'help' nomads settle through development schemes as if that was required to be saved.

While the rest of the world looks askance at nomads as unfortunate, poor and problematic, they see themselves

as free, proud and able to live in deserts, on tundra or at frightful altitudes. We are not the rest of the world. We are meant to see peoples from the perspective of Jesus, their Messiah, and it is clear that He loves nomads.

God's great covenant was made with Abraham, a nomad. The people who sprang from Abraham remained nomads for centuries. Then God chose Moses, who had become a nomadic pastoralist while in exile. He had learned not to be threatened by the desert. God used this to instill confidence in the people as they walked through the Red Sea. God has room in his kingdom for nomads.

We need specialized workers for nomads who are networked in order to build excellence in ministry, and here's why.

## **1. Nomads are different enough from settled peoples as to warrant separate missiological attention.**

Those who study nomadic peoples have learned that there is much more that defines them than the fact that they are on the move. Cultural and worldview similarities abound among nomadic groups all over the world. These distinctives even transcend religious differences. As a result the challenges of doing mission among them are abundantly common throughout the nomadic world. We believe that nomadic worldview distinctives are so sufficiently and significantly different from settled peoples that they deserve separate treatment by mission agencies, missionaries and missiologists.

Nomadic pastoralists are not a type of farmer, like ranchers are. They have a distinctly different

# At this point we can confidently say that ten times more gospel workers are needed for nomadic ministry. We need trained workers willing to go to the harshest places where nomads live.

understanding of land, ownership, wealth, family, blessing, curses, etc. Those who minister to nomadic pastoralists as though they are farmers will miss the heart of the people. This can lead to ineffective and perhaps even counterproductive work as Christ followers.

We worked for 12 years among other lowland camel herders in the Horn of Africa. In the beginning we hoped to work with established churches in that area but found they were made up of migrant highland farmers who had no intention of reaching the nomads.

They told us that they feared and hated the nomads. They confessed their belief that God would never save any because none had ever responded to the gospel. They could not understand why their methods, which had worked so amazingly in the highlands, did not work with these nomads. Their ethnocentric understanding of church left them with only one conclusion: These nomads were evil and doomed.

These dear people couldn't appreciate that the nomads viewed them as intruders, because they worked on government development schemes, which now deprived the nomads of their best grazing land. They didn't realize that it was imperative for them to value nomadic life in order to have any chance of being heard. They were guilty of the same pejorative approach that most sedentary peoples exercise over nomads and were ineffective as a result.

Nomads view themselves as a global fraternity. This should serve as a clue that a distinctive missiological

focus needs to be employed with them. I will never forget our clan leader's words when we were forced to leave The Horn for health reasons and move to a different focus, developing opportunities elsewhere in Africa: "I will pray for you, but come back and tell me how 'the Light of Jesus Christ' is moving among the camel herders over there."

## **2. Nomadic ministries need advocacy, prayer and publicity.**

It is estimated that 200-million people live as nomads on this earth and that most of the nomadic pastoralists, who make up the bulk of nomads, are still unreached. From the nomads' perspective, over 97% of the world's peoples are sedentary, that is, they base their lives and livelihoods from a place they call home. All of the popular missiologies circulating in the world today are meant for this 97%. Hardly anything is written specifically for ministry in a nomadic context.

While there are hundreds of thousands of missionaries across the world, there are only a few hundred at most working amongst nomadic peoples. It is our sense that the percentage of unreached and unengaged nomadic groups is growing relative to the percentage of all unreached and unengaged people groups. If this is true, nomads will undoubtedly be the last to be reached. We are currently collecting data that will empirically demonstrate whether this is true or not.

At this point we can confidently say that ten times more gospel workers are needed for nomadic ministry.



We need trained workers willing to go to the harshest places where nomads live and give their lives to these amazing but lost peoples. We need people and churches to pray for nomads and to send more workers.

### **3. Nomadic workers' primary input needs to be informed by other's successes and failures.**

Consider the unique questions that nomadic workers face. They describe the barriers and challenges of this ministry:

Why do nomads see themselves as different? Why might they feel that settled people are their enemies? If the Gospel comes to nomads from the settled world, i.e. from those outside the nomadic fraternity, how can it be made as sweet as honey?

Why do nomadic pastoralists count animals rather than cold, hard cash? Why do they react so badly when governments and Christian development agencies try to better their lives through settlement schemes or building of infrastructure, irrigation and schools? Why is it that when we try to help them in Jesus' name they resist our overtures?

How can we possibly live among them when they move all the time? What are the options? Does one need to become a nomad to work with nomads?

What Scriptures might have strong impact among nomads? How can we best spread the stories of Scripture among illiterate and oral nomads


who are always on the move? If literacy is key to biblicity, how can we build literacy amongst nomads who value orality?

A network of nomadic practitioners can look deeply into these issues, examine case studies and learn to value what nomads value without judging them for not being like us.

If I tell a nomadic pastoralist that in order to follow Christ he must build a building and attend that building every week at a prescribed time, he will look at me and conclude that I want him to give up being a nomad. Would he be wrong?

Today the concept of home church has propelled strategies like DMM, sometimes replacing the need for any building at all. One might assume, like in the story at the beginning of this article, that DMM should be the answer for nomads too. It turns out that even DMM needs to be adapted for nomads.

Workers need to grapple with the realities of discipleship and church amongst nomads and do it with their Bibles in their hands. When workers compare experiences, they are iron sharpening iron for the sake of the formation of the Church amongst nomads.

We pray that the Lord will mobilize churches around the world to learn about nomads, pray for nomads, love nomads and send workers trained to effectively minister to nomads. 

# WHAT IS A



FEATURE ARTICLE

# NOMAD?

BY **JAMES MORRIS**

James has been serving with OM in the Middle East for 17 years, mainly focused among Bedouin communities. James has a PhD in Bedouin life and culture.



**I WAS TALKING TO A COLLEAGUE** who works among a nomadic tribe in Sub-Saharan Africa recently. “This group are nomadic because they don’t have a consistent water source. If we can solve that problem, then they would not be nomadic, and if they are not nomadic, we will have so many more possibilities for sharing the gospel with them”, he reasoned.

This view raises so many questions at so many levels, but the issue I want to address here, and which is perhaps less obvious, is our understanding of nomadism.

Fundamentally, what is a nomad, and why is that significant?

It is important to understand that nomadism is not simply defined by mobility—though mobility is a factor as we shall see—but rather by worldview. This means that not all who are on the move (migrant laborers and refugees, for example) are nomads. It also means that some settled peoples are, really nomads.

Seem like a contradiction? Here we briefly look at four key characteristics of a nomadic world-view. But before that we will survey three types of nomadism in our world.

## **TYPES OF NOMADISM**

When we think of nomads we may think primarily of pastoralists: those that herd sheep, cattle, camels, yak, reindeer, or other animals. Bedouin in the Middle East, Kyrgyz in the High Pamirs, Sami in northern Sweden, or the Samburu in East Africa are good examples of pastoral nomads, people that live and move with their animals, and depend on them for their livelihood. The hundreds of pastoralist nomadic groups in the world represent the most common form of nomadism.

A second type of nomadism is that exhibited by hunter-gatherers. This is also the smallest nomadic grouping. Hunter-gatherers are those that keep on the move and live off of hunting animals and gathering berries, seeds and other plants. The numbers of hunter-gatherers are declining, but they can be found. Sea-nomads, those that are on the move and living off fish and plant-life found near the sea, are essentially a sub-set of hunter-gatherers.

The third type of nomadism is peripatetic, or “service nomadism”—that have a certain skill that traditionally they would offer in a symbiotic relationship to the

settled communities near where they settle for a season or longer. They may be horse-traders, artisans, copper-smiths, or have a whole range of other skills and services. Traveler communities in Europe are historically a good example of these peripatetic nomads.

But what makes some cattle herders nomads and others not? Or some copper-smiths nomads and others not? Or some fishermen and berry-pickers nomads, while others are not?

We were sitting in a tent in a Middle Eastern desert. My friends had moved here recently because there was better grazing for their sheep and goats. Some of their tribe had settled in villages a couple of hundred kilometers away; others moved between the village and tents, depending on the season.

The sun had set, the animals had been watered, and we were drinking sweet tea as we talked. Bedouin are known for their hospitality, and, as well as experiencing it, I wanted to deepen my understanding of it. “Do you always extend hospitality?” I asked. “Are there any circumstances in which you wouldn’t extend it?” The answer was clear: “If anyone comes to our tent they are our guest and we treat them as such. We are responsible for their protection and their well-being.”

I probed further, “Say someone had killed your cousin, and then came to your tent? What would you do?” Again, there was no hesitation, “If someone had killed our cousin, then they would not come to our tent. But if by mistake they did, the moment they enter they are under our protection from anyone else, including other tribes, the police, and the authorities. We are Bedouin. We are not like those farmers and city people.”

“Even though he has killed your cousin?” I confirmed. “Yes, that is right. After he has left our tent we will give him three days. Then we can track him down and kill him to avenge our cousin,” they replied.

We sipped our tea and then one of the brothers said, “Actually, there is one situation in which we would not extend hospitality. If one of our tribe were in a position of shame [by which he meant that someone’s daughter or sister had been accused of sexual impropriety and they had not ‘dealt with it’ by either killing them both or by coming to some settlement with the accused man’s family] and if he entered our tent, we would fill a coffee cup, as we do with all guests, and then pour it onto the

# As long as we seek to make them fit our way of thinking and behaving in order to win them to the gospel, they will understand that the gospel is not for nomads, but for everyone else.

ground in front of him. And we would do that every time, until he has dealt with the shame and restored the honor and reputation of our tribe.”

This conversation illustrates the key aspects of nomadism. The details will vary for every nomadic group. I am not suggesting that all nomads are like Bedouin or would want to be considered so, but all nomads share these features:

## TRIBE

Nomads belong to a clan or tribe; they do not stand as individuals. Their identity and security is tied to their clan, their allegiance to that clan, and the moral codes of that clan. The moral codes and the expected behavior will certainly vary greatly from tribe to tribe, but to be a nomad is to belong to a tribe and not to stand as an individual.

## MOBILITY

A nomadic tribe or clan is presently or has recently been in an environment that is insufficient to support them and their chosen livelihoods over a period of years or seasons. The nature of economic activity means that they need to be mobile, or at least that mobility needs to remain an option. Most nomads are not single-resource nomads, and it may be that some members of a tribe are mobile and others are settled, which better serves the tribe overall. The key here is not whether they are mobile or not at present, but whether their ancestors were and whether a mobile lifestyle remains an option.

## AUTONOMY


Autonomy is a high value for nomadic tribes. They value their ability to make their own decisions vis-a-

vis the nation-state and other communities around which they live. This might bring tension with farming communities for pastoralists, or with town communities for peripatetic nomads. Nomads often have very little loyalty to a nation-state. Indeed, because it is such a high value, some would argue that nomads choose a mobile lifestyle in order to maintain their autonomy, rather than their autonomy arising from their mobility.

## DIFFERENT FROM EVERYONE ELSE

In the end, nomads see themselves as different from non-nomads, even if on the surface they may appear very similar. They don't see themselves as part of a settled system or hierarchy or class, nor part of a nation-state. They see themselves as standing outside it, even when they may be living in the midst of it.

It is these four characteristics that make nomads, nomads: the tribe, mobility as an option, autonomy, and their view of themselves vis-à-vis other communities.

My colleague's comment that if only nomads would settle they would be easier to reach falls at many levels. The tribe he was referring to is nomadic, not simply because of their mobility, but because of the way they see and interact with the rest of the world. That will not change, whether or not they are settled. This is what we need to come to grips with. Our sedentary gospel strategies will not work amongst nomads. We need to re-think our approaches. We are the ones who need to change for the sake of the gospel. As long as we seek to make them fit our way of thinking and behaving in order to win them to the gospel, they will understand that the gospel is not for nomads. 



# HERE

# THERE

# OR FAR AWAY

## IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

| FEATURE ARTICLE

BY **LISA L.**

[LisaL@24by7.org](mailto:LisaL@24by7.org)

Lisa L. and her husband lived for 16 years in West Africa and pursued several different types of ministry among the Fulbe (Fulani) people. They are now based in California, and often miss drinking sweet mint tea with their friends.



**ONE AFTERNOON AS WE WERE** walking home from the market, we passed an elderly man on the road and stopped to exchange the normal series of greetings. He was surprised to find that foreigners like us were able to speak his language, as well as wear typical Fulbe clothing. Gesturing to a nearby house, he invited us to come and share dinner with his family that evening, and we happily accepted. When we showed up at his home later, he seemed a little surprised, but with a big smile he showed us into the house and we sat down on floor cushions. Looking around the room, we realized that 8 or 9 other guests were already there, sharing traditional mint tea and conversation. Some of them were people we knew, men we had met in the neighborhood or as students in our English classes. We greeted one another, and our host made this memorable comment: “Until now you have been meeting the children. Today you have met the father.” Without being aware of it, we had been building relationships with members of the same clan, and had now met their leader.

From 1996 to 2011 we lived and worked among the Fulbe people, also known as Fulani. We started out in a small settlement in the Sahel of western Mali, then moved to a larger town, and finally pursued a

new ministry in a medium-sized city. The city where we lived was in Mauritania, outside of the Fulbe homeland area, but many had migrated there to work in service-sector jobs, and, in some cases, to provide better education for their children. Having learned about traditional Fulbe life in the rural area where we started out, we were interested to find that much of their nomadic worldview came along with them when they moved to the city and began adapting to a “modern” lifestyle.

After moving to the city, I found ways to build relationships with women in the neighborhood. As I got invited to weddings and baby-naming celebrations, I began to notice how these community events were planned and organized by women’s groups. These groups were defined by age and by clan just as they had been in the village, or by the home area where the families’ cattle and sheep were herded. I found that every Fulbe woman I got to know belonged to one of these groups. Wedding planning would be done by the group to which the bride’s mother belonged; they would all contribute money to purchase food for the feast, and organize the cooking and serving. When a woman gave birth, her group would pitch in to plan the naming ceremony



and feast, and help with festive new clothes for the new mother. I remember watching with amazement as one of the women recorded in a notebook the small financial contribution each woman had made on a line next to her name; they kept track of every detail.

Some of the women's groups used this system to manage a revolving loan fund. The money accumulated through monthly contributions could be taken out as a small-business loan by one of the members, to be paid back later so that another woman could borrow. This system seemed to work because the women knew each other well, and their families were linked by clan relationships. The "collateral" was their social standing in the community.

### IT'S ALL ABOUT WHO YOU KNOW

David J. Phillips, in his book *Peoples On the Move*, explores this dynamic of nomadic life in a chapter titled "Who You Know, not What You Own." He writes: "Nomads...emphasize relationships with their own kind—especially their close relatives. Their identity and security is in who and what they can take with them and in their relationships with others on the route. This identity depends on belonging to a mobile society with its social relationships, customs and even concealed rites and terminology." (p.31, William Carey Library, 2001)

We saw another example of this one afternoon when we stopped by to visit at the home of a Fulbe family that we had met, and spent an hour or so drinking the traditional three cups of strong mint tea that facilitate

conversation and relationship-building. We were invited to stay for dinner, and we accepted. Before long, we noticed that young men were arriving and more mint tea was making the rounds. By the time dinner was served, there were 5 or 6 single men seated around the plates, as well as our friends and their four sons, and the two of us. After the meal as we were saying good-bye, I ducked into the kitchen to thank our hostess, Jeynaba, for the meal, and I remarked on how she had had to cook a very large quantity of food. She told me that she never knew how many people would arrive for dinner. She went on to explain that, because her husband had a steady government job and they were established in the city, they were a "host family" for any men from their clan who migrated to the city looking for work. They were expected to provide a safety net of lodging, food, and contacts for new arrivals until they could provide for themselves. Eventually we got to know several families who played this kind of role, anchoring their traditional network in a new urban setting. We've heard anecdotally that this practice continues where Fulbe emigrate abroad, in cities in France and the United States.

While they had moved to the city and worked in blue-collar, government, or service sector jobs, our Fulbe friends continued to hold perspectives on life and cultural norms that echoed their rural, nomadic roots. One of the most significant of these was how they answer the question, "What gives you security in life?" For those with a nomadic worldview, security is found in relationships, in that network of family



**We asked ourselves,  
“Can we bring the Good News into whole  
families, so that Jesus’ grace draws them  
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And we tried to focus our storytelling  
and prayer ministry on gathered  
families, rather than individuals.**

and clan ties that stretches across geography and transcends what we consider modern culture. In this view, a person will always be provided for as long as those ties are maintained.


**NOT ALONE, BUT TOGETHER**

The significance of relationships as the basis for security gave us much food for thought as we considered how to best share the good news with our Fulbe friends and neighbors. In searching the scriptures, we realized that much of Jesus’ ministry, including many of his miracles, had to do with restoring people’s relationships and social connections. The lepers, the demoniacs, and the woman suffering from a 12-year hemorrhage received not just physical healing but restoration into their normal family and clan networks and the security that provided. We asked ourselves, “Can we share the good news in such a way that it brings not only salvation from sin but also the restoration of relationships and community?”

As we observed places where Fulbe had become believers in Jesus, we noticed that bringing them together in groups as house-churches was challenging, and often those groups didn’t last or grow. We realized that often this was because the individuals were from different clans or home regions, and thus didn’t have natural ties or trust each other. It became clear that the good news would spread much faster, and resulting

house-churches would be much stronger, if natural relationship networks were used. Can we model sharing the good news in a way that motivates people to share it themselves within their own families, age-group circles, and clans?

We also met Fulbe believers who had chosen to follow Jesus as individuals, and then been thrown out or cut off from their families. These lonely people suffered the loss of the relationships that form their security net. Although this is sometimes the “cross to be borne” by new believers, it isn’t always necessary, and can be counter-productive to the spread of the good news throughout the family. We asked ourselves, “Can we bring the good news into whole families, so that Jesus’ grace draws them together instead of separating them?” And we tried to focus our storytelling and prayer ministry on gathered families, rather than individuals.

Among the Fulbe, as in most nomadic-background ethnic groups, it’s all about who you know, not what you own. In this way, their worldview echoes the perspective of the God of the Bible, who is inherently relational and made the ultimate sacrifice to adopt us into His own family. The more we value and consciously honor this aspect of the nomadic worldview, the more we will see God’s kingdom become a reality among them. 

# BREACHING AN INVISIBLE BOUNDARY

MOBILIZING PEOPLE  
TO REACH THEIR OWN  
SOCIETY'S NOMADS

FEATURE ARTICLE

**IN MY FIRST 15 YEARS OF** fieldwork in Latin America, I came to understand that the ultimate task of missions is best carried out on the shoulders of well-disciplined local Christians. When my family and I arrived in Outer Mongolia in the late nineties, we went without any adjutant team members. This was by design, as I was determined to connect and work closely with local believers to see God's purposes fulfilled. My family and I were in for some big changes in our new home. The cultural changes alone were huge. But the sociological and missiological lessons

that I was to learn in moving from ministry in a sedentary Latin culture to an Asian culture built on nomadic values were to prove priceless and exciting.

Throughout Africa, the Americas, and much of Asia the relationship between mobile people groups and sedentary ones is at best tense, often antagonistic, and sometimes even violent. Differences between how the groups utilize resources produce humanly irreconcilable conflicts between them. When they come into contact, usually the more financially powerful, better organized sedentary groups will

BY **S. CLEMENT**

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S. Clement and his wife have spent nearly 30 years in ministry, 25 of these in foreign missions work. Of those 25, 15 were spent in eastern Mexico and 10 were spent on the steppes of Outer Mongolia, working with a national Mongol fellowship to establish what by all accounts looks to have been the first fully nomadic local church in the country. Now, having resided in the US since 2008, the Clements are setting their sights on the foreign field once again, looking to begin a new discipleship and teaching ministry in northwest Mexico.



decide that they want to control the resources that mobile people use. Land and water of traditional grazing grounds become important to the sedentary group as it grows. The mobility of the nomads and the freedom that this affords is perceived as a threat to the stability and security of the sedentary group. Nomadic communities are commonly marginalized, too often corralled into enclaves built by people who neither understand nor care about their history, culture, values and way of life. The effect of this practice on nomadic groups is brutal.

The walls that these tensions erect and the conflicts that they precipitate present special challenges to the work of missions where nomadic people live. Many see these conflicts as an insurmountable obstacle. I see them as an opportunity to teach and practice the ministry of reconciliation. Central Asia presents an especially fruitful place to do this, but the principles are applicable nearly universally with proper tutelage.

### A WAY FORWARD

Most of the Central Asian republics are built on a history of nomadism. In most other regions of the world where nomadic groups live, they are seen as oddities existing outside of what more powerful

sedentary groups consider “the norm.” Central Asian cultures generally find identity and solidarity in their nomadic heritage.

Arriving in Outer Mongolia, it was clear that the work of the gospel had prospered much in the urban centers. In spite of much accompanying preliminary evangelization in the countryside by the missionaries and urban churches, we could find no instances of strategically focused long-term discipleship work that would lead to establishing a fully nomadic church. I began to develop a strategy for accomplishing this. As new residents of Mongolia, we had joined an existing urban church. Eventually, what was possibly the first fully nomadic church to be established in Mongolia was done on the shoulders of this indigenous church that was comprised of sedentary urban denizens of a major metropolitan center.

As our strategy developed, it became clear that one of the greatest challenges in employing the urban church was convincing them that this was a cross-cultural outreach. A long-time expat Christian worker shared his view that the cross cultural jump was going to be easier for foreigners than for urban Mongol believers because the Mongols were crossing





an invisible boundary, one of which they themselves were unaware, the existence of which they might have a difficult time believing or even acknowledging. Even though they were to be ministering to fellow Mongols who spoke the same language, shared the same history and heritage, they really were going to be ministering in a cross-cultural context because of the way their sedentary urban lives had altered much of their way of dealing with the world.

### **A WORKING MODEL**

Cooperating with our urban home church, outreach efforts began through connections with nomadic families in the countryside. The vision for reaching this nomadic community grew in the urban church. As it took shape, the church's leadership bought into the idea. The church was closely engaged and carefully taught by deed and instruction. Members of the urban fellowship who had a heart for ministry and willingness to humbly engage the nomadic community came alongside. Instruction regarding pertinent aspects of cross-cultural relationships and ministry were discussed and these Mongol believers began to understand that a true cross-cultural opportunity to minister was before them.

Initially, an older widowed man who had lived most of his life as a herder was instrumental in helping to meet families, develop relationships and school us outsiders in the essentials of nomadic etiquette and culture. As the nomadic outreach developed, urban believers were involved at every step. The urban fellowship was encouraged to take an interest in the lives of both the individual nomadic believers and the corporate church. We developed outreach opportunities. We took care to make sure that the nomadic work was never perceived as a simple evangelistic project, or even a "daughter" of the urban church, rather it was presented as a growing younger sister church. As both bodies of believers matured, the relationship between them broadened and deepened.

For me, the most difficult phase of the development of the nomadic church was the separation of outside leadership from the believing nomads. In its initial phases of growth, I had worked closely with an urban church leader, serving together as co-pastors of the work. We both loved (still love) everything about the work and our nomad brethren and neither of us were willing to leave; however, at divinely prescribed times both of us were removed from our positions of influence within the body, forcing the leaders in

## Because of the historical appeal of nomadism in Central Asian culture and history, helping sedentary urban believers on the Steppes reach their nomadic neighbors, while not without challenges and obstacles, has proven to be especially effective.

the nomadic community - with the support of the urban church - to rise to the call of ministry. This was a painful process as doors that we both wished to remain open were closed to us, but the Lord directs our steps.

I endured a divinely imposed five year exile from Mongolia, receiving only occasional news in generalities about the status of the work and the health of the believers. In 2014 I was finally able to return to Mongolia and see our children in the faith. Sitting at a small cafe in Ulaanbaatar, I heard how the nomadic church had grown and deepened its faith roots. I heard how men and women whom I'd helped disciple years before had grown into leadership and developed spiritual gifts. These wonderful testimonies of the work of the Spirit were shared with me by the pastor of the urban church who had worked closely with the nomadic fellowship since its inception.

Now, over eight years after the departure of the last non-nomadic workers who were directly involved with this endeavor, both the urban and nomadic churches continue strong, growing in grace, effectiveness in ministry and numbers. They have a lovely and powerful ministry, have developed a mutually beneficial cooperation and have become, together, effective ministers of reconciliation.

### THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION


In 2 Corinthians 15, we see that first God reconciles man to Himself through Christ, then as those who have been reconciled to God come to know the fear of God and the love of Christ, we are constrained and compelled to persuade others. The message of

reconciliation has been entrusted to us, the church, as ambassadors of Christ, God making his appeal through us.

The "us" referred to in this passage is as much the growing national church as it is the foreign workers. Perhaps, in some ways, it even refers more to the national church than to the expat workers as the work of reconciliation is one that takes place in the deepest places of the hearts of men and women.

It is impossible to persuade another human regarding reconciliation with God without being willing to go through the sometimes painful and humiliating effort of seeking reconciliation with those with whom the gospel must be shared.

Often there is a deep need for reconciliation between sedentary and nomadic groups in a region or a country. Because of the historical appeal of nomadism in Central Asian culture and history, helping sedentary urban believers on the Steppes reach their nomadic neighbors, while not without challenges and obstacles, has proven to be especially effective.

In other places there are greater challenges to enabling groups of believers (where there have been perhaps generations of bad blood) to reach out to nomadic people groups. However, if God has given us (all believers, missionaries as well as newly developing churches) the ministry of reconciliation, and if knowing the fear of the Lord, we are compelled to persuade others across cultural and ethnic boundaries, through histories of hostility and distrust, then the work of the Holy Spirit in the power of the gospel will enable us (all of us) to carry out this ministry in Christ Jesus. 



# 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

BY **ANDREW DAY**

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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.

# 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 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 1:16a



| FEATURE ARTICLE

# WHEN THEY DON'T SHOW UP



BY **LISA M. ROHRICK**

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Lisa M. Rohrick grew up in Canada and has lived in West Africa since 1999, first in Benin and now in Niger (since 2004). Her primary tasks focus on evangelism and church planting among the Western Fulani.

**“Will you teach us about Jesus?” they asked. Their boldness surprised me...“We have heard some stories about Jesus on the radio,” they said, referring to a daily broadcast on a local station. “Lots of people in our village—maybe 40 people—want to know more.”**

**ONE SWELTERING AFTERNOON** in Niger’s hot season, I responded to a knock at my gate to find two young men from my favourite village. I didn’t know them, but they knew me! After the usual greetings we sat down in the shade and they told me they know I tell stories about Jesus.

“Will you teach us about Jesus?” they asked. Their boldness surprised me.

“Tell me why you ask that question.”

“We have heard some stories about Jesus on the radio,” they said, referring to a daily broadcast on a local station. “Lots of people in our village—maybe 40 people—want to know more. We want to understand. But there is also opposition, so we don’t want you to come to us. That would cause problems. So, can you teach us about Jesus so that we can go home and teach our people?”

Wondering if I’d heard correctly, I readily agreed and we decided on a day to meet. I was excited! I have prayed for that village for over ten years. Many nights I pitched my tent there and sat around the cooking fires visiting with the villagers. I remember sitting alone when everyone had gone to the mosque for evening prayers, praying with tears streaming down my face, begging Jesus to come and make himself known to my friends there. And now these two young men were coming to me. What an answer to prayer!

They were back on the appointed day to learn the first stories that they would then tell the others. Both of them could retell a story after hearing it only once,

and caught on quickly to the discussion questions. I felt good about their ability to pass on what they were learning.

The following week they came several hours late, but their enthusiasm quickly enabled me to forget their lateness. The third week they came on the wrong day. It wasn’t convenient for me, but I shuffled things around and enjoyed my time with them.

The next week they didn’t show up at all. I called and they said they were coming, but they didn’t. Same thing the next week, and the next. And I haven’t seen them since.

What went wrong? Was it my accent, my errors in their language? Did I offend them with some cultural blunder? Or was it something in them that kept them from returning?

This was not the first time something like this happened. People frequently fail to show up for scheduled meetings, sometimes with seemingly good reasons, but often not! One day I was talking to a Fulani friend about it after he told me of someone not showing up when they said they would. “That’s the way it is,” he said with a laugh. “We’re nomads!”

I just smiled along with him, but I was thinking, “No you’re not! You’ve lived in the same village your whole life! You live 100 meters from where you were born!”

### **“SETTLED NOMADS”**

I work with the Western Fulani of Niger, a sub-group of the very large Fulani people group spanning about

**...we all have faced the same frustration. People seem interested in hearing the gospel, in discussing stories of the Bible. But, in spite of their enthusiastic words, they simply stop gathering.**

twenty African countries from Senegal and Guinea in the west to Kenya and Ethiopia in the east, and numbering over 15 million, nearly all of them Muslim. Historically they are pastoral nomads, migrating across the plains in search of water and grasslands for their cattle. Over the years, drought and other factors have led many of them to settle and plant crops, establishing permanent communities.

It seems like a contradiction to call people “settled nomads.” But that is how I would describe Niger’s Western Fulani. They still have their herds, which play an important role in their lives and culture. Young boys look after sheep and goats, returning to the village most nights. But it’s different with the cattle. Young men will be gone from home for months, returning only in the rainy season when there is adequate food and water for their herds. Older men frequently make visits to their sons and nephews tending their cattle in other countries. The community itself doesn’t move, but they have the mentality of nomads. Many times I have heard Fulani people refer to themselves as such. Who am I to argue?!

And where does that leave me, trying to meet with people who regularly disappear, whether they are tending animals or not? I have discussed this with other international workers among the Fulani, as well

as some Fulani lay-pastors, and we all have faced the same frustration. People seem interested in hearing the gospel, in discussing stories of the Bible. But, in spite of their enthusiastic words, they simply stop gathering. One Western man who has spent nearly thirty years among them summed it up by saying, “They’re Fulani. No one tells a nomad where he’s supposed to be!”

It is certainly oversimplifying things to say that this would be the only reason, or even the primary reason, for people to inconsistently attend meetings they claim to want to be at. Illness, poor weather, work, persecution, family responsibilities, etc., all enter the equation. But if it is true that the nomadic mentality fights against making regular commitments (or pretty much any time commitments for that matter!), it adds another obstacle to them coming to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and to growing to maturity as believers.

#### **PERSEVERE!**

There is a group of about twenty Fulani men who follow Jesus and call me their “pastor.” They have chosen Wednesday mornings as their time to gather for worship, including prayer and Bible study (in oral format centred on stories from the Word). But it is rare for more than eight of them to be there at once. Sometimes only two or three come. It is tempting for me to reprimand those who return after a long






absence, as if they were naughty schoolboys. But these are mature men in their 40s who aren't looking for a lecture from me. My ranting would do nothing to change their behaviour anyway! Instead I am trying to be encouraged that they show up at all.

It's also tempting for me to give up, to conclude that they aren't really serious about learning the Word and only show up when they want to ask me for money (which isn't true, but it can feel that way sometimes!). I think it's important for me to persevere, to be well prepared for our meetings and do my very best to help them learn and apply God's Word. Rather than being disappointed by the fourteen who aren't there, I try to celebrate the six who are. I want to be available to meet with them and pray when they have challenges and questions. But if they only hear one Bible story every few weeks, how will they ever have a reasonable grasp of what the scriptures say?

This is where audio can be a great asset. In addition to daily radio programs that many of them receive in their homes, books of scripture, teaching and music can be recorded and distributed on USB keys, SD cards, smart phone apps, MP3 players, etc., making the Word available to people wherever they may wander. A man far from home, leading his cattle to water, can listen and learn God's Word on a solar-charged MP3

player. Learning in isolation cannot replace being in a community of believers, but it certainly is a valuable tool on the discipleship road.

Hama has been following Jesus for nearly five years. With about a 50% attendance rate, he is one of the most faithful at our meetings. And he often stops by to see me at other times, frequently telling me of others with whom he has been able to share the gospel. Six women in his household (including his two wives, his mother, and a widowed sister) also believe. But it's too far for them to come to our meetings. And I rarely see them because my presence in their village draws attention that none of us want. Hama shares with them what we talk about, but he also has a solar MP3 player which he uses to learn the scriptures himself and to share with these women. My job is to equip people like Hama who can be where others are without set meeting times.

What about those two who so keenly asked me to explain to them the road of Jesus and then disappeared a month later? I don't know! I cannot chase them down or force them to listen. But I can continue to pray for them and be available should our paths cross again. And I rest in the knowledge that the Good Shepherd, who laid down his life for his wandering sheep, will bring them into the fold. 

# NOMADS: HELPING THEM TO FACE THE GROWING CHALLENGES

FEATURE ARTICLE

**I GREW UP AS A NOMADIC** pastoralist in The Horn of Africa. Today I work among my people, catalyzing the formation of the church while addressing the various challenges of change among the people. These challenges are macro in scale, usually causing disturbances to nomadic lifestyle and systemic poverty. There are natural and intentional challenges.

Natural challenges include persistent drought and reoccurring famines, but they also include the stresses of population increase in nearby settled populations. When settled communities grow, they can impinge on nomadic territories, shrinking available grazing lands and wreaking havoc on those who are already living as survivalists during the very best of times.

Nomads are impacted by the intentional challenges of government socio-economic policies that aim to make

land more economically productive. Governments tend to look at nomadic territories as vast and undeveloped. They crave the natural resources or dream of developing grand agricultural schemes. In my home area the government has opened nomadic lands to foreign investors for huge cotton and sugar plantations. They have turned the desert into farmland by redirecting major rivers into mazes of irrigation channels. The rivers where we used to water our herds have been reduced to a trickle and we are not allowed to water our animals at the manmade channels.

People are suddenly left with two choices, settle and farm, or try to move their herds into regions already occupied by other clans' animals. Nomads generally resist enforced farming and the land can only sustain so many animals, so towns fill up and drug addiction

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Adam Faranna works in the Horn of Africa. He is married with 5 children. He accepted Jesus Christ 20 years ago and serves among his own people, a nomadic Muslim group. He says, "Ten years ago it was unthinkable to reach my people but these days handfuls of believers are worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ."

# **In old days we had many animals and few worries...Now things have changed. We face too many challenges. We have frequent droughts. The cows are gone and the shrinking number of camels and goats produce less milk.**

becomes part of the new reality. These challenges lie well beyond the capacity or control of nomads.

There is a cattle herder named Ali Michael where we minister. He is a Muslim in his forties, an old man in his community. One day I sat down to listen to Ali Michael about how life is for nomads.

“In old days we had many animals and few worries. We were happy and at peace. Our camels and cattle produced so much milk that we poured some of it on the ground. In those days it was rare to find a poor person. If we did, the community would give him animals so that he could become like the rest of us. Everyone was proud and comfortable. We competed with one another to see who could gain the most cows. Our only concern was another tribe, who would come to steal our livestock.”

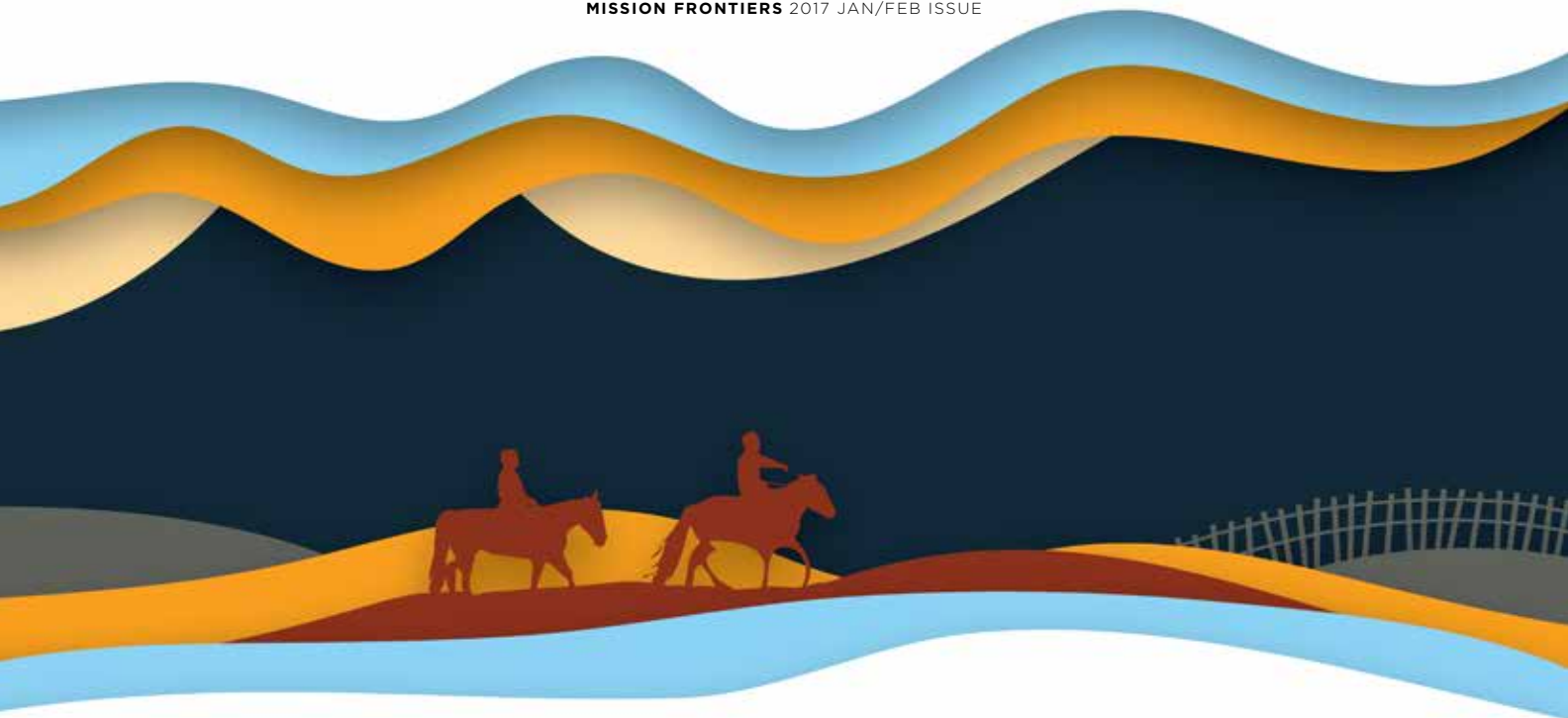
“Now things have changed. We face too many challenges. We have frequent droughts. The cows are gone and the shrinking number of camels and goats produce less milk. Our main food is camel's milk but now there is only enough for the little children. We have become dependent on food aid and goats' milk mixed with hot water, coffee leaves and salt. We call the food aid, 'Kings Food' because it's from the outside. We have no king. It is a shame to eat this food but we have no choice. We are dependent on it.”

“At the same time our land has been taken for sugarcane farming, leaving less grazing areas for the animals. Nobody brags about the size of their herds because too many are suffering. People don't know what to do. We are proud of what we had in the old days but we are confused about our existence now. Some think this is God's judgment or curse. Maybe it's true but why would God want to curse us? Why doesn't God allow us to have the good life our ancestors enjoyed?”

How do we as evangelists and disciplers respond to these challenges? Do we help them discover ways to settle or do we help them discover the means to succeed as nomads? My ancestors lived as nomads and my people don't want to change. If they were forced to settle, it would cause them deep pain and suffering. Even if some settled, the rains would eventually come and then everyone would immediately get back to the life they love, so that herds could grow in number and production, providing them with the only reliable security they know. There are no easy answers.

Here is some of what our team brainstorms about:

1. What attitudes do the people have about remaining as nomads? Which ones have lost their appetite to remain as nomads and cannot be convinced to continue? What causes nomads to lose this appetite?
2. How do we assist when the government intentionally disturbs nomadic life in favour of



economic development? Anger and resignation often surface when rangeland is simply taken from the people. How do we minister to nomads who need to face up to these types of challenges?

3. How does God want us to come alongside nomads who have been left with nothing? They don't know how to negotiate with the state and cannot seem to regain an economic foothold. They and what few animals they have are starving. Can animals become their wealth as before?
4. How can we help the people develop a long-term vision for the productive changes that these challenges are demanding? Nomads are survivalists and therefore good at adapting, but these challenges overwhelm them. They cannot see the future. Our partnership with them needs to benefit them by educating them further about their situation so that they can discover their real options going forward.

When we talk about forming the church among nomads we need to consider the challenges nomads face today and partner with them as they seek best paths forward. Whether we like it or not, this has impact on church formation because new believers are also part of the community and share exactly the same challenges.

We cannot responsibly advocate for any ministry strategies that have the effect of economically extracting believers. This includes expecting the global church to support the monthly needs of believers as some

do. We have even found that tent-making strategies for believers have not worked very well because they usually have the aim of creating more wealth for individuals in a society that values community wealth.

Rather than create dependency, we want to empower whole communities as a testimony to the transformative power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. As God directs us into areas where people of peace have welcomed us we want to listen to the people. We want to hear what their unsolvable challenges are. We want to meet the innovators among them. We want to work with them to help them develop the skills they need in order to accomplish their vision of the future, whether it is to thrive as nomads or to incorporate more semi-settled or settled elements in their economy in order to augment their ability to live as nomads.

We aim for a nomadic pastoralist church of Jesus Christ that is indigenous in every aspect (including economically), while communities are losing their land and their ability to survive. We want this church to incorporate pure nomads as well as settled nomads in the same community of people.

We pray for a reproducing church that takes the gospel from clan to clan as they move. We aim for the church to be as elastic as the nomad communities they are growing up within, but if people have no more reason to move, we desire this same church to connect with the settled part of the community. The nomadic church needs to develop different approaches and strategies for reaching nomadic people who are living in different contexts within one community.






Recently, I sat with a man from my area. I asked, “If I were able to give you support what would you want me to do?” He said, “The best thing for me would be a camel.” I was not surprised. Then I asked, “If I were able to support your son, what would you want me to do?” “Education,” he answered. There are generational dynamics in play. Things are changing. This helps us think about our approaches to the next nomadic generation.

We need to initiate strategies that strengthen nomads economically so that they survive the challenges and adapt to the changes. Governments are less apt to label nomads as lazy and re-purpose their land if they see that the land is already producing recognizable wealth. We must serve nomads as God’s transformational agents, enabling them to come up with their own economic ideas in order to ward off forces of unwanted change. When the nomadic way of life is severely threatened we need to serve nomads as advocates for augmented or secondary means of survival.

We need to help create educational opportunities for nomads so that they at least learn to read and write. There are two reasons for this. First, all believers need to be able to read Scripture for themselves. Secondly,

nomads need to become better informed of the challenges arrayed against them and more aware of their options for change through education.

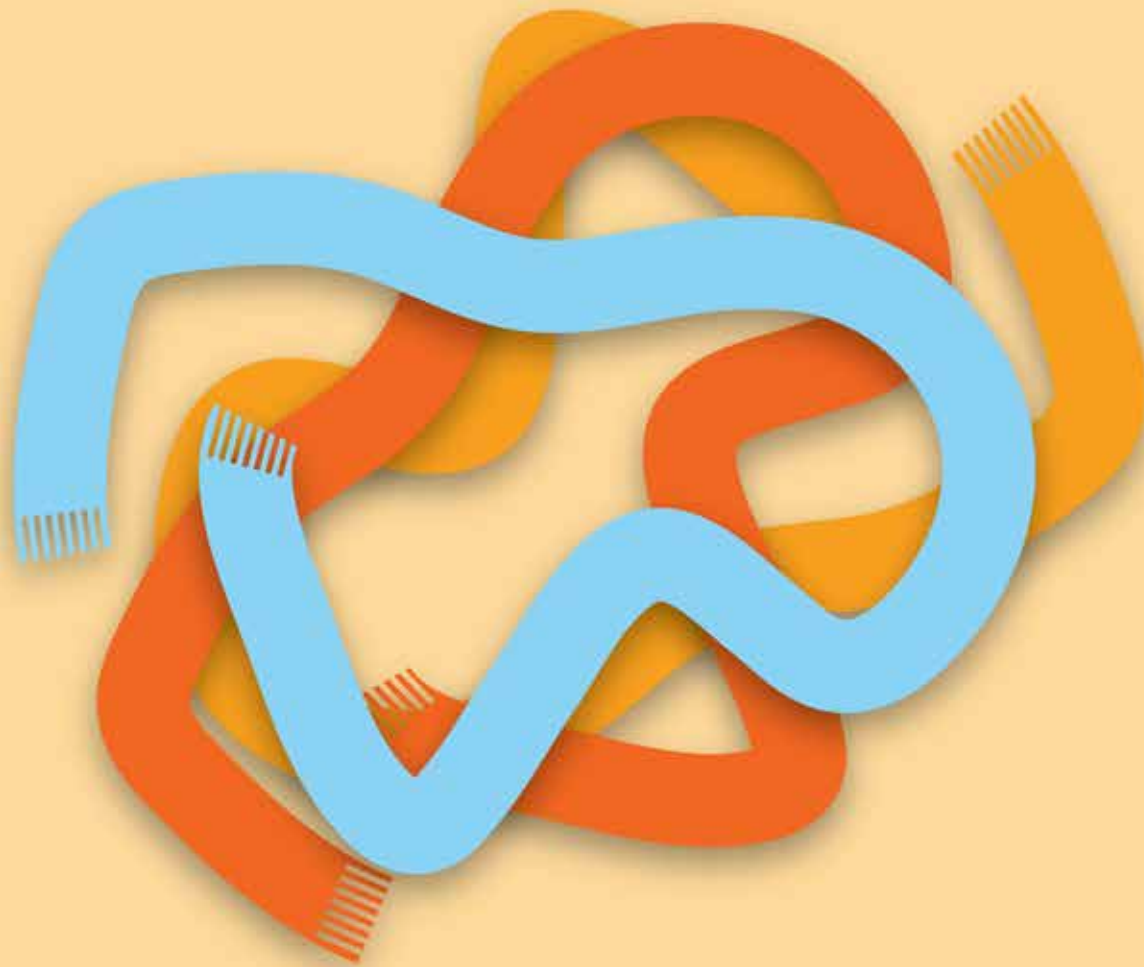
We know that nomads have strong oral cultures, but even these cultures depend on a few people with excellent memories to pass along abiding truth. Long experience has taught us that most find it difficult to remember biblical stories and pass them on reliably to others. The Bible is not for the few. If we want to see healthy, reproductive and transformed lives among nomads, we need to develop education programs for adults and children.

As education becomes part of a nomadic culture, the potential for a new normal develops. While nomadic pastoralists continue in the rooted traditions of life, there will be those whose education allows them to defend their people as politicians or serve their people as veterinarians, agricultural professionals, doctors, nurses, engineers and business people. We can help nomads create this needed strength in their culture by finding ways to bring effective educational opportunities into nomadic life. Then they will become more equipped to confront the challenges to their survival and to influence how change occurs. 

# CONTEXTULIZING CENTRAL ASIAN SHEPHERDS:

## DEVELOPING CREATIVE STRATEGIES TO REACH THESE PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

FEATURE ARTICLE



BY **ELIZABETH PAUL & THOMAS BENTLEY**

[elizabeth.paul.ca@gmail.com](mailto:elizabeth.paul.ca@gmail.com)

Elizabeth Paul (pen name) has been in Central Asia for 10 years on a church planting team teaching English and more recently educating women to comb their goats.

Thomas Bentley (pen name) has been in Central Asia with his family for 5 years developing a cashmere export business as a part of his team's church-planting efforts.

**We believe God will establish networks of believers in these mountain valleys through this business. Cashmere is an ideal gateway for relational engagement. We go from village to village, educating local shepherds about cashmere... Then we follow up from house to house, building relationships with families where ministry opportunities abound.**

**NOT TOO FAR FROM THE CITY** where we live, semi-nomadic pastoralists populate the high altitude mountain valleys of Central Asia. These dear people survive through the harshest winters one could imagine by managing large herds of goats and yak. Until now the gospel has not taken root among these Muslims. The primary challenge for high-altitude village ministry has always been how to establish an accepted and valued entry point for an ongoing presence, but over several years an opportunity has come together for our team to form a business that, God willing, will help develop the local cashmere industry.

Like many nomadic pastoralists, these people live primarily off the dairy products of their animals, but these people also gain an income from goat hair and yak hides. Our research has confirmed that the goats they work with produce world-quality elite cashmere. That sounds great but these shepherds don't have an informed concept of what properties influence the dollar value of cashmere. Chinese buyers have created a monopoly by purchasing all the cashmere based on weight rather than by quality grades. This means shepherds do not get full market value for their higher quality fiber. Besides this, cashmere, once removed from the goats, is not processed locally. All

of the profit from the value-added steps of processing is realized outside of the country. This is what we are working to change.

The socio-economic impact is significant. We source the fiber and export it to the West where we have partnered with others who create retail outlets for cashmere yarn in North America. As a result we pay 30% higher prices for shepherds who agree to sell to us directly because we have eliminated the middleman. We help establish brand recognition for their cashmere, bringing greater dignity to nomadic shepherds, who are often viewed as being second-class people.

We believe God will establish networks of believers in these mountain valleys through this business. Cashmere is an ideal gateway for relational engagement. We go from village to village, educating local shepherds about cashmere. We help them with better breeding for improved fiber. We teach them how to collect the hair and sort it by quality. Then we follow up from house-to-house, building relationships with families where ministry opportunities abound.

The vision is to broadly sow the gospel amidst these unreached, remote semi-nomads and to connect those who respond with national believers from way down in the city. When these city-folk engage, God grows



their love for their nomadic counterparts, whom they may have once regarded poorly. They are excited to have natural opportunities to convey the person and message of the gospel where it has never been heard before. There they can help each other grow in their faith, persevere in a hostile environment, and make the name of Christ known with wisdom and boldness.

Zukra (not her real name) lives in a remote village area where she came to faith in Jesus Christ ten years ago. Her daughter became afflicted with demons suddenly when she was in 4th grade. For 3 years she could not speak and was not in her right mind. Zukra took her to every doctor, Muslim teacher and witch doctor she could find; but no one could help her. Her sisters were followers of Jesus. They kept telling her that Jesus could heal her daughter but she hated them because they had converted from Islam and “sold their religion to become Russians.” Eventually in desperation Zukra asked her sisters to come and pray. When they prayed in Jesus’s name everyone saw a dark presence leave her and exit the house. Zukra’s daughter was miraculously delivered. The whole family came to Christ that day. Today her daughter continues to live in freedom, but Zukra’s family lives in fear of persecution.

It is not abnormal for the few scattered believers in villages to be ostracized. They are threatened with beatings and divorce. People steal things from them

and sometimes burn their homes. They live in fear of being exposed as Christians.

Because the cashmere business allows us a legitimate reason for continued presence in the villages, we are able to encourage these scattered, isolated believers. Zukra is employed as one of our coordinators for collecting cashmere. By helping her people receive more income for their fiber, she is gaining more authority and dignity in her community.

One of the stated goals of the cashmere business is to pour profits back into the community. The business has already been able to repair the heating system in a school and in day care centers throughout several villages where we work with local shepherds. We have also begun working to serve children with special needs in these villages.

The government has a program that provides financial help for those with special needs. When children are diagnosed with a disability, they are put on the list to receive financial aid from the government. This entitles them to free medical care and therapy at a rehab center down in the city. The problem is that this city is many hours away and therefore inaccessible to most families.

Medical care is poor in these areas. Overwhelmed by children with special needs, local doctors encourage parents to go to a Muslim priest or witch doctor for treatment. People with disabilities are considered



**We live in the city and regularly travel out to the villages. Together with the social workers, we started meeting families of children with disabilities, loving on them and treating them with dignity. We often tell the story of the man born blind and God's heart of love for people with special needs.**

cursed, demonized and shamed. Fear and pity are the general attitude. Parents of children with disabilities are often asked what terrible sin they committed that God would curse them with this child. Most of these children do not go to school, and many never leave their homes due to fear and shame.


Last fall, my local believing friend and I met the director of the social services department for the region. We shared about the cashmere business and how we wanted to bless the community by working with their special needs children. We explained that we wanted to bring a team to provide training and make regular therapies available for special needs children.

We told him the story from John 9 of their prophet, the Messiah Jesus, how one day while walking with his disciples they saw a man born blind. The disciples asked Jesus, "Who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" Jesus responded, that his blindness was not the result of sin, but so that God's glory would be revealed. Then Jesus healed him!

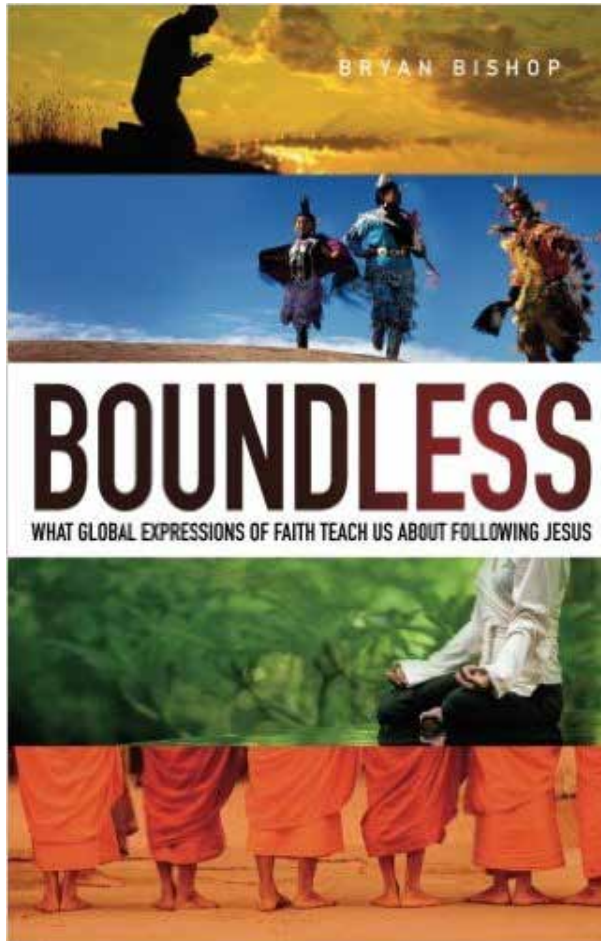
I told the director that this is God's heart for people with disabilities. It is not a shame or a curse, but rather the world is broken. God loves these kids and we wanted to help by bringing specialists to train and advise the parents. The director promptly handed me a list of 200 special needs children from the 17 villages in the region.

We live in the city and regularly travel out to the villages. Together with the social workers, we started meeting families of children with disabilities, loving on them and treating them with dignity. We often tell the story of the man born blind and God's heart of love for people with special needs. I am amazed and grateful for the open doors we have found.

However, in finalizing plans for the anticipated team of specialists, local government authorities, who had been very excited about our efforts, suddenly slammed the door shut at the last minute, threatening investigation by the police if we tried to work in the villages. It was an unfortunate reminder of the suspicion, fear, power plays and tight control authorities wield in these close village communities. It was also an abrupt reminder that things are not always as they seem. Situations and relationships can change quickly. Even though we speak their language well, we often have no idea what is really going on.

The cashmere business has allowed us access to these village regions. Tangibly loving on the marginalized has allowed us opportunities for deeper relationships. We have been given a very natural way to proclaim God's heart for their kids. We still have a lot to learn, but are grateful for all the opportunities we have to engage these people. 





## Boundless: What Global Expressions of Faith Teach Us About Following Jesus

by Bryan Bishop

ISBN: 978-0-8010-1716-2

Published in 2015 by BakerBooks.

At Pentecost, after Peter preached, how many of his listeners became Christian?

When I first heard this question, I thought, “Hmm, Was it 2000 people or was it 3000 people who became Christian?” Bishop helped me to realize that actually the correct answer is zero! This is a trick question! Most of those people woke up that day and called themselves Jews and they went to

sleep that night calling themselves Jews. The term “Christian” wasn’t coined until later. Moreover, the Bible does not teach us that we have to call ourselves Christians.

In 2001, the Center for the Study of Global Christianity reported that 14 million Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims have opted to remain within those religious traditions in order to witness for Christ as active

believers in Jesus as Lord. This means 14 million people are following Jesus Christ as Lord but at the same time they are not calling themselves Christian. This is something we don’t hear much about in our churches. For those of you who have been looking for an easy-to-read book that illustrates and explains some aspects of this phenomenon, this is the book for you. This is also a

BY **SCOTT HEDLEY**

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Scott Hedley has 30 years of extensive missionary experience both as a mission mobilizer and as a on-the-field worker.

good book to give to others who may be confused or even critical of those followers of Christ who refuse to call themselves Christian.

John Travis mentioned that, for many Muslims, the word Christian is not necessarily a positive term. Some Muslims may associate Christianity with the love and selfless devotion of Mother Teresa and relief organizations. But most Muslims tend to focus on the negative aspects of present-day Western culture like immodest dress, sexual promiscuity, disrespect of elders, indulgence in alcohol, Hollywood violence, narcotics and pornography.

But it is not just Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims who prefer not to take on the label of Christian. Even in America, a recent report by Pew Research found that of all religious categories, such as Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, and Mormons, the “religiously unaffiliated” category is the fastest growing category in the United States. And in a 2007 study by Barna Research, two-thirds of unchurched youth call Christianity boring, and even one-quarter of young Christians used that same word to describe the Christianity that surrounds them.

Throughout the rest of his book, Bishop describes different scenarios of how Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims have opted to remain within their religious traditions while following Christ (and while not taking on the ‘Christian’ label). For example, Muslims who are

now following Christ show their other Muslim friends that the Qur’an actually tells them that they should read the ‘earlier books’ (i.e. the Bible). Even Surah 10:94 (in the Qur’an) says, “If you were in doubt as to what We have revealed to you, then ask those who have been reading the Book from the Lord.”

Some Buddhists who now follow Christ have chosen to use Buddhist concepts to describe salvation. For example, through Christ, God saves us from karma. God suffered terrible woes so that all should be freed from karma, for nobody is beyond the reach of the Buddha principle. In Thailand, one of the most derogatory names that Thais call Christians is *luksit farang*, which means “disciple of a foreigner.” Therefore, many Buddhists do not call themselves Christian, instead they call themselves “Children of God” or “New Buddhists.”

Bishop gave a good example of outreach happening in a largely Buddhist area in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Ben Jones, a tall man from the Pacific Islands, has learned the Thai language very well. Several times a week he made trips into the neighborhood of his area. He had a simple goal: find people who would like to hear a story about God. Once he found a family who wanted to listen, he would get to know them a little bit and then would tell them a Bible story. Afterward, he would ask if they wanted him to come back in a week to tell another story. After only three weeks of doing this, Jones already had eight different families he was

visiting each week to tell stories. By the time he told two or three stories, he would encourage his listeners to tell the stories to their friends or family.

In the chapter on how Hindus have chosen to follow Christ, Bishop includes an interesting example of how a man named Navin chose to follow certain Hindu practices in the burial service of his father who passed away. Many of his Hindu relatives came to visit during this burial service and they were all intrigued to find out why Navin, as a follower of Jesus, had honored their Hindu traditions. They asked him many questions about his beliefs and invited him to visit them and explain more. They were ultimately happy to learn that they could follow Jesus in a Hindu way.

However, I would like to suggest that Bishop add a comment or response related to his quotation of George Housney who apparently said, “Most Muslims who come to Christ want to leave Islam, not stay in it.” This statement of Housney may be true in some parts of the Muslim world. But Rick Love points out that this is not true in other parts of the Muslim world.

Bishop’s book ends with an appendix containing ten suggested stories which can be used to help others more fully understand the concepts in his book. This is a very easy-to-read book and I heartily recommend it to those who want to know more about the 14-million people are following Jesus Christ as Lord but not calling themselves Christian.



# THE INTANGIBLES OF URGENCY AND GRIT

BY **STEVE SMITH**

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Steve Smith (Th.D.) was part of a church planting movement in Asia. He currently works globally to catalyze biblical church planting movements to finish the Matt. 24:14 quest. He is the author of *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution* with Ying Kai (WigTake Resources, 2011) and *Hastening and Rebirth* in the “No Place Left” saga (2414 Ventures, 2015 & 2016).

KINGDOM KERNELS

Jack<sup>1</sup> grasped the bars of his cell door and peered down the hallway. His heart raced as sweat beaded down his forehead. Should he speak or not? As a former soldier, he recalled the cruel horrors inflicted in military prisons. Arrested for preaching the gospel, he was now on the wrong side of the bars.

Should he speak? How could he not? His Lord had commanded him.

Gripping the bars more tightly, he spoke in a low voice to any guards stationed nearby. “If you don’t let me go, the blood of 50,000 people will be on your heads!” He darted back to the corner of the cell, awaiting a beating. But it never came. I did it! I witnessed in the face of my captors.

The next day, grasping the bars, he spoke more loudly. “If you don’t let me go, the blood of 50,000 people will be on your heads!” But again no retribution came.

Each day he repeated this encounter with his captors, his voice growing louder with each declaration. The jailers admonished him to be quiet, but to no avail.

At the end of the week, Jack shouted so all could hear, “IF YOU DON’T LET ME GO, THE BLOOD OF 50,000 PEOPLE WILL BE ON YOUR

HEADS!” For hours this went on until finally several soldiers grabbed Jack and loaded him on to a military truck.

Jack looked around in apprehension expecting the end to come shortly. After a couple of hours, the truck rolled to a stop. The soldiers escorted him to the side of the road. “We can’t stand your constant shouting! You are at the border of the county. Leave here and never preach in this place again!”

As the trucked rambled back down the dusty road, Jack blinked in surprise. He had been faithful to the call to preach the good news in a country that had never heard of Jesus. The Lord had called him and the Lord had protected him. A few weeks later, filled with a sense of urgency and emboldened with spiritual grit, Jack and another brother slipped back into the county under cover of darkness to obey the great King’s command. Soon they led the first man to faith—a man through whom a Church-Planting Movement would be birthed.

## THE INTANGIBLE ELEMENTS OF FRUITFUL CPM CATALYSTS

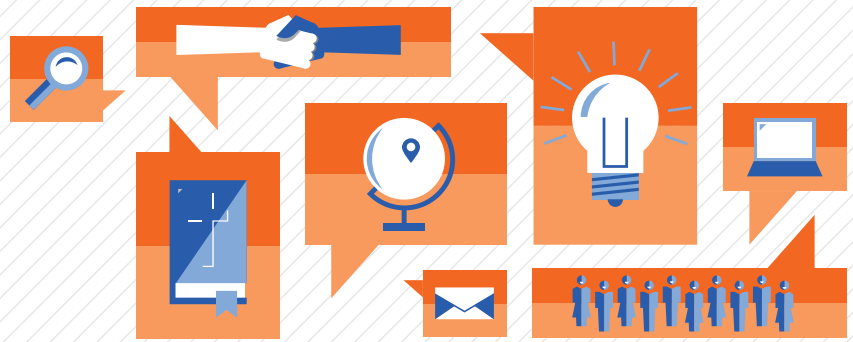
Two intangible characteristics rise to the top over and over again that seem to separate the most fruitful Church-

Planting Movement (CPM) catalysts from many other laborers. Like Jack in that Asian prison, these elements are evident in the life of Christ and in the lives of the Acts disciples. They are the accelerants that seem to spur on a spiritually abiding servant of Christ to fruitfulness. Though it is hard to define them, I will refer to them as “urgency” and “grit.” For this purpose, I define urgency as purposefully living on mission with the awareness that time is limited. Grit is a tenacious determination and staying power toward that mission, often in the face of insurmountable odds.

These are not normally the first characteristics we look for in church planters and missionaries, usually because of negative connotations:

- Urgency: “He is too driven!”
- Grit: “She is too stubborn!”

It is becoming less common to find laborers in the kingdom (at least in the Western world) who face their mission with gritted teeth and a sense of urgency that often keeps them awake at night. We much prefer people who have “margin.” Yet Jesus and Paul would probably not fit our definitions of people with appropriate margin. Today we might counsel them to “slow down,”



spend more time on non-work interests and adjust their work-life balance.

Yet, the men and women through whom God is birthing kingdom movements seem remarkably blind to the idea of margin as we define it. Rather, the mission of God consumes their lives like it did with Jesus.

His disciples remembered that it was written: “Zeal for your house will consume me.” (John 2:17, ESV)

Zeal was a defining characteristic that the disciples recalled about Jesus. Did John Wesley, writing sermons on horseback as he traveled from meeting to meeting, have such margin? Would a movement have emerged if he had? As William Carey chafed in England to be set loose to fulfill the Great Commission, would we characterize his life as a margin-filled life? Would Hudson Taylor, Mother Teresa or Martin Luther King, Jr. fit such definitions?

Jim Elliot, the martyr, said:

“He makes His ministers a flame of fire. Am I ignitable? God deliver me from the dread asbestos ‘other things.’ Saturate me with the oil of the Spirit that I may be a flame. But flame is transient, often short-lived. Canst thou bear this my soul—in me there dwells the Spirit of the Great Short-Lived, whose zeal for God’s house consumed Him. ‘Make me thy fuel, Flame of God. God, I pray thee, light these idle sticks of my life and may I burn for Thee. Consume my life, my God, for it is Thine. I seek not a long life, but a full one, like you, Lord Jesus.’”

An encounter with CPM catalysts today evokes similar descriptions: passion, tenacity, determination, restlessness, driven-ness, zeal, faith, unwillingness to quit or take “no” for an answer. It is time

to re-elevate the intangible elements of urgency and grit to the level we see them in the New Testament.

Can they become out of balance? Undoubtedly. But the pendulum has swung too far in the opposite direction.

## URGENCY

*Urgency: purposefully living on mission with the awareness that time is limited*

Jesus lived with a sense of urgency knowing his time of ministry (three years) was short. From the beginning to the end of John, Jesus frequently references his “hour” of departure from the world (e.g. Jn. 2:4, 8:20, 12:27, 13:1). Jesus knew in his spirit that the days were short and he must redeem each one for the mission his Father sent him on.

“We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.” (Jn. 9:4, ESV)

For example, while the disciples were ready to camp out in Capernaum after the prior day’s amazing success, Jesus decided exactly the opposite. Knowing his mission was to get through all of Israel before his departure, he left to begin the next stage of the journey.

“And he said to them, ‘Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.’ And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.” (Mk. 1:38-39, ESV; see also Lk. 4:43-44)



A colleague describes this mentality as “one-term urgency” referring to the common length of a missionary term of service (3-4 years).

Today’s experts might warn Jesus about “burn-out.” But Jesus’ desire was not to burn out but to “flame out” or “burn up” at exactly the time the Father chose for him. Flaming out describes living with the urgency and intensity of the Father’s pace (his voice) toward the Father’s mission (his goal) for the Father’s pleasure (joy derived from knowing we are pleasing him and doing his will—Jn. 4:34, 5:30).

Burn-out has little to do with margin or lack of margin but rather with lack of fulfillment of a life spent well. Everyone today is busy; not everyone is purposeful. A busy existence lived aimlessly totters toward burn-out. But one rooted in the Father’s presence and for his purposes is life-giving. We end each day receiving God’s commendation: “Well done, my good and faithful servant.” Flaming out is letting our lives be completely used up by God at his pace and in response to His promptings and letting him end our lives in his good timing.

Jesus implores his disciples to live in a similar way. Urgency marked a common theme of the parables Jesus taught them. In the parable of the wedding feast (Mt. 24:1-14) the servants are to compel people to come to the feast before it is too late. There is no time to lose. In the parable of ready servants, the servants are to stay “dressed for action” to keep alert for the Master’s return (Lk. 12:35-48).

Urgency means that we don’t know how much time we have, so our lives are to be lived on purpose, redeeming the days.

The disciples carried this sense of urgency with them in the mission efforts of Acts. Paul’s three journeys of thousands of miles (at the pace of foot traffic) and dozens of places squeezed into the span of 10-12 years has a dizzying effect. Paul had a mission (preaching to all of the Gentiles) and not much time to fulfill it. It is why he hoped not to linger in Rome but to be propelled by them toward Spain so that there would be no place left to lay a foundation for the gospel (Rom. 15:22-24).

Urgency to fulfill the stewardship given them by God has always driven the most fruitful servants of God:

“This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.” (1 Co. 4:1-2, ESV)

## GRIT

*Grit: tenacious determination and staying power toward a mission, often in the face of insurmountable odds*

Rooster Cogburn (epitomized by John Wayne in True Grit), guns ablazin’, conjures up images of someone staring down insurmountable odds to achieve a mission. But in the spiritual realm, tenacious grit has always characterized men and women God has called to launch movements.

Jesus’ one-term mission could not be stopped. his face was set like a flint toward the troubles that awaited him in Jerusalem (Lk. 9:51-53). Along the way, many declared their desire to follow him. But one by one, he challenged their willingness to count the cost and their determination to stay the course (Lk. 9:57-62). Grit.

Grit characterized our Lord’s wrestling in the wilderness temptations and in Gethsemane’s final hour—the determined staying-power to walk through insurmountable odds to reach the goal the Father had set.

Jesus implored his disciples to live with similar grit—an unwillingness to take “no” for an answer. Rather, like the widow beseeching the unrighteous judge, they “ought always to pray and not lose heart” (Lk. 18:1-8, ESV).

Thus, the disciples throughout Acts continued their outward kingdom push in the face of amazing odds. When Stephen was stoned and fellow believers were dragged off to prison (Acts 8:3), what did they do? They preached the word as they were scattered! Paul, stoned in Lystra, got right back up to re-enter the city before moving on to the next destination. Paul and Silas bound fast in a Philippian jail sang praises to the Most High when circumstances were the most low. Spiritual grit kept them at the mission.

What circumstances can arise that would cause you to quit the mission of God? What is your grit level?



# **We have within our ability the means to overcome every obstacle to fulfillment of the Great Commission and the Lord's return. But such a generation will only rise up when it is resolved to finish the task with a renewed sense of urgency, steeled by grit to push through every obstacle.**

Secrets of grit can be found in Jesus' determination to face the cross: "Jesus... who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising [lit. counting it as nothing] the shame." (Heb. 12:2, ESV)

The joy of what was before him—pleasing his Father, fulfilling his mission, providing redemption—led him to count the shame of the cross as nothing. The upside far outweighed the downside.

Paul expressed similar sentiments: "Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." (2 Tm. 2:10, ESV)

The upside for Paul—that God's chosen people in each place might find salvation—far outweighed the downside of enduring ridicule, beatings, imprisonment, shipwrecks and stoning. Only a vision of the upside of the mission will steel us with the grit we need to endure the downside of difficulty to achieve it.


Our generation has within its means the ability to engage every remaining unreached people group and place with fruitful CPM approaches. We have within our ability the means to overcome every obstacle to fulfillment of the Great Commission and the Lord's return. But such a generation will only rise up when

it is resolved to finish the task with a renewed sense of urgency, steeled by grit to push through every obstacle.

Moses, the man of God, prayed in Psalm 90:12: "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom."

What would happen if the global church recognized that time is limited? What if we set a date for completion of engaging every people group with an effective CPM strategy by a year such as 2025 or

2030? Perhaps we might live with wiser hearts, filled with a sense of urgency making whatever sacrifices are needed to fulfill the mission objective.

Let us live with a sense of urgency and endure with grit till the end is at hand. 

<sup>1</sup> A pseudonym for a Southeast Asian disciple of Christ

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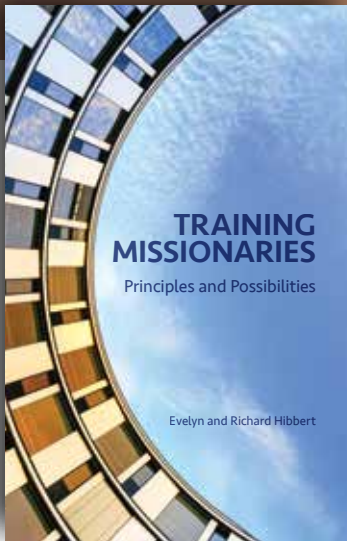


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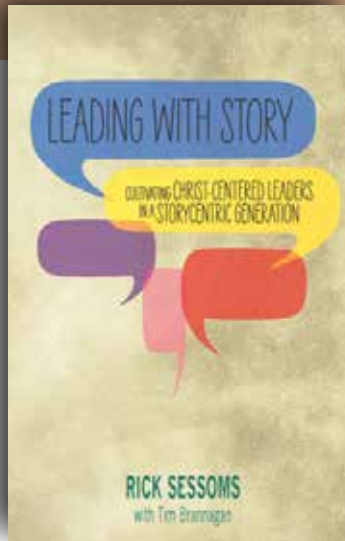
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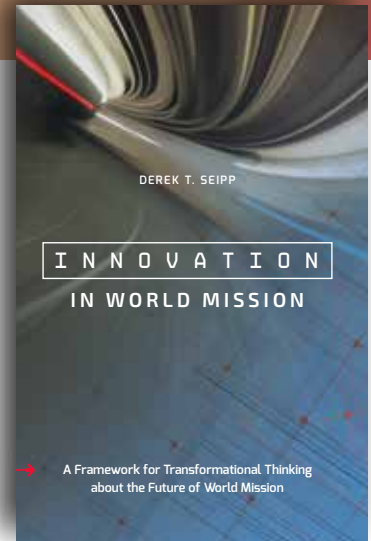
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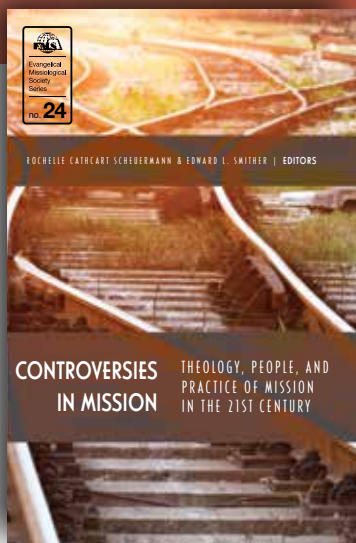
*A Framework for Transformational Thinking about the Future of World Mission*

Derek T. Seipp (Author)

Our world is changing: mass migrations, the emergence of mega-cities, globalization, travel, and ubiquitous connectivity. How do we make sense of it all? *Innovation in World Mission* was written for those who care about being relevant in this chaotic, yet exciting new world. This book explores the categories of mega-changes happening around us, and the impacts they are making, specifically in world mission. It explores how God created us in his image, to be creative and innovative—modern day children of Issachar who understand change and know how to respond. Real-life examples from ministries, non-profits, and businesses are used throughout to help understand how to put these tools into practice.

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ISBN 978-0-87808-397-8  
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**NEW**

## Controversies in Mission

*Theology, People, and Practice of Mission in the 21st Century*

Rochelle Cathcart Scheuermann (Author),  
Edward L. Smither (Author)

Crossing social, cultural, and religious barriers and making disciples of all nations has probably never been without some level of controversy. This book is an attempt to hit the pause button on this rapid-paced world and to reflect on how we do mission, especially in light of the new layers of complexity that globalization brings. While the contributors engage in new aspects of mission and cultural encounter unique to the twenty-first century, the underlying issues of each chapter are age-old topics that have reared their heads at various times throughout history: priorities in mission, power struggles, perspectives on cultural others, and contextualization. With that in mind, our aims are twofold: (1) to carefully consider issues causing tension and contention within current mission thought, practice and strategy and then (2) to engage in serious but charitable dialogue for the sake of God's mission and the salvation of all peoples.

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**CHARLES H. KRAFT**



**ISSUES in  
CONTEXTUALIZATION**

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## Issues in Contextualization

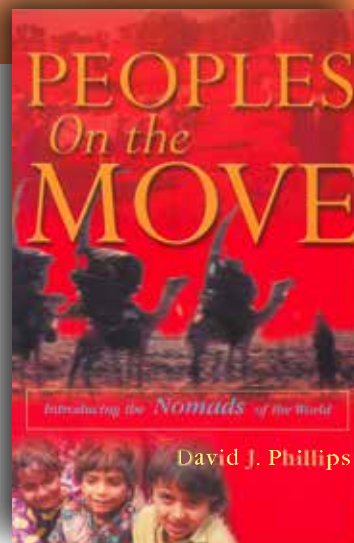
Charles H. Kraft (Author)

The gospel is to be planted as a seed that will sprout within and be nourished by the rain and nutrients in the cultural soil of the receiving peoples. What sprouts from true gospel seed may look quite different above ground from the way it looked in the sending society, but beneath the ground, at the worldview level, the roots are to be the same and the life comes from the same source. What does a vibrant indigenous faith in Jesus look like? How do we communicate the essential meanings of the gospel in forms appropriate to a particular people at a particular time?

*Issues in Contextualization*, Charles Kraft's latest book, presents his own insights on this topic from decades of experience teaching and ministering around the world. Significantly, Kraft's analysis includes an exploration of spiritual power, an aspect frequently neglected in such discussions. This volume is an update of Kraft's classic work *Appropriate Christianity*. It contains fresh presentations of previous articles and new insights into topics such as insiders (followers of Jesus outside the religious culture of Christianity) and power encounter.

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Charles H. Kraft (Author)  
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## Peoples On the Move

*Introducing Nomads of the World*

David J. Phillips (Author)

Nomads — they inhabit every continent yet have “no abiding city.” Always on the move, they are often “invisible,” unreached, despised, and easily forgotten by settled citizens. This is the most comprehensive source of information on all the nomadic peoples of the world and includes maps, black and white photographs, people profiles, and bibliographic data.

As you develop a new understanding of the political, agricultural, economic and cultural foundations of nomadic life, you will praise the “God of nomads” for his rich diversity and work among these peoples — and even consider your own calling and priorities in life.

Davis Phillip has worked with the Unevangelized Fields mission in churches along the Amazon river and in the cattle ranch regions of Brazil; and as missions researcher with WEC International, contributing to Patrick Johnstone's Operation World. As founder member of the Nomadic Peoples Network he has visited nomads in India, Nepal, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the Middle East and West Africa; more recently he has been teaching in Nomadic Peoples workshops.

List Price ~~\$19.95~~ • **Our Price \$15.96**

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David J. Phillips (Author)  
Piquant | Pages 490 | Paperback 2007



# Unknowns Create Opportunities

by Greg Parsons

Director of Global Connections  
Frontier Ventures

As Westerners, we like to be safe, secure and stable—the things that provide a foundation to our lives. This includes things like job stability and how to provide for our families and our future.

There is nothing wrong with that in and of itself. It seems sensible to us, given how our developed countries operate. The shock comes when we are exposed to those from very different places, who have no sense of where the next meal may come from. It can be shocking to realize how blessed we are and how often we take for granted what we have and how we lead our lives.

It is understandable that major changes in our U.S. political situation will create unknowns. While politics are downstream from culture, as Chuck Colson said, we realize that because of the election of Donald Trump, many people—here and around the world—wonder what changes that will bring. No matter what your opinion about him, it is clear to most people here, that if the election had gone the other way things would not have changed much from the direction they were headed under President Obama.

But what I hope we realize—and act on—is that this brings a tremendous opportunity to us. Uncertainty should drive us to God as should peace. But I fear that many Christians (especially Trump supporters) are sensing some level of relief, which can lead us back to complacency. We must be ready

to listen to the concerns of those around us and love those who feel the unknowns the most.

I realize that I'm writing this just a week after the election here. I happened to be in Hong Kong when the results came in. I missed much of the reaction to the unexpected results on TV in the U.S., but saw things from the perspective of those "looking in on" our election, wondering what might happen and how it might affect them.

So what should we actually do? Here are a few ideas:

- **We should pray earnestly** for opportunities for the gospel. Paul said it best when describing his situation in 1 Cor. 16:9 "because a door of great opportunity stands wide open for me, but there are many opponents." Just after that in v. 13-14, "Stay alert, stand firm in the faith, show courage, be strong. Everything you do should be done in love." He doesn't specifically ask for prayer there, but I believe he intended it to fuel the prayers for the Corinthians.
- **We should pray for those in authority** over us. As Paul wrote in 1 Tim. 2:1-4, "First of all, then, I urge that requests, prayers, intercessions, and thanks be offered on behalf of all people, even for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. Such prayer for all is good and welcomed before God our Savior, since he wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the
- truth." We should do this for the leaders in place wherever we live as well as for leaders of other political nations.
- It is **right for us to stand up against any wrong** words or attitudes that either side expressed. We must not hold back on criticizing someone even if they were "our candidate." Believers should not be hiding behind our "positions" on something to the point that we ignore their flaws, sin and error. I won't make a list here, since it is so publicized on both sides.
- **Talk with people.** It should be obvious, yet I realize this is easier for extraverts than introverts. I've found several recent conversations with strangers to easily turn into opportunities for sharing Jesus and faith issues. Many people are open to it. If someone is not, just move on. Don't let the fear of being rejected keep you from helping people overcome their fears of the events of our times. If we do, we are missing out on the opportunities God has placed before us.

Why not add your suggestions and ideas in the comments section of this article on the [www.missionfrontier.org](http://www.missionfrontier.org) website.



<sup>1</sup> The NET Bible was used for all Bible passages quoted in this article.



# Nomad Truck Venture

Come learn about mission to the nomads of Central Asia. If you are a back packer, adventurer, camping enthusiast, or entrepreneur it could be the defining trip of your life.

Join us on this 5 week “mobile work shop,” travelling through the countries where nomads roam. The Nomadic Peoples Network together with Frontier Ventures gives you the chance to get to know the nomadic peoples of Central Asia. We’ll camp our way across countries and go over 3,100 miles. All along the way we will meet nomads and learn from those who work with them.

What does God have for you on this trip? Will God give you a deep love for nomads and a desire to serve among them? Do you have what it takes for this kind of communal experience? Join us during the summer of 2018 and see.

For more information email the Winter Launch Lab:

[winterlaunchlab@frontierventures.org](mailto:winterlaunchlab@frontierventures.org)

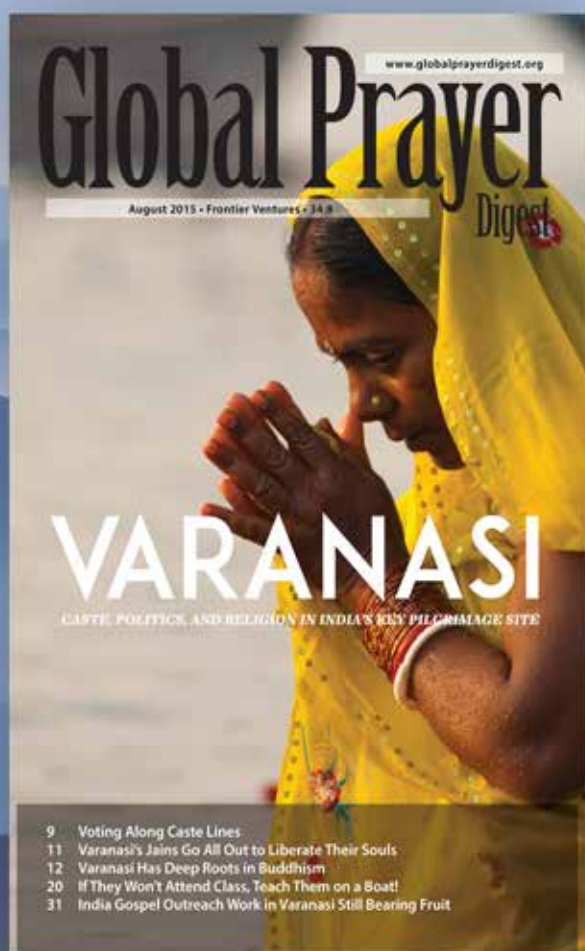


Nomadic Peoples Network [www.nomadicpeoples.net](http://www.nomadicpeoples.net)  
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