

# ZÚME Update

BY MASON ALLEY & CURTIS SERGEANT

**Mason Alley** is a writer and strategy consultant for businesses and non-profit organizations. He first met Curtis Sergeant as a part of the PEACE plan at Saddleback Church and has worked to synthesize Curtis' church-planting movement training curriculum for My Hope India and ZúmeProject.com. He lives in Gainesville FL.

**Dr. Curtis Sergeant** served with the International Mission Board (IMB) among an unreached people group (UPG) in China where he began training for house-church networks in China. Later he served in Saddleback Church over Church Planting to catalyze large-scale church planting projects in India, and engaged nearly a hundred UUPGs. He then served at e3 Partners as the International VP. Now he runs a disciple-making and missions training center called MetaCamp in Dadeville, Alabama (metacamp.org). He is also a co-facilitator of the 24:14 coalition (2414now.net) and founded the Zúme project (Zúmeproject.com).

Here's a report from the frontlines on the Zúme Project. As you read this, we'll be going into year three of this mission to train reproducing disciples and plant multiplying churches around the world through free online training designed for "non-professionals" and delivered in the languages of the nations. As we write this, we're about two and a half years post-launch.

In these beginning years God has been more than faithful at every step. So many good things have taken place that we have already lost count. We have seen the product launch, early adopters, first non-English languages launched, and first trainings held. We have seen first disciples multiplying, first churches planted, heroic programmers, faithful donors. We have an all-volunteer global team that has, somehow, been able to meet face-to-face multiple times each year and by video almost every week since launch.

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Through it all, God has also been faithful in every valley. And there have been lows. We have missed deadlines, re-structured our curriculum, and re-platformed our product (twice!). We have struggled delivering features we consider core to the mission, put work on hold as we waited for funding, put languages on hold (sometimes for years) as we waited on translations, and felt discouraged at difficulties in identifying language "champions" to help spread the training after launching those languages.

We have changed a key leadership role at least four times, shuffled seats as we tried to (re)discover our competencies and giftings, had effective leaders step off the team, and lost at least one beloved collaborator when God called him home far earlier than we were ready to let him go.

## AND CHURCHES

In the United States our target is one training and two simple churches planted for every geographical area of approximately 5,000 people. By the most conservative measures that's 65,000 trainings and 130,000 churches. Globally, our target is one training and two simple churches for every area of approximately 50,000 people. This means at least 140,000 trainings and 280,000 churches.

We are still trying to develop the ability to track the churches planted. Since transitioning to our third iteration of our platform, we have had 1,522 registered training groups with participants from 105 countries who have logged over 40,000 training hours. We are still seeking for ways to track the many offline training events that don't report. As of this writing there are fifteen languages



completed and we are halfway to our goal of thirty languages we expect to be completed by the end of 2019. Another ten languages should be added in 2020. Clearly this progress is just a drop in the bucket toward our overall goals, but we are excited at some major upgrades that are coming soon and will allow us to greatly accelerate our progress.

But here are some of the very good things we've seen on the way:

*In early 2018 I first heard about Zúme. It had been a long time since college Greek class, but I was intrigued by the name even though I had forgotten what it meant. I registered on the Zúme site and within an hour I had a call from Jordan Valdere, a Zúme coach. That half hour call was a game changer for my ministry, my church and my future. Jordan flew out to Maryland a couple months later and led a two day Zúme workshop for about 14 of our leaders. In each heart, something was sparked. A fresh desire to actually make disciples rather than simply do church ministry was restored. Following that May workshop, I began teaching Zúme across the mid-Atlantic to interested churches. Large group training was hosted at churches ranging in size from 30-1300. Over 1000 people were trained in the next 8 months. We looked for those who applied the tools and disciplined them further. Groups by the dozens were birthed. People came to Christ. Baptisms surged in congregations that had seen few baptized in*

*recent years. The gospel took root in places once feared to enter. God's Kingdom expanded in several hot spots where obedience flourished. And a buzz began to be heard that lay people could actually be trusted to lead a movement that truly moves. One local church pastor in Maryland almost lost his job because of his pursuing of Zúme. A battle erupted over his constant talk about reaching lost people. It unsettled content church people who merely wanted to "be preached happy" but wanted nothing to do with impacting lostness. A critical meeting was held where only one group would be left standing. Yet all day, the Prayer Cycle (Lesson Two) was prayed through and when the meeting was held that evening repentance came, tears flowed down once hardened faces and today that church is growing by reaching into the harvest. A church in Florida down to 22 senior adults went through Zúme(21 showed up for training) and today those seniors are out sharing Jesus, discipling people and seeing revitalization break out in their church family. A Maryland church frustrated over stagnant evangelism has adopted Zúme as their primary ministry and as of this writing over 250 of its 500 attendees have been trained in Zúme. Groups are forming in hard places, baptisms have increased and a fresh joy has permeated the church as new believers become a part of the family of God. Zúme has radically moved individuals and churches to do the last command of Jesus, "Go...make disciples..." Our goal now is to train 10,000 people in the next decade to live as disciple-makers. Multiplication is the flag we wave. Making heaven fuller and hell far less full is our passion. We are grateful for Zúme coming to us in the Mid-Atlantic 18 months ago. We are "all in" for a multiplying movement that like a pebble in the pond ripples across our nation.*

—RON LARSON, Pastor, *The Crossing*

## EARLY SATURATION EFFORTS

In places like Louisville and the state of Maryland there are efforts gaining traction to saturate geographic areas.

**AFRICA**—When one of our team was headed out on an outreach to Somalis in Africa, he was up against some of the toughest security situations for ministry on the planet. He utilized SD cards with the version of Zúme that we are preparing for the mobile app to make training accessible to some local believers. The result was a number of new churches and dozens of baptisms among Somalis within a very short time frame.

**NORTH AFRICA**—A team in North Africa has been laboring diligently for many years and has been frustrated by the lack of fruit. Since introducing Zúme to the small local community of followers of Jesus, they have been amazed by how quickly those local believers are owning the vision and work of multiplying the gospel through their country.

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In addition to geographic breakthroughs we are seeing progress in high schools, prisons, and other settings. Many times these are not recorded in our system, but we frequently hear about people using the site in their ministries.

Finally, a number of people have been finding Zúme useful to reinforce and retrain people who have previously had training in multiplicative ministry approaches. It has also helped people quickly become comfortable in training others as they use the site as “training wheels” to assist them until they become comfortable enough to train people without it.

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## ACCESSIBILITY

Our goal has always been accessibility. It’s the key reason the training is unbranded, multi-language, and distributed online to groups, trainers, missional agencies, and churches at no charge. But accessibility often means being willing to go in a different direction than we originally planned. Here are some of the key initiatives we’re currently working on and some of the ways God is stretching us most to share training with more people in more places:

**Zúme Mobile App**—One of the biggest challenges we face delivering an online training product is that the trainers and trainees we are targeting are often in areas with little or inconsistent online access. We’re investing heavily in a Zúme mobile app that will allow those we serve to download our free training materials to their mobile device and deliver it wherever they go, regardless of signal strength or cost of service.

**SD Cards**—This approach is what was described above in the work in Somalia. It has served as a proof of concept for the Zúme mobile app as well.

**YouVersion**—The same innovative leader that worked in Somalia has pushed for more and greater delivery channels from the very beginning. Recently, he reached out to YouVersion to see if they would be willing to host and distribute some Zúme-themed Bible studies to help build awareness of multiplication and available training. This single channel has quickly resulted in more than 16,000 individuals subscribing to Zúme reading plans. These don’t show up in our statistics but we believe they will soon result in wider awareness and usage of Zúme.

**Zúme Pieces / Gamification**—Since launch, we’ve had numerous requests for access to individual topics in our training (Person of Peace, Prayer Walking, Duckling Discipleship, etc.). Because we view the curriculum as a whole system of discipleship development, we were very reluctant to break it apart and share it out piecemeal. The requests kept coming, so our leadership team kept exploring the possibilities. By the time you read this, most (or all) of the individual Zúme training topics will be available for direct access and sharing. We’re working hard to ensure that our platform and delivery encourages users to explore more and more topics until they are fully trained (what technologists call “gamification”).

**Zúme Playbook**—We are in the process of creating the Zúme Playbook, a compilation of how faithful practitioners have actually modified and delivered Zúme training successfully and fruitfully in the field. Each “play” consists of a brief overview and description of the intended targets for discipleship (students, prisoners, traditional church members, etc.) and then a detailed plan-of-action for how others can follow these steps to share training in this way. As a team, we never could have come up with all of the variety and creativity that these plays represent, but it’s a relatively simple task to assemble and share them so they can multiply.

**Additional Website**—Finally, we are preparing to launch a companion site to the training site in 2020. The current site will be accessible at the current URL (ZúmeProject.com) or at [www.Zúme.Training](http://www.Zúme.Training). The new site will be [www.Zúme.Vision](http://www.Zúme.Vision). It will host the playbook mentioned above as well as interactive maps which will help people track the progress toward the saturation goals in their town, county/district, state/province, and country. It will also house coaching functions and specialized communities of practice.

## LEADERSHIP

Our plan has always been to make this work a completely free resource not owned or controlled by any organization but also 100% voluntary in terms of those who would serve and lead. Along the way, we've had paid vendors who have built and delivered key elements, and we're grateful for their (often discounted) professional and faithful work. But our core team has always been unpaid volunteers who travel and work at their own expense. Some of our team are support-raised missionaries serving in the field. Some are staff at local churches. Others are involved in "marketplace ministry." All volunteer by carving out time from other important and fruitful projects. God has created this ministry from the margin, and we are thankful.

« We are always looking for other faithful workers to join us. Maybe you're one of them. »

We are always looking for other faithful workers to join us. Maybe you're one of them. If some of what you've read above has resonated with you, we encourage you to read through our Vision, Mission, and Values statements below and then visit [ZúmeProject.com](http://ZúmeProject.com) to explore more of the training and our mission.

If, after prayer and consideration, you're still interested in learning how you can join this effort to multiply disciples everywhere, just drop us a line and share your heart at [teams@Zúmeproject.com](mailto:teams@Zúmeproject.com).

## OUR VISION

At Zúme Project, we see a God-powered movement of everyday followers of Jesus saturating the globe with multiplying disciples in our generation.

To us, saturating means this: 1 online training leads to 2 simple churches planted among every 5,000 people in the US and every 50,000 people globally.

In other words, we see ordinary people around the world launching 425,000+ churches strategically among all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues within the next 20 years.

## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to equip multiplying disciples. We succeed when faithful disciples multiply.

## OUR VALUES

These values define our team. With God's help, we are:

**Expectant**—We expect to see this work accomplished, because we know God lives up to His word. He is with us, always, as we go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all Jesus commanded.

**Perseverant**—We persevere because there is no greater cause than Jesus Christ. We freely accepted His call, and we will never give up, never give in, never waiver, and never lose hope until His commands are fully accomplished. Others may stray; we must finish the work.

**Urgent**—We are urgent, because pace matters. Every day without Jesus everywhere means more are left separated from God's forever family. The faster we work, the more who hear, the fewer who are lost. God has made people His priority, so we move with speed and purpose.

**Candid**—We are candid, because truth spoken in love accelerates the mission. We commit to regularly and honestly evaluate our actions and their outcomes, so we can invest in what's working and stop doing what is not. We will be open about what we know and what we don't.

## OUR STRATEGIC ANCHORS

These descriptions define our work. With God's help, it is:

**Actionable**—We are hearers and doers. Our work isn't just an idea—it's actionable. We commit to deliver a product that moves users to action - to become producers and not just consumers of God's word.

**Effective**—We examine the impact of our actions. Our work isn't activity—it's effective. We commit as a team to reduce wasted efforts and work on what matters most.

**Scalable**—We go to the nations. Our work starts small but can't stay small—it's scalable. We commit as a team to make sure our work is intentionally simple and growing.

**Accessible**—We go to the ends of the earth and to every nation, tribe, people, and tongue. Our work isn't exclusive or out of reach—it's accessible. We commit as a team to deliver our work to as many people in as many places as possible with a preference for the least served and the hardest to reach. 