

# 24:14 Goal



Movement engagements in every unreached people and place by 2025 (36 months)

## How Long to Reach the Goal?

By **JUSTIN LONG**

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Since 2015, I have been laboring to document the spread of rapidly multiplying movements around the world. As of 2022, over 1% of the world's population are disciples of Jesus in such movements: at least 114 million people in 8.5 million churches, found in 1,967 movements.

Additionally, 3,500 teams are working to start more movements, steadily aiming toward the promise found in Matthew 24:14—...*this Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world, as a witness to all nations...*

The goal of the 24:14 Coalition has been “to engage every unreached people and place with an effective kingdom movement strategy by December 31, 2025.” How close are we? Are we likely to meet or even exceed the goal?

As part of my research, I have collected data on which languages in which provinces have teams aiming to catalyze a movement. I have tracked how fast new teams are being sent. Based on the compilation of that data, it appears that having teams engaging every language in every province *by 2025* isn't likely. However, while I am mildly pessimistic about reaching that goal by 2025, I am *very optimistic* about seeing it reached within my lifetime. I strongly believe that somewhere between

2025 and 2050 we will see teams in every place, and movements in many places.

Here's why.

Thirty-five years ago, movements were largely catalyzed by the combined work of an outside catalyst (a “missionary”) and an inside near-culture believer. We see this origin story behind nearly all the movement families. However, for most movements being founded today, this is no longer the case. New movements *are mainly being started by existing movements*.

This makes sense when we consider that movements in 2022 are comprised of thousands—even millions—of disciples who have been spiritually raised in an environment that takes for granted that each believer: 1) follows Jesus, 2) teaches others to follow Jesus, and 3) reaches out to non-believers, inviting them to follow Jesus.

Their own movements began out of a vision to reach the unreached, so it's perfectly natural for them to intentionally send teams of believers to near-by unreached peoples, and use their already-lived methodology to start new movements among those groups.

These disciples can go to unreached places where no Westerner can go. These places are, for them, just next door, down the road, or over the hill. And they can do this faster because they don't usually have to learn a new language or culture. Not only can they go *more easily*, but they are also *going intentionally*. Their own movements began out of a vision to reach the un-

reached, so it's perfectly natural for them to intentionally send teams of believers to nearby unreached peoples, and use their already-lived methodology to start new movements among those groups.

Over 90% of the new movements started in the past five to 10 years have been started by teams sent out from these movements—without any Western cross-cultural workers involved. This has resulted in a phenomenal multiplication of sending. While, as I said, I do not believe we will see teams in *every* language and place by 2025, I *do* believe that goal will be reached shortly thereafter. I believe this because we can see the fruit of this multiplication already.

We have collected data on the total growth of individual movements in five-year increments from 1995 to 2025. This data set is not completely comprehensive. It is the “floor” not the “ceiling,” but it is large enough to give us a sense of the overall direction and speed of growth.

In 1995, we knew of close to 10,000 disciples in movements. Today, we know of well over 114 million. This means there have been four “10X growth points” when the number of disciples in movements had grown by 10 times:

From 1995 to 2000, grew from 10,000 to over 100,000 disciples

From 2000 to 2005, from 100,000 to over 1 million

From 2005 to 2015, from 1 million to over 10 million

From 2015 to today, from 10 million to more than 114 million

This is an average annual growth rate of 23%, with the number of believers doubling on average every 3.5 years!

It is dangerous to predict the future. I have often quoted the old Wall Street disclaimer: “Past performance is no guarantee of future results.” I know many things could potentially derail growth. However, consider the context of the past 30 years: wars, rumors of wars, pandemic disease, severe persecution, hostility from many traditional churches—in fact, pretty much everything we read in Matthew 24. I do not cite that famous passage

to suggest I believe we are living in the end times. As anyone who knows me can attest, I resist eschatological predictions.

I am only saying that phenomenal growth in movements has occurred in the midst of, in spite of, and sometimes amplified by all these *Black Swans*.

If we estimate that what movements have done over the past 35 years, they are likely to continue doing for the next 25—on to 2050—what would the result be? A simple extrapolation of the growth trends would lead to two more points of 10X growth: one in 2035 and the other in 2045.

By 2040, a 23% annual growth rate would equal 4.2 billion disciples in movements.

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Some might throw up their hands at such numbers. Why bring it up, when the numbers are obviously impossible, since one cannot have more disciples than there are people in the world? I address this not because the numbers are possible but because of the on-the-ground reality the numbers point to—that movements are filling up the places where they presently are. As they do, they are sending new teams go to “the next door” places—many of which are over harder boundaries. Each place that movements are entering, they are filling up. As a result, they are learning, rapidly, to cross successively harder cultural, linguistic, and political lines on the map.

While we recognize from Scripture that not everyone will follow Jesus (*the gate is narrow...*) our goal must be to share the Gospel with every person and family and group and pray that *none would perish but all come to repentance* (2 Pet. 3:9). Some people groups are a reported 95% evangelical. We aim for 100%, knowing that this is not likely. BUT what lesser goal should we aim for? Ultimately, only God knows the dynamics of these situations, so we trust him to sort it out.

Will this happen everywhere? William Gibson once famously said, “The future is here—it’s just not evenly distributed yet.” The same could be said of movements. There are a lot of believers in movements in certain parts of the world, and fewer in others. In some countries, multiplying the current number of disciples in movements by 10 would bring the country to over 100% Christian. In others, multiplying by 10 would still leave the movement as a small percentage of the country.

By comparing the populations of each country to the number of disciples in the country, we can estimate the number of 10X increments required to get past—or at least very near—the line of 100% Christian.

To see what I mean, consider a fictitious country of “Versa.” It has a population of 100,000. If one were to start with one believer, five 10X multiplications would be required to reach nearly 100%: 10, 100, 1,000, 10,000, and 100,000.

Due to security, I cannot name specific countries. But we can break down the world’s countries as follows:

39 have movements that need only one 10X for the country to be reach 100% Christian (based on the movement’s size alone, not any other Christians in the country); 90 need two 10X multiples; 50 need three 10X multiples; 27 need four 10X multiples; 17 need five 10X multiples, and four are less than one 10X away from completion. On average, each 10X multiplication currently requires a decade.

If we continue in the same vein, thirty years—three 10X multiplications—would be enough to bring

179 countries to the range of 100% Christ-followers through the efforts of multiplying movements alone—*not including any other “Christians” of any other kinds.*

In 30 years—one generation – a dramatic change in the world could bubble to the surface.

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Will this work actually impact the unreached or—as with most Christian work—will it mainly affect countries that are at least marginally Christianized? Many of the 47 unreached countries (look at any list of countries that are less than 8% Christian by most global measures) are among these 179 that would require only three 10X multiplications. As noted earlier, movements can more easily send to “nearby, down the road” unreached groups—and are intentionally doing so.

How many unreached groups could be reached by these movements? How might we measure this question?

I analyzed what we presently know about the deployment of movement teams. While we know quite a bit more than when the 24:14 Coalition began in 2017, the “language-and-place” information about movement deployments is still thin, so this is a minimalist analysis. Despite that caveat, here’s

how the data stacks up. My database lists 4,098 provinces. Of these, 517 are known to be engaged by a movement-catalyst team (not necessarily at movement stage yet).

An additional 785 provinces directly border an engaged province—for example, Oklahoma shares a border with Texas. So, if we propose that a province is in reach if they are “next door” to a province that is currently engaged, then over a third of the world’s provinces are either engaged or conceivably within reach of a movement team *right now*. (And many of *those* provinces are actually on the border of more than one engaged province—meaning resources could be brought to bear from multiple avenues.)

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To focus on the remaining task, we know of a total of 935 provinces in the countries that are less than 8% Christian (a rough measure of the least reached areas of the world). Uttar Pradesh is one well known example, with published case studies and books and the like. Of those 935, 215 are known to be engaged, and a further 315 are in range (in this model, for example, all the provinces bordering UP). This means 45% of the provinces of the least-reached places of the world are *right now* known either to be already engaged or engageable by near-culture movement teams (and again, this is what we know—more is certainly happening).

I have heard plenty of stories from movements in the field of sending people to the next province, to the next people group, or even over the border to the next country.

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In most of these countries, most of these believers are deep underground. If the movement numbers are in the right order of magnitude—and I have no reason to doubt they are<sup>1</sup>—then the published estimates of percent Christian for many places are off by an order of magnitude.

Lately, movement leaders have shared anecdotal stories of government leaders in countries discovering large numbers of Christians in their communities. Some of these stories have been in the context of election campaigns, as election workers went house to house to mobilize the vote.

There are also multiple reports of both government and religious leaders warning about the significant growth of Christians and often calls for violent opposition to this trend. Global researchers—not just myself, but others—have asked, “When will you become visible?” and have been told, “When there are so many of us that nothing can be done about it anymore.”

I am reminded of a line from *The Lord of the Rings*, “A thing is about to happen that has not happened since the elder days. The Ents are going to wake up and find that they are strong.” I suspect something very similar will play out in the next generation, in many places around Africa and Asia. When people realize the number of Christ-followers that are around, quite a few significant dynamics could play out. It would probably be futile to try to predict what those will be. There will be amazing stories of turnings to Christ and there will also be painful stories of violence, repression, and martyrdom.

We love Habakkuk’s promise that one day, *The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea* (Hab. 2:14). It does seem we are in a time when the waters are rising. I know history has seen times of advance and times of retreat. I pray we will labor to help believers around the world—and especially movements around the world—to fuel their current expansion and remove any barrier that might hinder this glorious spread.



<sup>1</sup> See, for example, my article “How Movements Count,” *Mission Frontiers*, May/June 2020 (p. 40), [http://www.missionfrontiers.org/pdfs/MF42-3\\_WebR.pdf](http://www.missionfrontiers.org/pdfs/MF42-3_WebR.pdf).