

# THE PATH FORWARD IS CLEARER THAN EVER BEFORE.

## WILL WE HAVE THE COURAGE TO TAKE IT?



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For forty years, now Frontier Ventures and many other mission organizations have had a laser-like focus on taking the gospel to the Unreached Peoples of the world. We have worked tirelessly to mobilize the Church to reach these “hidden peoples” who have been forgotten by our global mission efforts. So how much progress have we made?

With a specificity and clarity not seen in decades we lay out the progress we’ve made, where we stand today and the hopeful future that stands before us if we have the courage to embrace what needs changing and renew our commitment to bring the blessings of the gospel to every people.

In our lead article starting on page 6, Rebecca Lewis presents in succinct detail the current state of world evangelization and what needs to change in order for us to make progress. She introduces us to the Frontier People Groups—those 4,762 peoples who are the most neglected or overlooked peoples in the world with the least access to the gospel and the fewest believers. They also have the fewest workers attempting to reach them. They make up one fourth of the world’s population and are a subset of all Unreached Peoples. After 40 years of attention on reaching Unreached Peoples, these peoples are still “hidden” from the attention of the Church.

As our cover this time indicates, Frontier Peoples are increasingly young and tech savvy. Though some may have access to the Internet, they are still in desperate need of a personal, cross-cultural presentation of the gospel. But who among us will bring it to them?

This issue is your invitation to change the status of the Frontier People Groups from neglected and hidden to prayed for and engaged.

### REACHING “THE 31”

In this issue we also introduce you to “The 31.” The 31 are those Frontier People Groups with over 10 million in population. They make up almost half the population of all Frontier People Groups. With less than one in a thousand being a Christian of any kind, a person in these groups has virtually no chance of ever hearing about Jesus from someone within their people. All 31 of these Frontier Peoples are either Muslim or Hindu and all but nine of them live in South Asia. We have prepared a prayer booklet that you can order to pray for one of these largest Frontier Peoples each day. Learn more about this prayer booklet starting on page 20 and order enough copies for all of your friends and pastors. Ask them to do likewise and order copies for all of their friends. To order, go to [www.Go31.org](http://www.Go31.org). In order to defeat the “strong man” over South Asia who holds these peoples in bondage,

a massive prayer movement is needed and you can be the one to help start it. We need millions of Jesus followers to be praying for these Frontier Peoples.

Because of their large size these 31 Frontier Peoples are very strategic in reaching all the rest of the Frontier Peoples. Movements in larger groups tend to cascade down to smaller groups thus making The 31 an important first step in reaching all Frontier and Unreached Peoples.

### WHY NO PROGRESS AFTER 40 YEARS?

The sad reality revealed in this issue is that *after 40 years of unrelenting Unreached Peoples efforts, NO discernable progress has occurred in over half of all Unreached Peoples.* These are the Frontier People Groups we have introduced to you. There are a number of reasons for this tragic situation that Rebecca Lewis lists in her lead article starting on page 6. In her second article, “How to Reach Frontier Peoples?” (See page 25), Lewis focuses on the most significant reason both biblically and strategically for our lack of progress. The root cause is our failure to consistently apply the Apostle Paul’s biblical mission strategy of keeping new believers within their family, community and culture rather than extracting them to join a new foreign community. We have typically applied Paul’s mission strategy with great results in reaching out to tribal peoples, but when it comes to the major religious spheres of Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism our typical mission practice is to extract individuals

from their families, households and communities thereby hindering any further outreach to that people. Paul was right; we should always work first to reach their families and households with the gospel.

Lewis says it well. “I believe unless we fully understand and return to Pauline principles of implanting the gospel into families, without removing them from their socio-religious-political communities, we will continue to make little progress in today’s largest remaining Frontier People Groups. It is not enough to identify which groups have the least help and are making the least progress in receiving the good news; we also need to go back to following the biblical and historical principles God has shown us for sparking indigenous movements in Frontier People Groups and training global workers in these principles.”

## GOD’S FOCUS ON THE FAMILY—ALL THE FAMILIES ON EARTH

A return to Paul’s missionary method of reaching families is not just important because it works or because Paul did it. It is important because it has been God’s plan all along. In Gen. 12:3, God says to Abraham, “and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.” (NASB) The Hebrew word for families here is the term *mishpachah*. Butler and White explain the significance of this word in God’s plan for mankind:

*Mishpachah* is just one in a set of Hebrew and Greek words with a generational perspective, variously translated clan, family, tribe, people, or nation. In English we could think of all of these as ‘family lines’ of varying sizes.

In God’s foundational promise to Abram (Abraham) in Gen 12:3, the

final recipient of God’s blessing will not be every individual, but ALL *mishpachah*. Paul labels this promise “the gospel preached in advance to Abraham” (Gal 3:8). Blessing and salvation aren’t just for individuals, but also for households, and whole family lines.

From this biblical perspective, we can understand the biblical terms translated people/nation as:

Households bonded together in preserving a shared generational identity—through intermarriage, the continuation of traditions, and rejection of outside influences.

Many Frontier People Groups are isolated from the gospel in part by their perception and fear of Christianity as a threat to their households, and to the historic identity they are seeking to preserve. One study of Christianity in India observed this in action:

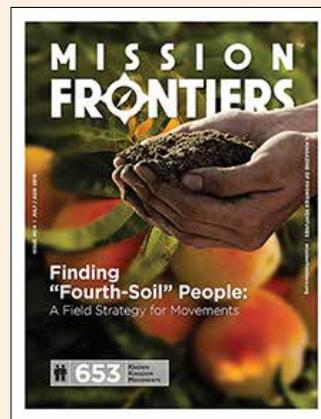
The adoption of Christianity by one group within a generic community would lead to a strengthening of non-Christian identity among other groups within the same community.<sup>1</sup>

When our evangelism methods win individuals away from their families among Frontier People Groups, we reinforce these fears within the Frontier People Groups.

As each of these families come to faith in Jesus, they inherit the promise, blessing and commission made to Abraham to bring the blessing of salvation to still more families. This includes the Frontier People Groups. We see the ultimate fulfillment of God’s plan for all family lines in Rev. 5:9 and 7:9 when Jesus is worshipped by every tribe, tongue, people and nation who have been washed clean in the blood of the lamb, wearing white

robes and holding palm branches in their hands. It is our job in this age to continue working to bring this blessing to all the families of the earth so that Jesus would receive the glory He deserves.

## AN UPDATE ON OUR JULY/AUGUST 2018 ISSUE



The July/Aug 2018 issue of *MF*, as it turned out, sowed more confusion (pun intended) than I had anticipated as people debated whether we should be seeking to find a Person of Peace or a Fourth-Soil Person. On page 45 of this issue, Steve Smith and Kevin Greeson bring some clarity to this topic. The bottom line is that they can be the same person and are both found the same way—by the sowing of the Word of God. The focus of this particular issue was to point out that the Parable of the Sower was intended by Jesus to be taken as a mission strategy since He applied it as such with His disciples in Galilee. We should go and do likewise—sowing the Word and looking for the responsive, productive people. Kevin sums it up well by saying, “A CPM practitioner stands on solid ground when sowing with the intent of finding Persons of Peace and Fourth-Soil individuals.” 

<sup>1</sup> *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818-1940*, by Jeffrey Cox (Stanford, 2002).