

It is Said That the Only Constant in Life is *Change*

BY RICK WOOD

Editor of *Mission Frontiers*
rick.wood@frontierventures.org

Things are changing all around us every day with increasing speed. Some of it is good and some of it is bad. But in all cases, we are forced to adapt to the new realities that change brings. Some people adapt easily to change, and others do not. For 45 years now, Frontier Ventures has proclaimed the biblical mandate to reach all peoples with the gospel of Jesus Christ, but the realities on the mission field are changing. That is what this issue is all about. How does the promise of God to Abraham in Gen. 12:3 to bless all the families of the earth through him match up with the tectonic shifts now taking place in the world today? Is that promise still valid in a rapidly changing world? Many of the forces impacting us today such as technology, globalization, migration, urbanization and rapid communication and travel are also impacting the unreached peoples, reshaping their relationships, communities and self-identity. The impact of these changes in terms of mission strategy is like sticking the peoples of the world, their cultures, languages and traditions in a blender and then trying to figure out where to start in reaching them. It is a significant challenge for the Church going forward, but a few simple principles can help us make sense of it all.

Change is Nothing New

The fact is, ever since the promise came to Abraham to bless all peoples, the tribes, clans, families, peoples and nations of the earth have experienced continual change. The problem in our day is that the rate of change is growing exponentially, making it difficult to cope with a rapidly changing people



group picture. Tracking these changes becomes a real data challenge for ministries like Joshua Project.

You Just Have to Be There

As good as Joshua Project is, and they are very good indeed at what they do, there is no way to perfectly understand the massive changes happening on the ground within thousands of peoples without intensive study of the situation on site in each people by capable workers. The wonderful data that Joshua Project provides is a great place to start for any workers seeking to reach a particular people. But once onsite, the mission workers learn what is really going on and develop the creative strategies required for the situation. And that info needs to get back to Joshua Project more consistently so others can learn from the information gathered onsite.

The concept of people groups says that the gospel will spread naturally from person to person within a people group until it meets barriers of understanding and acceptance. Ralph Winter often said that you won't know how many Church Planting Movements are required until you get to the mission field and figure out where the boundaries of each people group are. When you run up against those boundaries you need a new effort to get the gospel into a new people group. With the global forces now impacting each unreached people in a

myriad of ways, being onsite is even more necessary to understand where the barriers to understanding and acceptance are.

Let the People Be Your Guide

When you get to an unreached people your first step is to figure out what is going on. Initially, the intricacies of the various relationships will be a mystery, but finding the Persons of Peace will be the key to understanding and reaching any people group. If you work through a Person of Peace, they will be your guide to trusted relationships in starting Discovery Groups. Yes, regardless of the complexities on the field the Disciple Making Movement approach is key to understanding and working with complex relational networks. As Discovery Groups are formed, you can train people to reach out to their own networks of relationships and the gospel will spread naturally along the lines of friends, family, clans, tribes, etc. Our job is to lead people to Jesus and equip them to reach their own. They can do a far better job of it than we can and they already know the complexities of their community relationships. When the gospel stops spreading, that is your clue that you have reached a boundary of a people and a new work is needed in a different people. The application of DMM principles will help us navigate the changing world of tribes, tongues, peoples and nations.

A New Address for Frontier Ventures

Please note on the contents page and back cover that the address for Frontier Ventures has changed. The

old address of 1605 E. Elizabeth Street, Pasadena CA 91104, will no longer be the headquarters for Frontier Ventures. This is a major change for us after 45 years. See the masthead at the bottom of the contents page for the latest contact information for address changes, new subscriptions etc.

Support the Work of Mission Frontiers

As is the case with most publications, *Mission Frontiers* cannot cover its costs from subscriptions alone. We need additional funds from those who believe in this ministry and are willing to sacrifice to help us move forward in casting vision for Kingdom Movements in all peoples. Like most of the people who work for Frontier Ventures, my salary is supplied by the donations of churches and friends who believe in what I am doing. And also like many staff members at Frontier Ventures, there are many months when not enough comes in to fully cover our allotted salary. To donate to my ministry with *MF* go to www.frontierventures.org and click on the Donate button. Put MA 323 in the dialog box. If you would like to help *MF* cover its general expenses and expand its influence, go to the same web address, given above, click on the Donate button and put MA 030 in the dialog box. We greatly appreciate whatever you can do to help *Mission Frontiers* and Frontier Ventures continue its work to see Kingdom Movements emerge in all peoples. 