

MISSION™ FRONTIERS

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On the Move with Nomadic Peoples

	1,965	NO CHANGE
KNOWN KINGDOM MOVEMENTS		

FEATURES

- Let Nomads Move You! **8**
Ron Ahlbrecht
- Elastic Church **11**
Evelyn Hibbert, Lance and Barbara Williams
- The Nomadic Peoples Network **14**
Ron and Kirsten Ahlbrecht
- The Testimony of
Tambaya Ibrahim **15**
As told to Jon Banke
- The Tale of Two "Brothers" **16**
Yusuf Habu Na'ango and Katharine Norton
- Desert Births **18**
Laura Anne Michaelis
- Beautiful Feet
Bringing Sweet News **21**
Jon Banke
- Changes in Central Asian
Nomadic Life **24**
Jameson Hartin
- Redeeming the
Starving Shepherds **25**
Rev. Agabi E. Ode
- Disappearing Kyrgyz Villages
in the Pamirs **28**
Jameson Hartin
- Who Will Go? **30**
Julia Woods
- Nomad Connect **31**
Samira Offereigns

- Searching for New Pastures **34**
Joy Marlowe
- Herders and Their Amazing
Economic Impact **36**
Daniel Sambo and Katharine Norton
- Innovation among the Unreached **39**
Paul Dzubinski

COLUMNS

- Editorial *Rick Wood* **4**
- M4M: Local Media, Bibles,
and Worship for the Next
Billion Believers (24:14) *Roger Charles* **40**
- Mobilizing Every Believer
to Make Disciples *Cynthia Anderson* **44**
- When Bible Training Falls Flat **47**
Greg Parsons
- Unreached of the Day* **52**

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My Final Word to the Church

By RICK WOOD, Editor

This will be my last editorial for *Mission Frontiers*. After this issue, I am stepping down as editor. Darrell Dorr will be taking over for me in this space going forward. I have been serving as editor since 2008 when Dr. Ralph Winter asked me to take over for him, knowing that his passing was near. Before becoming editor, I worked as managing editor under Dr. Winter for most of the time from July 1990 until December 2008. Since this is my last opportunity to give you my thoughts, I wanted to share with you what I feel is the single most important issue for the global Church to focus on as we seek to complete world evangelization. By “complete” I mean providing access to the Gospel to every person living within every people group.

Our Biggest Problem: Passivity

If there is one thing that limits the progress of the Gospel more than anything else, it is *passivity*. Believers are far too apathetic about their faith. They sit and listen *passively* to the pastor’s sermon each week. Many do not open their Bibles and most do not take notes. If you ask them to give you a summary of the sermon the next day, most cannot. Education experts tell us that passive listening is the most ineffective means for communicating knowledge so that it is retained. Universities know this so they do not give credit to students who simply sit and listen. They call it “auditing” a class.

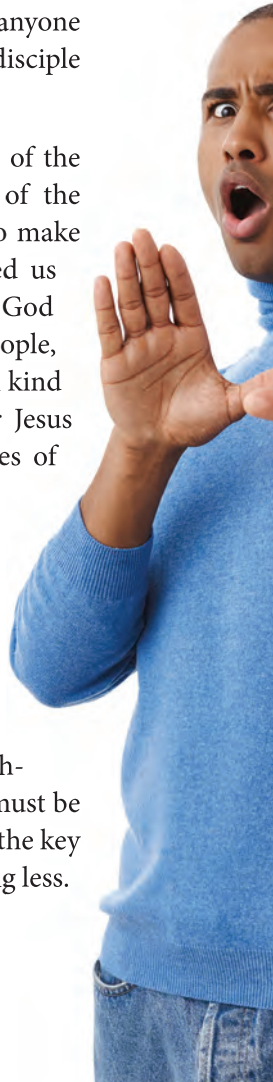
Unfortunately, this passive listening method is how most believers acquire an understanding of what is sound biblical doctrine. It is the primary method by which churches worldwide seek to “make disciples.” The vast majority of churches do not have a comprehensive program for educating their members in basic biblical doctrine, how to study the Bible for themselves, or make disciples.

Many churches have even done away with such meager attempts at Christian education as Sunday School. So most believers’ understanding of biblical doctrine is haphazard at best and heretical at worst. See our Nov-Dec 2021 issue on “Do You Have a Biblical Worldview?” for more on this. Perhaps this is why, according to researcher George Barna, only 9% of self-proclaimed Bible-believing Christians in the American church hold to basic sound doctrine, such as believing in the atoning work of Christ, the authoritative nature of the Bible, the reality of Satan, the need to share the Gospel, etc.—really basic stuff that any true Jesus follower should believe. Is it any wonder that according to some estimates, 98% of all Christians will never share their faith with anyone during their whole life, nevermind train a disciple who will go on to make more disciples.

We have created a passive “spectator” form of the Christian faith that is stifling the ability of the Church to make disciples who will go on to make more disciples in all peoples as Jesus called us to do in Matt. 28:18–20. Every living thing God has created in our world, from bacteria to people, has been designed to reproduce after its own kind or species. God’s plan always has been for Jesus followers to reproduce our faith in the lives of others.

The Solution: Learning to Make Disciple-Makers

As the Church, our focus must be on learning how to see this “reproduction” of faith take place as often as possible so that movements of disciple-making and church-planting will take place in all peoples. That must be the goal of the Church moving forward. It is the key to world evangelization. Jesus expects nothing less.



In the parable of the talents, it is very clear that Jesus expects His faithful servants to work to gain an increase for Him, our master. The one servant who *passively* sits back, does nothing, and buries the talent given to him, is rightly condemned as “*you wicked servant.*” Those servants who worked to multiply what was given to them were praised with the words all of us long to hear one day, “*well done good and faithful servant.*” The tough question we must ask ourselves is, “If we sit back and do not use the talents Jesus has given us to grow His kingdom by learning to make disciples who go on to disciple others, will we likewise fall into the category of the wicked servant?”

If there is one thing that limits the progress of the Gospel more than anything else, it is *passivity*. Believers are far too apathetic about their faith.

The sad reality is that we have taken this passive, spectator-like form of the Church and spread it all over the world. It is failing in America, and it will ultimately fail wherever we take it. If our mission entails taking this failed model of doing church to every tribe and tongue, then our mission will fail to fulfill what Jesus has called us to do—make disciples who likewise go on to obey Jesus by making more disciples—one generation after another.

A Return to Our Roots in the Book of Acts

In the time of the book of Acts, the Church understood that following Jesus was an all-in experience of walking with God in obedience to what Jesus called on them to do. It was not an event once a week. It was all about living for Jesus and helping others to know and follow Him, too. In this environment, people understood what it meant to be a disciple

and to make disciples. There was no passivity here. As a result, the Church grew exponentially and literally took over the Roman Empire. As the Church morphed from a movement into an established institution with priests, bishops, cardinals, and popes, it lost the understanding of how to make disciple-makers and to foster movements to Jesus. We need to return to the type of church and disciple-making that we see in the book of Acts. Take note of Steve Addison’s new book on this topic and the interview with him in the last issue.

For more than 20 years, I have highlighted in the pages of *MF* the power of Church Planting Movements and Disciple Making Movements to move us from a passive, event-focused Church to a book-of-Acts-type Church that can complete world evangelization. Regardless of whether you prefer one method of making disciples over another, we must recognize that learning how to make disciples who reproduce their faith in the lives of others is the key to providing access to the Gospel to every person in every people.

Reaching Nomads or Anyone Else

The kind of church I have advocated here is exactly the kind of church that is able to reach nomads. The brick-and-mortar type church where people sit passively and listen to sermons they can’t remember is not the kind of church that can reach nomads. A nomadic church must be able to fit on the back of a camel and be able to interact personally with people. It needs to be the kind of church where nomads can learn about Jesus and His Word from each other as they learn together how to study the Bible for themselves.

Whether it is nomads in Africa or urban dwellers in New Delhi, the kind of passive Church we have in the West will not work to reach them. Learning to make disciple-makers and foster movements must be the highest priority for the mission of the Church to all peoples. 📌





Let Nomads Move You!

By **RON AHLBRECHT**

Ron & Kirsten Ahlbrecht: The Shepherd used nomads to move Ron & Kirsten in Asia for 20 years. Then He moved them to Europe to learn from nomads globally.

Nomads have moved me. They have moved me toward a more nomadic way of following King Jesus, the Good Shepherd, as revealed in both the Old and New Testaments. During our 20 years of learning from and walking with nomads in the Himalayas, many asked me, “Did you come here to convert us?”

My reply: “No. I came here to be changed by you.”

“What do you mean by that?” they would ask.

“My Sunday School teacher taught us *about* Abraham and Sarah and their descendants. But with you, I feel I am actually *walking with* those great men and women of faith. Our settled people, especially in the North Atlantic cultural context, have to a large extent lost a precious treasure that you, my nomad friends, have

preserved. I want to learn it from you so that others can also experience Jesus in the same way, *as the Good Shepherd.*”

Now, for the past 10 years, I have been tasked with data collection about nomads globally.

What Is a NOMAD? Do all nomads have some traits in common? Are migrant laborers, refugees, and digital nomads also included? Is there a clear universally accepted definition? No. But mine is adapted from James Morris, PhD, former Director of the Nomadic Peoples Network (NPN). As James also says, it is not just about mobility. This definition has helped guide countless communications by email, video calls, and field visits talking with nomads and people learning from nomads on every continent.

NOMADs are...

Networking, not individualistic. Relationships (both internally in their communities and externally with others) seem built into their DNA.

Internally, they're...

Organized as clans, tribes, and other community structures.

They see...

Mobility as a community resource even if they don't appear to use it!

They highly value their group's...

Autonomy.

And they see themselves as...

Distinct from people with a sedentary heritage.

Nomads conduct themselves as a community. Individual members may make personal choices and can enjoy personal freedoms. But they are constantly aware of their place in their extended family or community. They value the benefit of mutual responsibility rather than individualism.

Nomad tribes, clans, or other social structures are much tighter than settled concepts of family or individualistic communities. For Himalayan Gujjars, there are at least 12 distinct terms that overlap with an English understanding of "family" and "community." Even with rough translations of those terms in English, we must recognize that we cannot understand those concepts like our nomad friends.

Mobility is a community resource. Who is moving? When? Where? How will they get there? By what route? By what means of transportation? And of course, why? Most of these questions are assumed by habit or intuition. Any changes to their habits may also involve community discussions at many levels.

NPN leadership also suggested three occupational types of nomads which I have adapted as: **agro-pastoralists, service-traders, and hunter-collectors.**

Each of these observe some other resource or economic activity, which is central to how they see themselves. For agro-pastoralists, they may have farmland available where they have crops in addition to herding, but the animals are their life. Service-traders have a variety of goods and services that they buy and sell. Hunter-collectors hunt, fish, collect forest and sea products, cut and process wood products, etc., often with great craftsmanship. Some travel great distances to collect resources to share in their communities, like funds or even knowledge. Examples of nomads doing these things exist from Genesis to Revelation and on until now.

As settled people, we tend to value land or property. But each of the above types of **nomads value their mobility**. Mobility is what enables them to survive with their animals, trade, or collecting. Nomads might feel that a small piece of property is like a ball and chain or a prison and that the whole countryside should be available for their use. They need freedom to move where there is fresh grass and water for their animals, or fresh opportunities for services, trades, hunting, or collecting. They sustain themselves primarily on their own products and may trade or sell from their surplus to their neighbors along the way for whatever else they want or need.

Many nomads view outsiders with suspicion. The Fulbe, a.k.a. Fulani, are the world's largest nomadic people group: 50 million people spread from coast to coast in the Sahel across middle Africa, south of the Sahara. They have a proverb like that of many other nomads: "An outsider is either an enemy to be killed or a cow to be milked." This sounds violent, indeed, but the point is protection and provision for their own people, livestock, and way of life. They have a code of conduct called "pulaaku." This term describes their "Fulani-ness," or what it means to act like a Fulani. I have found that other nomads have similar codes of conduct: the Tuareg and other Berber peoples, north across the Sahara to the Mediterranean Sea, the Bedouin across North Africa and the Middle East, the Turkmen and other Turkic nomads in Central Asia, the Mongol peoples of Mongolia and China, the Qashqai, Pashtun and Baloch nomads of South West Asia, the Gujjars, Gaddi, Lohari, and Raika of South Asia, the Minang and Sama Bajau of South East Asia, etc.

It is rare for nomadic codes of conduct to be written down. But there are three clear exceptions:

- The Hebrew nomad, Moses.
- The followers of the Good Shepherd, another Hebrew nomad.
- The followers of a Bedouin merchant, cousin of the Hebrews, who came along roughly 600 years after the Good Shepherd.

Usually, these codes of conduct are intuitively understood, being taught by the family and the community. They define a certain way of behaving and a way of treating outsiders. They provide a way of relating within your tribe, or clan, or other social structures. Across the islands of South East Asia, the Minang intuitively know what it means to be “hunters of knowledge.” It is built into the social DNA of the Sama Bajau “sea gypsies” to be the world’s best free divers. Across the Middle East and into Europe, the Domari and Roma service nomads have their own certain way of behaving, passed down generation after generation. All nomads know how to treat guests, how to treat enemies, and how to treat insiders.

Nomads were the first to hear the Good News about Jesus. When those shepherds outside Bethlehem heard, they immediately raced to have their own experience with Him! They must have been delighted to see Him lying in a manger just like some of their own children had done. At a crowded wedding, I have also seen as many as five ladies, some with small children, all sleeping in one big feed trough surrounded by a herd of water buffalo. Once those shepherds had experienced “God-with-us” for themselves, Luke tells us that *they spread the word ... and all who heard it were amazed* (Luke 2:17–20). How far did the word spread? As far as Arabia, where Paul went after his conversion? Nomads do get around.



What difference does it make?

For nomads, much of “the West” (wrongly understood as “Christianity”) equals...

- **Alienation from the network of relationships**—Christians are seen as people who value things. But nomads value relationships.
- **Severance from the banner of protection and provision of the community organization**—It results from severed ties with their extended family. It is commonly spoken of as a fate worse than death.
- **Loss of mobility**—Lost freedom and purpose, imprisoned by buildings.
- **Lost group autonomy**—Individual autonomy leaves them feeling lost and confused. Group autonomy involves shared responsibilities, mutual respect and loyal love within the context of their group identity. By contrast, separation from the group can lead to addictive behaviors, drug abuse, alcoholism, etc.
- **Disoriented heritage**—“Who am I?” Their distinctive code of ethics has been built over millennia. It has provided resiliency over a multitude of generations.

But consider their joy to discover the truth!

The Good Shepherd heals broken relations! He gathers and restores clans and tribes! He wants us to be autonomous from worldliness and any world system that goes against His divine code of conduct! We even share a distinctive heritage in Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and through Jesus, our Shepherd King!

So come! Let’s put the Church on His camel and bring the Good Shepherd back into nomadic communities.

You, an outsider, can take the message of Good News to a nomadic community keeping watch over their flocks outside the city. Demonstrate the Good News with your words, actions, and relationships. Become comfortable with their code. Let them see for themselves how this Good Shepherd fulfills all the best parts of their “Pulaaku” or other nomadic way of being, that He Himself is the culmination of the long line of God’s nomadic messengers throughout the Scriptures. MF

Elastic

Church

Developing a Different
Paradigm of Church for Nomads

By **EVELYN HIBBERT,
LANCE AND BARBARA WILLIAMS**

Evelyn Hibbert worked among the Millet in Bulgaria who are now spread across Europe. The Millet are closely related to the Roma. She is a researcher with the Angelina Noble Centre.

Lance and Barbara Williamson lived and worked among nomads in the Horn of Africa for 12 years. They currently teach at Sydney Missionary and Bible College and are involved in ministry to migrants in Australia.

Nomads are proportionally less reached than sedentary people groups.¹ This is not necessarily because they are less open.² Our presentation of the Christian message has often inadvertently conflated Christianity with buildings and sedentary identity.³ In reaching out to nomads, we need to demonstrate to them that “church” fits on saddles and does not have to mean physical buildings.⁴ This means developing a non-sedentary paradigm of church. Adam Faranna refers to this as “elastic” church.⁵

1 Rome, Caleb. 2018 Paper presented at the Nomadic Peoples Network Conference, Central Asia, July, 2019. “Sheep in Need of a Shepherd.” In *Fruit to Harvest: Witness of God’s Great Work among Muslims*, Gene Daniels, et al., ed. Littleton, CO: William Carey Press, 217–229.

2 Day, Andrew. 2017 “The Nomad Challenge: Say Yes to Nomads.” *Mission Frontiers* 39:1, 23–25.

3 Ali, Aweis A. 2022 “Jesus as the Good Camel Herder: The Somali Nomads as the Final Frontier.” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 58: 1, 23–25. Phillips, David J. 2001 *Peoples on the Move: Introducing Nomads of the World*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.

4 Ali, Aweis A. 2022 “Jesus as the Good Camel Herder: The Somali Nomads as the Final Frontier.” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 58: 1, 23. Hunter, Malcolm. 1997 “The Challenge of Reaching Nomadic Pastoralists.” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 14:4, 189. Phillips, David J. 2001 *Peoples on the Move: Introducing Nomads of the World*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 125.

5 Faranna, Adam. 2017 “Nomads: Helping Them to Face the Growing Challenges.” *Mission Frontiers* 39:1, 32.

Understanding the Sedentary Paradigm of Church

Sedentary church and its institutions are in fixed physical locations. Sedentary Christians typically assume that church is associated with a physical building in a specific geographical location. Visiting church leaders always asked the nomads we worked with where their church building was and why they didn’t have one. Even when we loose ourselves from church buildings, we still tend to associate church with a community building or physical homes in specific physical places. This is a sedentary mindset.

In the New Testament, the organizing principle for the church is supra-locational, even though most of the church examples are linked to specific towns (e.g. Acts 11:22; 20:17). Jesus’ followers are reborn into an organic family network. Believers are committed to one another and bound to Jesus rather than to towns, cities, and regions. Christians are pilgrims with “no abiding city.”⁶ We are oriented to the heavenly Jerusalem, spending our lives journeying towards it.

6 Walls, Andrew F. 1996 *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, ed. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 8.

After biblical times, the Church started organizing itself into an institution. The institution of the Church established hierarchies based on physical locations. These institutional developments were interpretations of how to be church. They were attempts to address specific contextual problems of the time. The sedentary institutional approach does not have to be normative. It is simply one way of being the Body of Christ.

Defining Elastic Church

If we uncouple church from location, the main feature of church is the people. Just as home is often a feeling related to wherever family members are at any particular point in time, so church is where the people of God are together. As Jesus said, *wherever two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst* (Matt. 18:20). In this sense, church is a dynamic, communal relationship that constantly reconfigures as the members of Jesus' family move around.

Most people have little difficulty with the concept of church as described above. But, in practice, problems arise in relation to what we think should happen when people gather (e.g., preaching) and who has authority over those people (e.g., bishops overseeing a specific geographical region). Another example is how we do discipling. Usually, this involves a set of lessons delivered to new believers over a specific period of time, in a specific place. This is part of a sedentary mindset that is associated with content, times, people, and places that all are fixed.

Jesus' approach to discipleship was very different. It was mobile, reactive to life events, and responsive to context. Its focus was life-to-life. It was firmly embedded in community-based relationships. The relational interactions continually reconfigured as He moved around between homes, towns, and rural settings. This seemingly chaotic approach to teaching and learning is very different to that modeled in the well-controlled settings of sedentary church and theological institution. It more mirrors God's command to the Israelites to train their children as they walk along the road together (Deut. 11:19). Elastic church should therefore flexibly respond to changing configurations of the people of God. It should interact with the life nomads encounter in the contexts they pass through.

In contrast to the institutional approach, many of the New Testament leaders appeared to be heads of households (e.g., 1 Cor. 16:19; Rom. 16:10–11). As is normal for households, believers ate together (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:20–34). Paul also implied that many people were baptizing others (1 Cor. 1:14–15). In elastic church, the sacraments are re-placed into the hands of God's people wherever and whenever they meet. Believers are released to baptize new believers and remember Jesus as they eat together, wherever they meet together as a priesthood of all believers (1 Pet. 2:5, 9).

Creating Elastic Church

Elastic church should be different from the pattern we are used to.⁷ It needs to be modeled as nomadic “to overcome the perception that the Gospel is only for settled people.”⁸

Some nomad believers in our context chose to make their camp together with a couple of other believing families. They found they shared similar values and appreciated fellowshipping together. These “camp churches” frequently met around a fire at night to sing, pray, and encourage each other from God's Word. In retrospect, we wished we had given as much attention to nurturing these “camp churches” as we did to promoting weekly gatherings where there was a high turnover due to people coming and going. Later, a sedentary church

⁷ Hunter, Malcolm. 2002 “Advancing Strategies of Closure: Counting the Cost to Closure or What About the Nomadic Peoples?” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 19:4, 9–11.

⁸ Phillips, David J. 2001 *Peoples on the Move: Introducing the Nomads of the World*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 47.



built a building for these nomads. But it stands unused as the nomads moved to another area to avoid armed conflict. Without any buildings or other infrastructure or equipment, the smaller more organic “camp churches” continue to be able to move with the families when they move, because the churches are the families.

In elastic church, the timeframe for discipling can stretch, and the pace adjust, to what disciples are encountering on their pathway through life. This gives more hope that the form of Christianity that emerges from elastic churches will be more authentic to the nomadic experience. Nomads with whom we worked continue to meet a few times each week to have “milk times.” The aim of these is to drink deeply from God’s Word and to seek answers to context-driven questions. An example of such a question was how to respond to the murder of a visitor. The culturally honorable response is for the host to avenge the victim through finding and killing the murderer. If the victim is not avenged, subsequent visitors become targets (which happened when a second guest also was killed). This culturally and contextually complex problem is not easily resolved. This nomadic church is still working through the issues to try and find a biblical solution.

Elastic church members need to be empowered to share however much they know of Jesus with others. The Bible does not require completion of a pre-set curriculum before people start passing on what they know to others. This more sustainable approach is easier to transfer on to new people. It goes with nomads, in the people themselves, wherever they are.

One new nomad believer had relatives among a remote and even more unreached neighboring people group. Soon after coming to Christ, he became keen to go and share the Good News with them. However, he was convinced that he didn’t know enough or wasn’t qualified to go. After much prayer and encouragement, he went. He returned with great joy at how they had listened to him and how God had answered his prayers.

To develop elastic church there are two main ways we need to change our thinking about church. First, we need to reorient our conception of the church away from location towards wherever two or three are gathered in Jesus’ name. Second, we also need to accept the ebb and flow of changing configurations of gathering in different places and at different times.

To enable authentic nomadic forms to emerge from the nomads’ relationship with Jesus and His Word, missionaries need to hand over decision-making to nomad believers. We can trust the Holy Spirit for fruit from short encounters as nomads travel past us (e.g., Philip and the Ethiopian in Acts 8:26–39), as well as from longer interactions in multiple, constantly changing locations. This way of church is life-responsive, done together in normal nomadic life. It focuses on sharing in ways that can be easily passed on to others as they meet on the pilgrimage of life.

Conclusion

We need to recover a nomad mentality for the church generally. Nomads have much to teach sedentary Christians about how to be pilgrims on the Jesus Road.⁹ They remind us that we cannot comfortably settle in any context on this earth. We are all expected to be in a dynamic process of continually changing into Christ’s likeness, ready to respond to Jesus’ command to “go” (Matt. 28:19), unsettling our tendency to fix ourselves in any single state or location. Together, we share and model what it means to follow Jesus in all the specific contexts through which each of us wanders. ❏

⁹ Hibbert, Evelyn and Richard Yates Hibbert. 2018 *Walking Together on the Jesus Road: Discipling in Intercultural Contexts*. Littleton, CO: William Carey Publishing.



THE NOMADIC PEOPLES NETWORK (NPN) A NEW BREED

By **RON & KIRSTEN AHLBRECHT**

The Shepherd used nomads to move **Ron & Kirsten** in Asia for 20 years. Then He moved them to Europe to learn from nomads globally.

In the early 1970s, Malcolm and Jean Hunter saw clearly that nomads “will be the last to hear the Gospel simply because they are nomadic.” Nomads were feared, despised, or just plain invisible to missionaries and national churches. Likewise, nomads tend to be wary of “Christian” social structures composed mostly of unrelated individuals bound to a building. How could these two worlds be brought together? A Somali herder challenged the Hunters: “When you can put your church on the back of my camel, then we will think Christianity has something for us!”

The Hunters realized nomads would need a specialized breed of emissaries who can invest years of service in harsh climates in order to gain access to the heart of nomadic communities. They would need to walk with nomads through the Scriptures and re-imagine *ecclesia* on the move with whole clans and tribes of nomads following Jesus, their true Shepherd King.

There are no experts in nomadic ministry. The Hunters saw a need for a community of workers able to learn from Scripture, from the Holy Spirit, from nomads, and from one another. To this end they began to network with national and international workers, at first through correspondence and field visits. In the 1990s, this fledgling network began to gather face to face to share what they were learning, to pray, care for, and encourage one another. They rejoiced with those who rejoiced, and they wept with those who wept.

The purpose of the Nomatic Peoples Network (NPN) has always been three-fold: Walking with Jesus the Good Shepherd in partnership with one another to:

1. Learn from nomads as we invite them to walk with Jesus
2. Care for existing workers so that they thrive long-term among nomads
3. Multiply new and effective workers connecting with nomads

To accomplish this, we:

- connect with nomad and expat fieldworkers.
- conduct “regional and rolling gatherings” to encourage and learn from workers.
- connect relevant resources to needs on the ground.
- send out *NPN News and Views* by email.
- collaborate with sending agencies and churches to recruit and equip new workers through our Nomad Connect training program.
- advocate through articles and other media on a wide variety of themes.
- conduct field surveys to see where the gaps are in workers and/or resources.

NPN has three kinds of members—experienced laborers in the field, learners preparing to go, and supporters of all types helping to send and keep workers thriving on the pathways with nomads.

Get involved:

- Invite nomads to follow Jesus.
- Begin your journey alongside nomads.
- Learn how you can support those who are walking with nomads.

Contact us at info@npnet.net about joining and **Let Nomads Move You!** 





The Testimony of Tambaya Ibrahim

As told to **JON BANKE**

Tambaya Ibrahim is a passionate evangelist and teacher, serving both the settled and nomadic Fulani Church in Niger. He is a recognized leader inside and outside of Niger, active in various key ministry capacities.

I am a Bodaadó Fulani. My father and forefathers are Wodaaße; all of them were cattle herders. I grew up in the bush. I knew only herding cattle—nothing else. As a child, I never visited a town, large or small village. Sometimes, men might go to a town market, but children and women never went to towns. We only stayed in the bush.

I was born during the famine of 1974. My father's name is Ibrahim. In that year, my people experienced much suffering, including the death of all our animals. Many lost everything. Within a week of my birth, my father was visited by Malaam T, a friend who was a Christian. He brought the customary greeting for my birth and asked if he could pray for me. Though my father was a Muslim, he accepted. Malaam blessed me and asked God to make me a worker for Him.

Ten years later, during the second terrible famine, our people went to a large city to find food. There, two of my uncles met a missionary, who explained to them the way of Jesus Christ. They trusted in Jesus that day.

From a young age, I suffered from terrible nightmares. My family thought these were caused by evil spirits; nothing could be done to alleviate these terrors. On one occasion, I was taken to a traditional healer, who explained what must be done. My parents were away at the time, but when my mother returned, she flatly refused such a treatment. She then prayed a prayer I will never forget, “Jesus, I trust You. You have saved me and my son. He is Yours. If You choose to, You can cure him.” She then took me to another town to see my father, who was now a believer. While there, a SIM missionary talked with me about Jesus, and asked if I wanted to follow Him. I trusted Christ that day. God removed evil spirits from me, and the nightmares stopped. My heart was filled with joy, and I began to follow Jesus.

I learned to read and write and loved studying. Some years later, a pastor observed my passion for learning and encouraged me to go to Bible school. This was God's leading, and I studied four years at a Fulani Bible school in the country of Bénin.

God has called me to reach Fulani who have never heard the *habaru beldum* (sweet news). This dominates all my thoughts. I travel across Niger to preach to Fulani and encourage believers, finding great joy in working for the Lord. My life is a testimony to how God is answering Malaam's prayer for me at my birth. ❏

THE TALE OF TWO “BROTHERS” A TRUE-LIFE STORY

By YUSUF HABU NA'ANGO AND KATHARINE NORTON

Yusuf Habu Na'ango is a Literacy and Education Consultant with SIL Nigeria. He is a Pullo herder, from Northern Nigeria.

Katharine Norton is a Scripture Engagement Specialist with SIL Nigeria, specializing in Faith and Farming, a program which helps farmers and herders engage with Scripture in their language. This is a story of two boys in two families in two communities, with two different religions and two different ways of life...that God brought together as brothers in Christ. This story evolves over many years and many miles. It's not a story about a successful evangelistic campaign or the power of loud preaching...but it's a story of a lifelong friendship, the joy of reading, and the power of God's Word.

Abdu is from a large Muslim family. His father was an Ardo, a traditional ruler of a Fulani clan who had two wives and 14 children. Abdu grew up in the bush helping his father to take care of the cattle for the Nigerian people.

Yohana is from a Christian family. His father was a farmer who had one wife and many children. Yohana grew up in the village helping his father on the farm, growing food for the Nigerian people.

From a very tender age, these two boys met when Abdu's cows were near Yohana's farm. As their friendship grew, Abdu would visit Yohana in the village when he was not herding. If Yohana was not going to the farm, he would go to the Fulani camp and meet Abdu, and together they would follow the cows throughout the day. And that is how their friendship began; two small boys, one a farmer with his family, one a herder with his family, Yohana from a Christian background and Abdu from a Muslim background.

Neither boy had much schooling, but when he was 19, Yohana's father sent him to the Bible school in the next town. This school had a one-year pre-reading course so Yohana could learn to read before he did his Bible school certificate. Abdu really missed his friend when he was away, but during the holidays,

they would meet again, spending hours together in the bush with the cows. They would often hunt and then sit under a tree or in a cave to roast the meat. It was during these times that Yohana would read Bible tracts that he had from the Bible school for Abdu. Abdu was so excited listening to these stories from the Bible. He especially loved the stories about people who had animals or made their living with herding, like David with his sheep who was then called by God to be king, or Jacob with his large herds of animals, or the parable of the lost sheep.

When Yohana went back to Bible school, Abdu really missed him, and he missed hearing the stories, too. So, he asked Yohana to teach him. Slowly over time, Abdu became really great at reading.

However, he really had to keep this new skill a secret from his family, because they would consider it a great offense and embarrassment to know that he was involved in anything to do with “boko” (Western education). One day, when he was in the town with his brother, he was so excited to show him the books in the Bible school library, which he had been enjoying since the library was open to everyone. But this joy turned to pain when his brother told their father, who,



out of anger, restricted his movements and increased his work. But his father could not restrict his thinking. As he walked with his cows, Abdu contemplated the Bible stories he had heard. He became convinced they were true and he needed to give his life to follow Jesus. Yohana kept encouraging him, telling him the joy of being a Christian, and sharing stories of how people overcame persecution.

One day, Abdu went to the church in the town, but as he was coming out, he was seen by his stepmother who was selling milk near the church. She told his father, who became irate! He sat him down in the traditional seating place, the “Dad̄d̄o” and shouted at him, “Do you want to disgrace me and make me ashamed of my title? I have many cattle and many followers, and if you become a Christian, you’ll make me a laughing stock.” However, Abdu continued to grow in his faith and meet with Yohana to pray. Therefore, one of the brothers called a family meeting where they decided that one night, when Abdu was sleeping, they would pull him from his hut and kill him. One of his brothers felt pity for him and told him, “They are planning to kill you, I’d advise you to run away. I’ll take care of the animals. Go home and get your things and run away.” Abdu went back to the camp and packed a small bag of belongings. He went to his friend Yohana, who helped him escape.

Despite many challenges in the years ahead, Abdu went to Bible college and became an ordained reverend. Through him, many Fulani came to Christ. His fruitful ministry began with his interest in learning to read and write, which in turn helped him know the Word of God and accept Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.

This true story shines with beautiful truths to inspire us in our ministry.

We see the **blessing of family**. First, Yohana’s family, who raised him with a strong Christian faith, taught him the skill of farming, and shared the Word of God with him. We also can learn from Abdu’s family, who worked together in harmonious relationships to keep their family together, who taught him the skill of herding, and who wanted the best for him.


We see the **blessing of friendship**, as Yohana and Abdu developed a “David and Jonathan” type friendship that transcended linguistic, cultural, and religious differences over many years together.

We see the value of **connecting Scripture with people’s day-to-day life**. Abdu loved the stories about animals and herding in the Old Testament because it connected with the work he was doing herding his cows.

We see the need for a positive attitude towards **Muslims and herders**. Yohana’s family permitted him to play with Abdu and their positive attitude led not only to Abdu’s salvation but to many more Fulani coming to Christ. It is so important that those who interact with herders reach out to them in love and friendship, such as those who have farms near where their animals graze, or those who buy milk products from them in the market. These positive interactions and precious friendships will go a long way toward peace in our societies, as well as the blessings of eternal peace for many.

We see the need for **patience and long-term friendship evangelism**. It took many years for Abdu to believe the stories he was hearing and reading from the Bible.

We see the **value of literacy**, the gift that helped Abdu to engage with Scripture for himself and further his studies at Bible college.

We see that **persecution did not stop Abdu from following Christ**. He spent many years outside his biological family because they wanted to kill him. He got another family; the Christian believers became his family. They loved and cared for him for many years until later in life when he reunited with his biological family. 

DESERT BIRTHS

By **LAURA ANNE MICHAELIS**

All Scripture references used are from the NIV.



Laura Anne Michaelis is a Canadian midwife, who has served in nomad communities in Chad for the past six years. With a heart for Jesus, she intertwines love and midwifery, delivering newborns, and sharing her faith in nomad communities.

A DESERT BIRTH

“You can’t tie the knot that way,” she said, her hands skillfully undoing my haphazard attempt before retying it correctly. Two weeks of learning seemingly simple tasks had passed—things I thought I knew, like tying knots, turned out to be challenges I needed to learn from. While my background of camping in northern Canada offered a modest advantage, it felt as though I was reliving childhood days, receiving basic instructions again, and needing to step into a posture of learning.

Jesus’ words...*unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven... Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven* (Matt. 18: 3–4) flickered through my mind, like a whisper of wisdom, as the determined 15-year-old girl patiently demonstrated the proper method for the tenth time. Who knew that securing water jugs on a donkey could actually be so challenging. Maybe, just maybe, I had finally gotten it right. “Lord, grant me the humility and openness to learn,” I quietly exhaled.

Settling into the nomad way of life in Chad, I realized that immersing myself in their culture, language, and daily routines was a more profound endeavor than I had initially imagined. Cooking over an open flame or securing knots became more than tasks; they became bridges connecting me to these resilient

nomads. Their simple, rugged, and nomadic lifestyle, defined by battling the elements, sourcing sustenance, and combating swift illnesses, revealed a people of remarkable strength and determination. A people created in the image of God. It struck me that this same God, who intricately placed every star in the sky and breathed the breath of life into everything living, also adores these nomadic people. God’s love has traversed great distances and gone to great lengths to save these souls. Their unique journey and heritage are embraced by the same God who holds the universe. As missionaries, we are privileged to be instruments of this unchanging love, demonstrating that the embrace of God’s affections knows no bounds. So, amidst the challenges and shared experiences, I see these moments as opportunities to extend a compassionate hand and to speak of Christ.

RESILIENT WOMEN

As a midwife, my calling embraces the mission of safeguarding and advocating for the well-being of women and their newborns. Please allow me to share with you a little about these women.

The women of the Arab nomad community in Chad stand as some of the most hard-working individuals I’ve encountered. From the first rays of a 5 a.m. sunrise to the day’s end, their tireless efforts include cooking for their families, collecting firewood, fetching water,

tending to livestock, nurturing children, and grinding millet, among myriad other responsibilities. Children are considered a blessing and large families are desired. However, Chadians say that a pregnant woman straddles the boundary between life and death. She is living but walking around with the worry and fear of the risks associated with childbirth for both herself and her unborn baby.

DANCING WITH SURVIVAL

“Ashta is in labor; can you help deliver her baby?” asked her brother. “Yes,” I replied. “OK, I’ll take you to their campsite.” Ashta was a young nomad girl of about 15, whom I had met a few weeks prior. During her prenatal visit, I discovered she had a congenitally enlarged spleen, which intensified her vulnerability during labor and delivery.

Arriving at their camp, the sight of an unfinished tent greeted us—this meant that they had been traveling earlier that morning and had hurriedly set up a makeshift tent upon arrival due to Ashta’s imminent labor. Navigating around cow droppings and a languid dog, I entered the tent to find Ashta curled up, overwhelmed by labor pains. Her mother reached out and pulled me into the tent urging, “Examine her, ensure her safety.”

Assessing her condition alongside a colleague, we offered reassurance that all was well and progressing as normal.

As darkness fell, the moment arrived for Ashta to push. Equipped with headlamps and resolve, we stood ready. As Ashta was pushing, the baby’s heartbeat wavered, causing concern. We prayed and asked God to help Ashta have strength and for us to have wisdom to deliver this baby. With tremendous effort, Ashta successfully delivered her child, though the infant’s struggle was far from over. Overwhelmed with fear, Ashta’s mother draped a blanket over the baby, resigned to the baby being dead. Swift action averted tragedy, as my co-worker took the blanket off and revived the baby, the tent filled with sighs of relief as the baby gave a cry. With mother and child resting on a bed, we asked for permission to pray a blessing over the baby in Jesus’ name. They accepted


and with gratitude, we thanked God for the gift of life and breath bestowed upon the newborn boy.

YEARNING SOULS

Yet, beyond the immediate physical needs that shape the lives of Chad’s nomads, there exists a deeply rooted spiritual need. Predominantly following the Islamic faith, the Arab nomads are a people searching for favor and connection with God. From birth, the father sings the Adah, the Muslim call to prayer in the baby’s right ear desiring that he or she follows in their way of faith. Amongst their Islamic beliefs, folk traditions and superstitions are woven in, which creates an intricate tapestry of both physical and spiritual challenges. At birth a string with a small pouch containing a prayer is tied around the baby’s hand or neck; this is done to ward off and protect the baby from any evil spirits or illness.

It is important to note that up until now we don’t know of anyone who has become a believer in Jesus amongst the Arab nomad camps in Chad. They are a people group where the light of Christ has yet to illuminate their souls to see the glorious wonders of Jesus.

Walking through a modest encampment in Chad, the realities of life become clear. The vulnerability of their children is undeniable—as many as one in five children do not make it to their fifth birthday. This sobering fact is a constant reminder of the urgency that underlies our mission. Nomads’ lives are marked by a delicate dance with survival, and yet, even as they navigate these harsh rhythms of life, there is a yearning that reverberates—a yearning that only comes from an eternal being created by God. *He has also set eternity in the human heart* (Eccles. 3:11).

The needs are vast and multifaceted. The hearts of nomads are awaiting the Good News. There is a calling for missionaries, bold bearers of Christ’s message, to venture into uncharted territory, to sow seeds of faith in all types of soil. This call is for messengers of hope and ambassadors of compassion. The challenge is substantial, but so is the promise—*I will be with you always* (Matt. 28:20). 



Beautiful Feet Bringing Sweet News

By **JON BANKE**

Jon Banke and his family have served among Fulani since 1998. His enduring passion is seeing God's kingdom grow among the Fulani, both through evangelism and church-growth ministries. The Bankes currently live in Charlotte, NC. Contact: intl.fulani-rmc@sim.org

Outside of God's Love?

God has always had a heart for the foreigner, the stranger, those on the fringes (Exod. 23:2; Lev. 1:33–34; Jer. 22:3, ESV). To those for whom we care very little, whether forgotten and innocent (Deut. 10:18) or blatantly guilty of great evil (Dan. 4), He extends care and offers mercy. God seeks to bestow good on those we hate, such as the nation of Nineveh (Jonah) and the account of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–7). He recognizes their evil and calls His people to do good to them anyway (Matt. 5:43–47; Luke 6:27–36).

In West and Central African society, the Fulani people fit this description well. Their pastoralist lifestyle naturally causes them to live on the fringe, and their nomadic culture sets them distinctly apart from most proximate people groups. The actions of certain groups of the Fulani are not endearing themselves to others. Perspectives on Fulani run the full spectrum from hated enemies to useful milk sellers, from “Oh, they're not from here” to kind neighbors.

To be fair, Christians who have not had their hard-worked fields intentionally decimated by herds of cattle, or who have not seen loved ones murdered by long-time neighbors, cannot likely understand the fear and hatred engendered by a passing shepherd and his animals. Such emotions are normal responses.

Situations like these typically result in prejudiced classification of the Fulani. Like Jonah, multitudes of African followers of Jesus do not believe the Fulani worthy of the mercy and love of God or see them as incapable of coming to Jesus for salvation. If we somehow believe that anyone is unworthy of the Gospel, then we grossly misunderstand the Gospel itself. What did any of us ever do to deserve salvation (Eph. 2:8–9)? Nothing—that is the essence of grace. How can we reject someone when we ourselves are so undeserving? Jesus' parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt. 18:21–35) makes crystal clear the foolishness of such an attitude.

What Is to Be Done?

The Fulani are very frequently feared, hated, labeled a “national problem”¹ and unengaged by those called to be ambassadors of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18–20). For years, I have heard the miserable refrain that the Fulani are “hard to reach.” These words are typically spoken by well-intended brothers and sisters who have invested very little time to listen to and get to know Fulani—those they rightly see as lost apart from the Gospel.

¹ Numerous such references and writings exist (e.g., www.vanguardngr.com/2021/02/the-fulani-problem/).

I believe that some of this hardness relates directly to the use of approaches anti-cultural to the Fulani. Sincere and mature believers from other peoples often seek in vain to engage Fulani, assuming that they are not that different from themselves. The notion that proximity equals likeness becomes an obstacle in presenting truth. The Fulani may have a semblance of the same worldview, but this is uniquely not the case.

What is to be done? Engagement and ministry strategies are useful in charting a way forward. Informed by careful research, they help us avoid past errors and present pitfalls. But a strategy is only as good as the attitudes at its foundation. Paul asserts in 1 Corinthians 13 that exceptional actions go precisely nowhere if not underpinned by love.

Borrowing from Malcolm Hunter, senior missionary and elder statesman of ministry to nomads, “the problem is in our concept and communication of what the Christian church is. To be a Muslim, all you need is a prayer mat; but to be a Christian, you have to settle down.”² Any significant movement among the Fulani will require the persistent and flexible application of our best cross-cultural principles, accomplished through “time on the mat,” listening and seeking to understand. It will take long-term commitment and sacrifice to “get inside the head” of one’s Fulani friend to see the world as she sees it and then communicate the *habaru beldum* (sweet news) in a way that makes sense to her.

I know of no single approach—no silver bullet—to reach the Fulani. Given the challenges of working with a mobile, reserved, feared, sometimes violent people, an utter dependence on God is absolutely critical. Nevertheless, a handful of underlying principles may be useful:

- **Relational Focus**—The most enduring work we can do among Fulani is to form relationships built on trust, love, and respect as a basis for anything else we do. Let us refrain from “ministering to” Fulani (or anyone, for that matter) and adopt an approach of “ministry with” them. In other terms, any person is not to be an object of ministry, but one worthy of

knowing and befriending. This is especially true if the person is not interested in the Gospel.

Further, whether collaborating in ministry with a Fulani believer or engaging with a non-Christian Fulani, both can be seen as “ministry with,” as the latter informs and improves the worker’s communication. Simultaneously, the non-Christian is increasingly exposed to the humility of Christ in one of His followers and his inherent value as a child of God.

- **Humility**—More than one Fulani leader has stated clearly that outsiders (of any color) coming into their camps/villages with an attitude of helping “these poor people” will be neither truly trusted nor accepted. This remains true in spite of a gracious welcome. A Fulani proverb states that “your visitor is your god,” inherent to their own social code, requiring gracious, generous hospitality. The unsuspecting visitor may feel he has entered in more deeply than he truly has. The Fulani hold humility in high regard.
- **Learn Fulfulde**—For practical reasons, Fulani almost always use (outside of their own community) the dominant language of the area in which they live. Yet, it is extremely rare for a non-Fulani to speak Fulfulde. As a result, it is very tempting for workers among Fulani to use the lingua franca. (“I don’t have to learn another language since the Fulani in my area already speak Hausa.”)

² Hunter, Malcolm. November-December 1989/December 1990 “Tracking the Gospel Among the Nomadic Pastoralists” *World Evangelization*.

Yet, when a non-Fulani makes the sacrifice of time and energy to learn Fulfulde, it speaks powerfully to Fulani. They recognize that one must care deeply for the Fulani to learn their language.

- **Learn from them**—Everything I ever learned about Fulani I learned from Fulani. It may seem simpler to rely on information about Fulani from fellow workers, but the best understanding comes through direct experience and appropriate questions and verification.

Ministry With

The sheer magnitude of the Fulani people (estimates run as high as 50 million) compared to the minuscule percentage (less than 1%)³ believed to be Jesus followers underscores the great need for Gospel work to advance and be strengthened among the Fulani. This massive nation remains unreached by any standard.

While Western missionaries can still contribute and invest, outreach and the spiritual growth of the Fulani Church cannot (nor need not) depend on Western endeavor. A powerful force for missions exists and is growing within the Fulani Church. The participation of these brothers and sisters is critical for the overall task. God is also bringing forward key leaders for Himself from among the Fulani. A number of highly mature and wise leaders are scattered across the region.

³ This figure is admittedly an estimation, as hard numbers are not available for a variety of reasons.


Engaging with, listening to, learning from, and collaborating with these men and women are essential to ensure relevance and sustainability in ministry approaches. Successful engagement will recognize that many Fulani Christian workers lack the means to advance this work. Consequently, adequate attention needs to be given to developing creative approaches and tools to equip these workers, being careful to acknowledge and incorporate Fulani cultural values.

Relevant training and wise assistance from external partners can be fruitful contributions and will be particularly enduring if the principles mentioned above are carefully applied.

Additionally, the non-Fulani African Church in regions where Fulani are found has a significant role to play in bringing Jesus to the Fulani. But faced with the unfortunate reputation of the Fulani for religious radicalism and violence, the Church fears and frequently hates the Fulani. Addressing and correcting this dynamic depends foremost on the work of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, advocacy for Fulani by those who know them and whom they trust can create understanding and encourage sincere engagement of Fulani neighbors. Mobilization of the West African Church is a task whose time has come.

What if?

It is widely known that the Fulani, particularly under the Fulani Muslim cleric Usman dan Fodio, spread Islam across much of Nigeria and portions of Niger during a period generally equivalent to the 19th century.⁴ As is often the case, Islam was spread by the sword—a jihad.

A long-held vision sees the Fulani reversing history, acting as a wind that carries the *habaru beldum* across the Sahel region. What if God moved mightily among Fulani across West and Central Africa? What if, instead of being met with fear and hatred, the Fulani were shown unconditional, sacrificial love by Christians? 

⁴ Johnston, H.A.S. 1967 *The Fulani Empire of Sokoto*. London. Ibadan. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.

Changes in Central Asian Nomadic Life

By **JAMESON HARTIN** lives and works in Central Asia

Few things are as recognizable in Central Asia as the high summer pastures or meadows, areas of green grass often surrounded by mountains and dotted with yurts. Nomads regularly ascend the roads leading to the highlands each May, bringing their herds to cooler weather for grazing during the summer months. This has been their practice for generations, and while familial lands have stayed the same, the routine has changed a bit.

Decades ago, families would move four times a year, leaving the village at the beginning of summer for a slightly higher and cooler area. Then, in July or August, they would move again to a much higher altitude for the hottest part of the year. Once the weather began to cool, they would travel back down, making the same stops in reverse.

Today, they only move twice—once in May from the village up to their family's pasture, and a second time at the end of summer from the pasture back to their home village. The practice of moving fewer times came about slowly over the seven decades the Soviets occupied Central Asia.

Early on during occupation, the number of nomadic families was such that multiple summer pastures were needed to feed all the animals. Once a pasture's grass was eaten through, the nomads and herds moved on, and by the time they came back, the pasture had regrown. By the time Central Asian republics had declared their independence, the number of nomadic families, and therefore herds, had decreased significantly.


Differing from their ancestors, contemporary Central Asian nomads must balance their daily lives with tourism—from foreign and local tourists alike. As more and more nationals work and live in the cities, they yearn for the cooler temps and clean air of the high

meadows from their youth, so during summer, they regularly travel out for rest. Foreign tourists also are attracted to the scenery and atmosphere, in addition to seeing a more traditional nomadic way of life that includes eating and possibly sleeping in a yurt.

Earning a living solely from herding is also more difficult today, so for some nomads, increased tourism has offered a promising side business. Families are routinely raising more yurts or even building small chalets to house tourists in a “posh” option. Some entrepreneurs have developed larger plots in the high meadows with resorts featuring pools and saunas. To keep up with the trends, a few nomadic families have begun installing portable camping showers, solar-powered lights, or Wi-Fi to cater to tourists.

While dabbling in the tourist market has been enough income for some nomads, other families send the husband to a nearby city for part of each week to work a second job. The wife and children stay in the meadow, feeding tourists, making fermented horse milk, and taking care of the animals.

As nomadic families in Central Asia change with the times, something that hasn't changed is their religion. Islam remains the dominant faith, and while Christ is known in some areas, there are far more where His name is not yet known. Large areas of Central Asia—particularly where the nomadic lifestyle persists—remain unreachable, with no churches for hundreds of kilometers. In many of these regions, only one or two believers may be known, or rumors of secret believers, scared of persecution, are shared in church circles.

Continue to pray for the nomads of Central Asia, that God would advance His name throughout the mountains and valleys. 



Redeeming The Starving Shepherds

By REV. AGABI E. ODE

Rev. Agabi E. Ode is an ordained minister of the Gospel from the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) in Nigeria. He has a first degree in Geology and Mining, a PGDT, and a Masters of Divinity. He along with his family, are all joyfully serving in Mali, reaching out to a semi-nomadic Unreached People Group called the Moors. He is the Projects Coordinator for SIM Mali. (ode.agabi@sim.org)

As we drove into a private hospital compound to see a doctor, we could not help but notice the beautiful landscape with colorful flowers and well-trimmed lush green grasses. While we were admiring the beauty, something totally different was going on in the mind of Jamil, our Moor friend, who had traveled from the village to visit us in town and ended up accompanying us to the hospital. “Oh, what a delicious meal for my rams these grasses would have been!” he exclaimed. Almost in unison, we all burst into laughter hearing him talk about feeding the decorative grass to his flock. What we did not realize was the extent to which he loved his animals, and if we could see through a shepherd’s eyes, good grass, especially in a region with little rainfall, wasn’t for landscaping but food for hungry sheep because they have high value for their livestock. David J. Phillips was right when he said that “the pastoralist’s animals not only give them subsistence but they also shape

their society and the way they think....The personal standing of each pastoralist depends on his family connections as well as on the number and quality of his animals.”¹ Unfortunately, while he was so concerned for his animals, Jamil himself was in need of physical and spiritual nourishment, just like many others like him. This article seeks to briefly bring to the foreground the Black Moors of southwestern Mali and to present their plight, with the hope that spiritual shepherds come to end their starvation.

Jesus the Good Shepherd, and Standard for Shepherds

In John 10:11, Jesus referred to Himself as the Good Shepherd, and among Christians, this portrays the relationship between Jesus and His followers. A good

¹ Phillips, David J. 2001 *Peoples on the Move: Introducing the Nomads of the World*. Carlisle, UK: Piquant, 15.

shepherd is one who recognizes his sheep and vice versa; who protects his sheep at all costs; who leads, grooms, feeds, and waters his sheep; and one who is willing to give his life for his sheep. It was the same in the Old Testament, where the relationship between God and His people was exemplified using a shepherd and his sheep. As David says, *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul* (Ps. 23:1–3a).

But should a shepherd tend his flock, and himself suffer starvation? As the standard, Jesus portrayed sound spiritual and physical health, and these put together, brought about the goodness of His shepherd-hood, which in turn led to the thriving of His sheep. As the Bible says, *...And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him* (Luke 2:40). No wonder His disciples, after undergoing this type of shepherding, were themselves able to be responsible shepherds of God's flock under them, not because they owned livestock, but because they had the characteristics of Jesus Christ.

So it would not be out of place to say that one is not a good shepherd simply by owning livestock but by possessing the qualities of a shepherd in a state of soundness spiritually and physically.

Peter will go further to encourage church leaders saying, *Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away* (1 Peter 5:2–4). So it would not be out of place to say that one is not a good shepherd simply by owning

livestock but by possessing the qualities of a shepherd in a state of soundness spiritually and physically. We have seen some of these qualities in Jamil and his kinsmen, and I wonder how much better they will be having the transforming Holy Spirit in them, becoming more like Christ.

Jamil and His Brothers, the Starving Shepherds

Why are Jamil, our dear Moor friend, and his fellow kinsmen struggling to flourish, even though they have a heart of care and preservation for their herds? A brief look at their background may help us understand them better.

Learning about their history from some of their chiefs, I found out that for decades and even for centuries, the Black Moors were brought up in Mauritania as slaves. They suffered from negligence and persecution by the government and the public dominated by the White Moors. They were marginalized and gained no access to equality in earning rights for education, jobs in the government department, and other social privileges. Garba Diallo depicted this ill-treatment while narrating the story of Abidi, a Black Moor and a slave to his White Moor master:

Abidi is not responsible, nor is he a human being with feelings or the right to make a family. He is a machine that works like hell without pay or rest. Like the machine, Abidi needs only to be fed to oil his black muscles from cracking. His master can take him anywhere and make him carry out any task. He can be legally sold, given away, used to pay bride price, or castrated to avoid mating with the master's harem. The master's right comes before God, and he has the right to sleep with any of Abidi's relatives, as they are by law his concubines.²

² Garba, Diallo. 2014 "Mauritania—They Live in Slavery." In *Justice and Human Dignity in Africa: Collection of Essays in Honor of Professor Austin Chukwu*. GMT Emezue, et al., eds. IRCHSSA, 491

These factors demeaned them and created a deep hurt in their view of themselves in relation to others, resulting in a sense of inferiority, passivity and low initiative, and isolation.

Eventually, many migrated to southern Mali. Some settled forming communities and villages. Socially and economically, the Black Moors became semi-nomads, partly herding livestock and also farming.

They tend to be accommodating to outsiders and are hardworking, but their communities are devoid of good roads, schools, or health-care facilities. Their youth prefer to travel to neighboring towns or return to Mauritania for menial jobs due to the economic hardship.

They suffered from negligence and persecution by the government and the public dominated by the White Moors.

These Black Moors are starving spiritually not only because of their suppressing history but also due to the absence of spiritual shepherds. They also struggle physically and economically due to insufficient pasture and inadequate farm yield to meet their yearly needs, as their region experiences little annual rainfall. Outside help has been slow in getting to the Moors because of insecurity in the country, which has led to the departure of many NGOs and mission organizations.

Shepherding the Shepherds

In the past, a few Moor villages had some visits by some political and developmental organizations with empty promises, but recently, some good shepherds have been providing help through potable water supply and irrigation farming. Still, little has been done in the areas of health care, especially for children and women, and education.

Perhaps if one is wondering if there are ways to ameliorate the lives of Jamil and his kinsmen, there are ministry opportunities available for exploration, which include fields such as human and veterinary health care, adult and children education, agriculture, water engineering, fishery, etc. David Phillips rightly says, that “reaching people such as these will require a realistic commitment, demonstrated by the size and duration of a missionary team.”³

But one should come not only with the intention of rendering help but with an open mind to learn the Hassaniya language and to experience the beautiful culture of these herders, which is relatable to some biblical culture.

Conclusion

It is not enough for us to know that our dear friend Jamil cares so much for his herd but to see that he and his kinsmen are also cared for. While they see to the welfare of their livestock, they themselves are indeed in a state of starvation due to their physical and spiritual poverty. Those who live in spiritual and material abundance are obligated to look in their direction and render help. 🏡

³ Phillips, *Peoples on the Move*, 97.

DISAPPEARING KYRGYZ VILLAGES IN THE PAMIRS

Three years after COVID-19, what has changed?

By JAMESON HARTIN

Jameson Hartin lives and works in Central Asia.

As I walked through the village looking for someone to talk to, all I found were empty streets, boarded-up windows, and padlocked doors. After having tea and bread with one villager, 45 minutes passed before I found another person with whom to speak.

Many of the Kyrgyz villages in the Pamir¹ region of Tajikistan shared these depictions. Studying reports and written commentary from trips taken pre-COVID-19 in 2017 and 2019, I expected more hustle and bustle. True, many nomadic families travel to the *jailoo*, or high summer meadows, to graze their herds, but I had read of regular village life continuing despite the summer travel.

Moving to Central Asia in 2021, I came with a dream of being involved in God's story in this nomadic region. I waited patiently for borders that had been closed due to COVID-19 to reopen. That didn't happen. Then in September 2022, ethnic fighting broke out between the Kyrgyz and Tajik, which kept the border firmly closed. Finally, by summer 2023, I decided to take the long way around and travel by car from Kyrgyzstan

through Uzbekistan into Tajikistan and cross nearly the entire country to arrive at the Pamirs.

To reach Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, took 14 hours of travel, and from Dushanbe up to Murghab, the largest Kyrgyz village in this region, was almost a three-day journey due to dilapidated roads and countless landslides that needed to be cleared. Construction to upgrade the only road to this area is currently underway, but it is slow-going as the threat of more landslides is constant.

Traveling from Dushanbe east to Khorog, Tajik ethnicity fades and Pamiri people appear on the scene. Entering Alichur, however, a distinct change to predominantly Kyrgyz ethnicity is explicitly noticed. Pamiri people still inhabit many of the Kyrgyz villages in Tajikistan, but the only Tajiks are those placed in government roles (that not too long ago were held by Kyrgyz). Starting in Alichur, I traveled up to Murghab, Karakul, Rangkul, Tokhtamysh and back. In each village, I sought out locals, asking about population, employment, cost of living. Answers were eerily similar.

“No work.”

“They've all left to Kyrgyzstan.”

¹ A mountain range between Pakistan and Central Asia. Kyrgyz villages in this section of the Pamir Range are situated in Gorno-Badashkan Province.



“My family moved to Bishkek.” (*city in Kyrgyzstan*)

“With the border closed, everything comes from Dushanbe and is more expensive.”

“No more horses—they eat too much grass.”

With the exception of Rangkul, where people roamed the streets conversing with one another and conducting business related to their camels, many villagers shared the same laments. Since the border remained closed for three years, many had left to find work in Kyrgyzstan. Those who remained complained of price increases in everything from food to coal because products that had once come from Osh—the largest city in Southern Kyrgyzstan—now come from Dushanbe. Even products coming from the Chinese/Tajik border cost more because they must first travel to Dushanbe before being shipped back out to the villages in the Pamirs. The increase in time on the slow, deteriorating road causes massive increases in prices. Many villagers were also upset about the expense for poorer quality coal. Prior to the pandemic, they imported coal from the Alai mountains in Kyrgyzstan, a region known for high-quality coal. Now, they're forced to pay higher prices for inferior product from elsewhere in country, so many resort to burning yak or cow dung. Yak products produced by Kyrgyz in the Pamirs have no profitable market as they aren't desired by Tajik people.


Sitting by the shore of Karakul Lake, a destination once dotted by boats and tourists, a woman watched her three children splash in the water. “My parents moved to Osh, but I have a store here so I have to stay. There aren't tourists anymore, and most people moved away, so I really don't have any business,” she bemoaned.

After speaking with locals on both sides of the border, the consensus is that about 50% of the Kyrgyz population has left the Tajik side for the Kyrgyz side. This used to be an easy, half-day venture, but now it is a costly, arduous journey that goes through Uzbekistan. Villagers endure the trip for the hope of something better, but many Kyrgyz from Tajikistan are now learning the grass isn't always greener on the other side. While food

prices are similar, those who moved to cities like Osh, Bishkek, and Jalal-Abad weren't prepared for the cost increase in housing. They also can't find comparable work due to their Tajik passports. They must wait three years before being able to apply for jobs for which they currently qualify.

For the Kyrgyz person, this is a deeply personal, grievous issue. Superficially, everything seems the same, but under the surface, it is anything but. An ethnically-Kyrgyz person who, for example, moves from Murghab to Osh, leaves home for a place where the language and culture are the same, but he can no longer be employed in the same way. A change in citizenship is possible, but due to instability in border situations, people must choose between opportunity and family. Once the change is made, he will lose access to attend weddings and funerals for an indeterminate period of time. To a Westerner, the choice might be simple, but for the Kyrgyz, these choices are agonizing. Family is of utmost importance to their culture.

Based on observations from my travel to the region, it seems both the Pamiri and Kyrgyz populations are facing increasing obstacles to the survival of their villages. The decline in the once-steady stream of tourism during the summer months has heavily impacted the economy of the area. One man, who spoke fluent English, had resorted to working the pumps at a gas station because he could no longer lead tours in the area.

Without a continued, open border available to both tourists and locals, the outlook for this region seems bleak. Shrinking villages coupled with an already challenging environment for foreign workers makes for a complex situation in reaching those who have yet to hear. Pray for God to work in creative ways to reach those who remain in this region and ask for more workers to be active in the areas to which these villagers are scattering. 

Author's Note: Travel to the region took place in mid-to late-July. Soon after, the Kyrgyz-Tajik border opened to foreign travelers only. Local passport holders must still travel through Uzbekistan.

Who Will Go?

By JULIA WOODS

Julia Woods is a first year university student and a participant in the 2023 Nomad Connect program. She is passionate about God and horses, and is pursuing God's call on her life for the nomads.

Who will go to you, O shepherds?
Who will go to you, O keepers of flocks?
You who dwell in the desert, in the arid places where
thorns are ever present;
where scorpions and snakes lurk and where sickness
is not easily treated.
Your hardships are real;
Your toil is ever enduring.

Who will reach you, O herders?
You who have been pushed far out,
To the land that no one else dares inhabit;
whose weather is unpredictable
and you know not when you will have rain.
Your lives are ever at stake.
Your livestock are ever at stake.

O you peoples, you are in a spiritual drought!
A spiritual drought, yet you do not know it.
You long for rain.
So let the living water in, let Him flood your lives!
And you will never again have to thirst.

How much longer can you survive?
How many more years of drought can you take?
Your livestock are thirsty.
Your children are thirsty.
You are thirsty.
So drink!

Stop being beaten up by the sun.
Stop being drained by the scorching heat!
I know it feels as though it is unrelenting.
But maybe your souls are unrelenting!

O people, hear this.
O people of God, open your ears!
Of these ever moving shepherds, some have never heard.
They have not heard of our LORD;
They have not heard of His love!
Of His compassion and His grace, His mercy and His power,
His fierce love!

O that they would call on the name of the LORD—
and be saved!

O people, hear this.

Though they rely on Him completely—though without His
rain they would be wiped off of the face of the earth—some
have never heard. (Selah)

So I ask again.
Who will go?

Who will give up their livelihoods to reach these people?
Who will go to reach the lost and forgotten?
Someone has to go!

Who will learn that special and unique language?
And who will sacrifice everything they thought they
knew about the world—for the sake of the tiny, so-called
“insignificant?”

I will go.
I will go!
Though my feet may get dirty,
Though the road is bombarded with thorns.
Though scorpions and snakes lurk,
Though every force of evil is against me,
I will go.

With the Lord by my side.
And only with my LORD.
But with my eyes fixed on Him and on Him alone,
With the LORD Almighty making the way in front,
I will run!
I will race!
I will stretch out my legs and step out in faith.
And with His people behind me lifting me up in their prayer,
I will go.
For He is my shade at my right hand.

How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the Word of
the Lord. ❏

Nomad Connect

A Learning Journey

By **SAMIRA OFFEREIGNS**

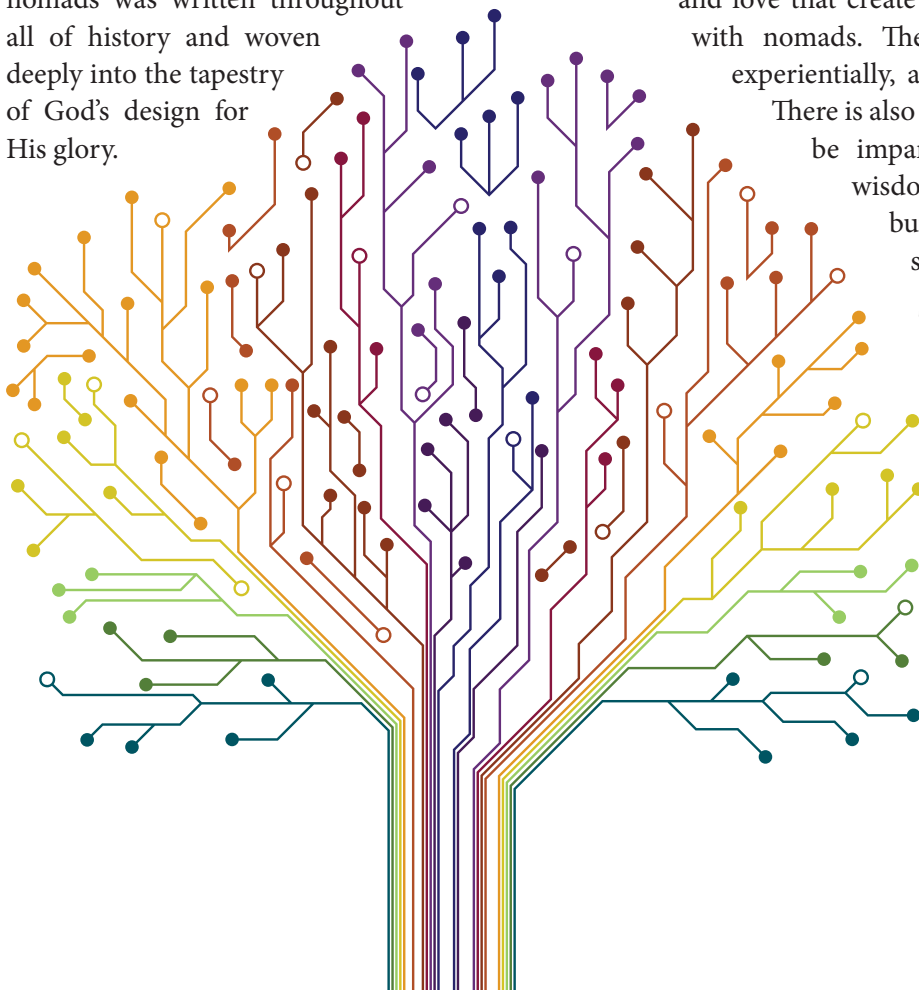
Samira Offereigns has been a part of the NPN leadership team since 2018. She has served among nomadic peoples in East Africa and in Central Asia.

Nomad Connect was born out of the dream of Malcolm Hunter, a man I highly admire. This was the man who first defined nomads for me and instilled in my heart a passion for nomadic peoples globally. His are the stories that make visible the hidden things, the peoples, and lands that are marginalized by modern society. His stories transport you not only to foreign lands fraught with adventure but also into the heart of God which is fraught with love and compassion. He taught me that God's heart for nomads was written throughout all of history and woven deeply into the tapestry of God's design for His glory.

Though Malcolm is no longer actively engaged in nomadic work, his heart remains passionately dedicated to nomads. To this end, he has turned his attention to the younger generations and ardently strives to raise up others with nomadic perspectives. He recognized that regular classroom instruction, seminary schools, or even missionary trainings could not adequately prepare people for nomadic work. These classes, designed and taught in sedentary ways, cannot infuse the unique challenges, differences, and love that create the complex beauty of working with nomads. These elements must be learned experientially, as people connect with nomads.

There is also a generational wisdom that must be imparted through mentorship. This wisdom is not contained in textbooks but is shared life on life, through stories and experiences.

Thus, a new learning experience was designed. In 2018, we called it Nomadic Truck Venture. In this venture, we loaded a large safari vehicle with mentors and students and traveled throughout Central Asia. Mentors shared missional strategies, cultural insights, and their personal stories and experiences of working with nomads. While this was an enriching experience for students, we found that the



long miles of travel kept students from being able to truly engage with nomads. Nomadic Peoples Network utilized this venture as a catalyst for an innovative process that helped redesign the program into what is now called Nomad Connect.

Learning takes place where our established frameworks of thinking are confronted by new information. The new information must struggle to find its place, to break down the old framework and create new structures of understanding. To do this well is to engage in a process, not to jump to conclusions. Nomad Connect's goal is to help students journey through this process: to move students from theory to experiential connection, from head knowledge to heart understanding. The purpose is not to create a methodology for nomadic ministry but rather to create a space for paradigm shifts of thinking: to confront personal limitations, wrestle with concepts, and seek God for His perspectives.

1 First Step: Online Course

The first step of this journey is to introduce new information, creating a base layer of knowledge from which they can build. This is done through an online, self-paced course that must be completed before going to the field. The course includes videos, reading materials, prayer guides, and student responses. It requires an engagement of time, energy, and prayer from the students. Nomad Connect is not an adventure-tourism activity, it's a sacrificial learning process.

2 Second Step: "Base Camp"

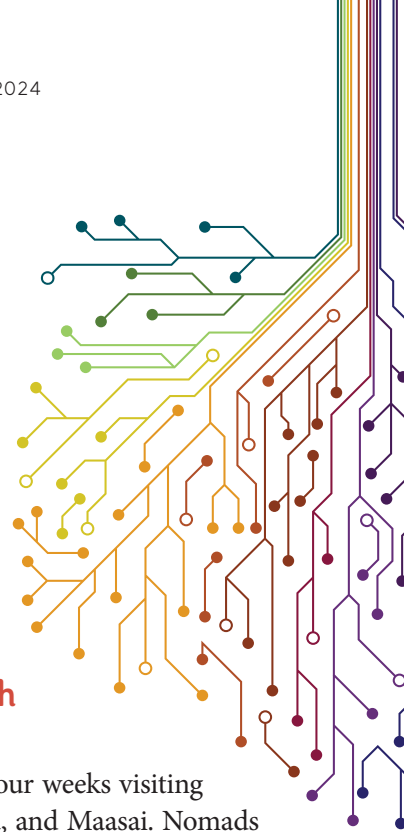
In June 2023, six students and three mentors from five different countries assembled in Kenya. Base Camp was a ramshackle assortment of cabins amongst acacia trees overlooking Lake Naivasha. A large table became our gathering point, a place where strangers began the journey of learning how to love one another as unto the Lord. Local mentors (believers from various Kenyan tribes) and the director of NPN joined us at the table to share their stories, perspectives, insights, and experiences with the students. These conversations were a rich input of


wisdom and discipleship. This was necessary preparation for nomadic connections and included cultural orientation, spiritual insight, and deepening understanding of nomads. Students were also taught about orality and Bible storytelling, and each prepared a story to share along the journey.

3 Third Step: Connecting with Nomads

We spent the next four weeks visiting nomadic tribes: Pokot, Turkana, and Maasai. Nomads are by nature hospitable but suspicious of outsiders. We were grateful for our hosts, local pastors, whom God used to bridge the gaps of language, culture, and trust. Through them, students engaged in observational participation, asking cultural questions and sharing daily life tasks. Students came with hearts eager to learn, and their humility opened the door to beautiful interactions. There is something powerful and significant in the exchange between human beings—sharing knowledge, celebrating differences, developing understanding, giving grace, and growing love. Our program was not focused on projects—doing things “for” the community—but rather based on learning, receiving from the community, which helped us grow in humility and love. This was a beautiful gift. Cultural exchange is a place of God's glory.

Traveling and living together, confronting discomfort, struggling through personality differences, and working together as a nomadic “clan” is challenging! It is something that cannot be learned in a classroom but is essential for developing godly character and equipping cross-cultural workers. As Sarah K, a participant said, “it confirmed to me how important team life is: unity and the general spiritual, physical, and emotional wellbeing of every team member. The leaders took really good care of that.” As a mentor, I was impressed by the conscious decisions that were made to love one another, to confess and forgive





grievances, to extend grace, and to push forward with joy. We are only as strong as our weakest member, and at one point, we will all be that weakest member. The love that we shared as a team was translated to the communities around us and bore witness of God's enduring love.

Though Nomad Connect is not focused on evangelism, one of the purposes is to further Gospel impact in nomadic communities. Partnership with local pastors allowed us to learn from and come alongside them in support of church development. Engagement in prayer and spiritual warfare was an intricate part of our connection with nomads. In each location, God opened times for sharing testimonies, Bible stories, and engaging in spiritual conversations with people. Students grew in their ability to depend on God and to speak God's Word with courage. It was a time of deepening and testing faith in every heart.

Though Nomad Connect is not focused on evangelism, one of the purposes is to further Gospel impact in nomadic communities.


One significant moment came when a student, a Native American, recognized some of the similarities between his nomadic heritage and these nomadic peoples. Upon realizing this, he shared a testimony about his grandmother that resonated deeply in the hearts of the listeners. It was amazing to see God work in and through him as he shared this testimony. Nomads share "universal" characteristics but also are distinct, with specific cultural differences according to tribe. One of the purposes of visiting three nomadic groups is to discern what is universal nomadism and what is tribe-specific. Analyzing similarities and differences is an important part of the learning process, as is finding cultural bridges for connection

4 Fourth Step: Debrief

After four weeks of living in tents in nomadic contexts, we spent the last three days in the city. This was a time of worship, reflection, debrief, prayer, and shifting focuses forward. As Jill, a participant said, "this was a significant time for me because it gave me space, time, even permission, to process, put words to my emotions and spiritual experience. It was an appropriate and tangible way to release and fill in the void that would be left from my experiences with the team I had grown to love and appreciate."

Nomad Connect was an undertaking of great worth that required great work. There were moments, especially in the preparation, or in the days of sickness and exhaustion, when I wondered if this was a valid effort of time, money, and work...and the answer is a resounding "yes." The worth of this effort is measured in several directions: **the honor of God's name** that was exalted in every place we went, and in every participant's heart; **the equipping of God's people** via the development of faith and perspective shifts that happened along the journey; **the shared blessings** as God's glory was mutually experienced by participants and nomad communities; **the joy of fellowship** in loving one another, seeking God together, experiencing the corporate revelation of God in our lives; and **the joy of worshiping God in various flavors, languages, and colors** while being the church, encouraging the church, and watching God expand His church among nomads.

5 Fifth Step: Moving Forward

The dream of Nomad Connect is realized only in the continuing story. We have participated in the first fruits of this endeavor but pray that there will be multiplying fruits. We hope that Nomad Connect will continue to challenge people to consider the nomads, to align perspectives with God's heart, and to go the extra mile to connect with them. We pray that there will be future Nomad Connect programs that will continue to equip, envision, and empower followers of the Good Shepherd to shepherd nomads. For information about future Nomad Connect programs contact: info@npnet.net or nomadconnect@frontierventures.org. 



SEARCHING FOR NEW PASTURES

By JOY MARLOWE

Joy Marlowe (pseudonym) has a heart for the least-reached people of the world. She has had the privilege of serving cross-culturally in a variety of locations and is passionate about learning more about modern nomads.

From camel-herding nomads of the Sahara to educated European immigrants, the Saharawi people are using their traditional skills and adapting them to fit their new modern environment. Prior to Spanish colonization, the Saharawi lived in nomadic tribal groupings, unified by a common culture and language. The Hassaniya dialect of Arabic they speak is shared across the western desert regions of the Sahara and includes the controversially labeled Western Sahara, Mauritania, the refugee settlements in western Algeria, and an increasing number of diaspora communities across Spain. Traditionally, the Saharawi were known for traversing the Sahara Desert in search of pastures and oases for their camels and other livestock while following the scarce rains.

After a series of complex geopolitical wars beginning in the 1970s, the Saharawi were separated by political boundaries, unable to freely move as the nomads they once were, segmented by the fallout of colonization and war. This is the situation in which they now find themselves, needing to adapt the skills learned from the nomadic life and apply them to their new situation. The Saharawi are a fragmented society clinging to their cultural identity and yet being propelled into modernization. This article will focus on three important Saharawi traditional practices and offer a further question of how these practices might be implemented to aid church-planting among this people group.

TRUSTED NETWORKS

An adolescent Saharawi boy in the refugee camps will often be taken out to *bediya*, remote regions to learn how to assist older male family members and to acquire the skills needed to be *beydhani*, a term given to articulate someone well-adherent to traditional Saharawi culture. Tasks include learning how to tie knots, slaughter camels, erect tents, navigate by the stars, and, most importantly, deepen relationships with the trusted network of people who can guide further nomadic exploration.

Now, the concept of a trusted network is being used in the Saharawi immigration to Spain. As young Saharawi migrate to Spain, they are following the same routes as those who have gone before them, traveling to places in Spain such as the southern Andalusia region, coastal port cities like Alicante, the Canary Islands, and the Basque region in the north. When these young Saharawi first arrive in Spain, they often stay with the friends and family members of the older generation, many of whom are there for medical reasons. These older and more established immigrants are showing the younger ones how to obtain government assistance, how to enroll in Spanish classes, and how to work low-paying jobs until paperwork can be completed. Take Ali for example, born into a camel-herding family in the desert, he now owns a van and runs a transport service, moving goods from the camps to Spain for families to send things back and forth.

The establishment of trusted networks must become a factor for consideration for the Gospel to spread. Is it possible that there would be people mature in faith showing and guiding the way for others to do the same?

IMPARTING WISDOM

Only recently have the Saharawi begun to say *googliha*, meaning “Google it,” using more modern means to find needed information. In the past, this nomadic community relied on the oral tradition of storytelling and repetition of *emtheela*, proverbs to pass on wisdom. Sitting around the tent drinking tea and sharing the news, the older Saharawi commend, correct, or challenge, using a series of proverbs often involving the example of a camel to illustrate a meaning. As the younger generation moves into Spain, they are taking these proverbs with them. The Saharawi-Spanish household often comes alive with conversation when debating the merit of a proverb, each person engaging with the facts and their feelings about them, choosing for themselves to accept them as fact or myth. Is this oral tradition and skill in engaging with truths and myths something that can be used to share the Good News, and can Gospel truths be introduced to these people in the form of *emtheela*?

RESOURCEFULNESS FOR COMMUNITY

Generations ago, the Saharawi nomads knew how to utilize almost every part of the camel after it was slaughtered. The meat was for sustenance, the leather was for a *chekwa*, a milk storage jug, and even the bones were for traditional games like *seeg*. Each part was useful and each part was needed by the community. This resourcefulness has passed down through generations and the trait of being resourceful is second nature even to the modernized Saharawi in Spain. Each part of a

Saharawi individual’s life in Spain can be used by the community and is meant to help. Homes are meant to house other Saharawi giving them addresses to apply for paperwork. Connections and friendships with people are meant to get other Saharawi jobs. Finances are meant to be sent back to families in the desert to provide for their needs. Even a *matla*, floor cushion, circulates around Saharawi families as they move from city to city in Spain. Each piece of immigrant life is a tool, a resource that is meant to be shared with the greater community for all to find a better life. So how can this resourcefulness be used in the community of Saharawi believers? Could it be that the Saharawi Church would be a close example of being together and having everything in common such as the early Church modeled?

POWERFUL SKILLS FOR FUTURE CHURCH-PLANTING

As every person and people are made in the image of God, the Saharawi have a unique skill set developed by their nomadic roots that now is being adapted by the immigrant population in Europe. Modernized Saharawi have learned that trusted networks that once led them through the desert at night now lead them through the complicated immigration paperwork process. They have found that imparting wisdom through oral stories is now able to be fact-checked and debated and yet still valued. They have used their innate resourcefulness that once benefited the nomadic community in using every part of a camel to survive, to using every experience of life in Spain to assist others. What a powerful force if these people came to know the Gospel! Not only would the resources, talents, and skills of the Saharawi people benefit new believers in their community, but these same resources, talents, and skills also could be utilized to penetrate other unreached areas of the world. ❏





Herders and Their Amazing Economic Impact

By DANIEL SAMBO & KATHARINE NORTON

Daniel Sambo is a Bible translator and has extensive experience with both farming and herding.

Katharine Norton is a Scripture Engagement Specialist with SIL Nigeria, specializing in Faith and Farming, a program which helps farmers and herders engage with Scripture in their language.

Recently here in Nigeria, a Christian Fulani herder was sitting with a Christian farmer and they were enjoying fellowship together. Their conversation turned to the issue of problems between farmers and herders and the fact that the herders had been sent away from the farmers' area due to increased fear of attack. The herder asked the farmer what would they now do for meat at Christmas time? "I never thought about that," replied the farmer. "But it's true! We usually eat a lot of meat at our festivals, but if the herders and their cows are not around, where will we get it from?"

This disconnect is a common phenomenon. Herders are often spoken of disparagingly and sent away from communities, but the enormous contribution that they and their cows make to the economy and to so many aspects of day-to-day life is not often recognized. This article is an attempt to highlight this important economic contribution that herders make to life here in Nigeria. We pray that this example would be an encouragement to pastoral nomads globally and help them to value their important and significant work. We also pray that this article would inspire settled people worldwide to value, appreciate, and respect the work that herders do.

Food for Every Day and for Special Occasions

Herders and their cows produce so many things that people here in Nigeria love to consume, particularly **meat** and **yogurt** (*nono*). In addition, most vegetable stalls have a bowl of **roasted cow skin** (*pomo*) for sale, and many people also enjoy **butter** (*man shanu*) and **cheese** (*awara*). Due to issues of preservation, milk is not often sold on the streets in the same way as yogurt (*nono*) but commercial companies go to the herders' camps to collect **milk** in bulk to sell in supermarkets as milk and sweetened yogurt. As evening falls, the aroma of **skewered beef** (*suya*) cooking over the fire fills the air. But this is not the only popular meat snack. There is also **jerky** (*kilishi*), **BBQ steak** (*balangu*), **dried meat snacks** (*dambun nama*), and **hot soup with organ meat** (*pepper soup*). These popular food products are sold on a daily basis in markets, supermarkets, and restaurants all over Nigeria.

When there is a festival or a special occasion, the herders' cows are even more in demand. This includes New Year, Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter, Muslim *Sallah* festivals, as well as weddings, parties, and visits of dignitaries such as governors or chiefs, etc. All these occasions see numerous cows slaughtered and much beef consumed as people celebrate and feast together.

Herders Supporting the Agricultural and Food Systems

As well as providing a lot of food that is consumed daily, herders and their cows provide vital products which sustain other aspects of the food industry. The traditional method of fertilizing farmland involves cows grazing crop residue after harvest with the result that their **manure** and **urine** enriches the soil, enabling the next year's crops to grow well, crops such as grains, tubers, or vegetables, etc. **Bones** from cows are burned and ground to make feed for chickens and dogs to provide them with much-needed calcium for growth and, in the case of laying chickens, to produce eggs. Cow **blood** is used to make many varieties of salt licks for goats and sheep.

This means that most food products that we consume are available to us directly or indirectly because of the valuable work of herders, without whom the food supply chain would collapse.

Cultural Products

Every tribe in Nigeria has their important traditions and when we think about it, it is surprising how many use products from herders and their cows. The most commonly used is the cow's **tail** which is often used as a status symbol for chiefs or as a fly swat held in the hand when traditional clothing is worn.

The **leather (skin)** from cows is used to make leather for decorative cushions and wall hangings, as well as handbags, belts, shoes, hats, machete sheaths, drums, etc. Cow **horns** are commonly used for decoration or musical instruments, e.g., flutes. One of the most common musical instruments to be heard in churches on Sundays is the xylophone. The sound is amplified underneath by many cow horns. Sadly, the loud services of many churches can often be heard criticizing herders rather than reaching out to them in love—a sharp contrast with the songs of worship accompanied by the xylophone that the herders have provided cow horns for.

Horticulture

Another overlooked contribution that herders make to our society relates to horticulture. People in Nigeria

love to go to beautiful places with trees and flowers to take photographs for special events such as birthdays, weddings, etc. Many horticulturalists who grow decorative plants buy large amounts of cow manure from herders to fertilize the flowers, bushes, and trees that we appreciate so much. Plus, horticulturalists use manure to grow plants to sell so are able to make money in part due to the manure from the herders' cows.

Providing Employment

Herders provide a lot of employment opportunities for people. Young men from many tribes walk with the cows to take care of them, earning their salary of a cow every year. Then there are employment opportunities for the many people who sell the meat products, such as butchers, roasted cow skin (*pomo*) sellers, and those who cook skewered beef (*suya*) and other meat products. On the commercial side, employment is created for those who collect milk for commercial re-sale or bones for commercial animal feeds. Local crafts people who make leather products, cow-tail decorations, and musical instruments rely on herders to provide the products needed for their livelihood. Then there are the truck drivers who earn their living transporting cows, providing employment for those who make, sell, and repair trucks.

Taxes

The government collects many taxes from people involved in industries related to herding. For example, every butcher that sells meat or every vegetable seller who also sells roasted cow skin (*pomo*) has to pay N50 (\$0.06) per day in government tax for their stall, adding up to millions of Naira/thousands of dollars each year. On top of that, the government collects N1,500 (\$1.95) in tax for every cow that is slaughtered at an abattoir/slaughterhouse.

Herders Adding to the Economy by Buying from Others

As well as these many contributions to the economy through animal products, herders also use their money to add to the economy as there are many items that they need to purchase for their work. These items include rope to tether the cows and salt licks for nutrition.

Then they need to buy clothes to cope with the weather, such as rain boots, coats, and warm clothes. Herders also buy many medicines for their cows when they are sick, as well as preventative vaccinations.

Herders also contribute to the economy by buying food products such as grains, beans, and rice that they do not grow themselves.

Challenges for Herders


Banditry is a huge problem for herders as people come at night and steal cows to sell. This is an illegal but lucrative business, since cows are in very high demand for all these valuable products as described above. The sharp rise in conflict between farmers and herders has caused numerous problems for herders, too. Most herders are peace-loving citizens who just want to get on with their work and provide for their families. But there is a tendency to group all herders together along with those few who are causing violence. This means that it is very difficult for innocent herders to move around peacefully in society. They are being forced away from areas where traditionally they have lived in symbiotic relationships with local settled people. With the increase in chemical herbicides used for clearing larger and larger farms each year, there are fewer places for herders to go to graze their animals. Therefore, cows suffer from malnourishment, hunger, and sickness, which affects the production of these products that are so sought after in society.

The Way Forward

Here are some suggestions for practical steps that can be taken to acknowledge and respect the important contribution that herders make in our society and economy.

- Remember where our food comes from!
 - Prayers before a meal can thank God for the farmers who work hard to provide the vegetables and grains that we eat and for the herders who bring their animals to fertilize the soil so the crops can grow well.
 - When we eat meat, yogurt, milk, and cheese we can thank God for the herders who worked hard to provide these foods for us.
 - When we speak to farmers and herders, thank them in person for their valuable work.
- When we worship God in church using xylophones with cow horns, we can pray for herders who provided them and thank God for their life and ask Him to bless them.
- When we meet herders on the road with their cows, we can drive slowly so as not to disturb the animals and we can greet the herders in a friendly way.
- When we have our cultural festivals with so many products from the herders, such as cow's tail, skin (leather) items, and drums, we can welcome herders and invite them to share the celebration with us since they have made so many of our cultural items possible.
- If we hear people speaking negatively about herders, we can speak words of peace. *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger* (Prov. 15:1).
- Christian farmers and Christian herders can work together proactively to bring peace among their people. *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God* (Matt. 5:9).

Conclusion

As we have seen, herders provide huge amounts of resources for the agriculture and food industries as well as important artifacts for cultural celebrations and church worship. Also, no great festival of any kind is complete without lots of meat which comes from herders. Yet the majority of the settled population do not seem to make this connection between these products that they value so much and the work that herders do. If people could understand the contribution of herders to the economic growth of every country where they live, perhaps herders would be respected and valued, and maybe even peace would return. 



Innovation among the Unreached

A Journey with Nomads

By **PAUL DZUBINSKI**

Paul Dzubinski is the Innovation Catalyst of Frontier Ventures and the Director of the Winter Launch Lab. He started ministries and churches in Europe and is fascinated with all kinds of innovation.

At Frontier Ventures, our heart is for the unreached, and we find profound joy in supporting those who've devoted their lives to serving nomadic communities. Our association with the Nomadic Peoples Network (NomadicPeoples.net) stands as a testament to this commitment. It's here, among the sands, tents, and transient routes that some of the most groundbreaking innovations in missions emerge. These innovations owe their birth to nomadic workers who, steeped in their specialized fields, showcase an unyielding dedication and passion to the nomadic cultures they serve.


For us, innovation isn't just a buzzword. In the nomadic realm, it signifies a relentless pursuit of effective methods to further Gospel-centric missions. Imagine taking vast reservoirs of knowledge, blending them with passion, commitment, and then channeling that energy to craft transformative solutions. These solutions are designed not only to bridge cultural and geographical divides but also to span spiritual chasms. Working hand in hand with those who walk among the nomads, our vision of innovation revolves around a wholistic Gospel ministry, reaching the edges that often have not seen much of the Gospel's light.

This edition of *Mission Frontiers* shines a light on a poignant truth: Nomadic souls are among those who,

more often than not, remain untouched by the message of Jesus. So, we at Frontier Ventures don the mantle of explorers, delving into the whys and seeking to mend this spiritual disconnect, nurturing understanding in its wake.

Our commitment has given birth to several transformative programs. Take, for instance, the Nomad Connect initiative. It is a training program that allows college students and young professionals to experience life with nomads, get equipped by seasoned mentors, and be inspired for lifelong work among or for nomadic communities. Every year, dozens of new projects are launched to address the practical and spiritual needs of nomadic communities.

But what truly sets our approach apart? It's a blend of a profound mission-driven commitment, spiritual discernment, and innovation principles. We work with people who yearn to learn, adapt, and above all, collaborate. In our journey, we join hands with visionary minds, those who base their actions on robust research, all tied to a singular, divine goal: to spread the holistic transformation of the Gospel.

In this vast world, while many routes are trodden, our mission is to ensure that none are forgotten. 



M4M: Local Media, Bibles, and Worship for the Next Billion Believers

24:14 Goal: Movement Engagements in Every Unreached People and Place by 2025 (24 Months)

By **ROGER CHARLES**

Roger Charles is a member of the Focus on Fruit team with Trevor Larsen. He also is an active part of the Media4Movements coalition and a researcher for the 24:14 network. He has lived in Asia for 25 of the last 40 years, planted churches and taught seminary, and now spends much of his time traveling alongside movement leaders, writing down their stories and sharing them with others. www.FocusOnFruit.org; www.2414Now.net

Almost 2,000 years have passed since Jesus spoke the Great Commission. Thirty years ago, prayers for specific unreached peoples of the world began to rise up before the Father. Twenty years ago, videos and media campaigns about and for those unreached peoples began to circulate. Ten years ago, movements to Christ began to be reported among Hindu and Muslim peoples in Asia and Africa. Today, more than 115 million people have come to Christ in movements! That means a lot of new disciples on planet earth, and a lot more coming soon.

Small groups are often growing into churches using a national or regional language, and the Gospel is being gossiped from house to house in thousands of mother tongues.

More than 1% of the eight billion people alive on earth today have come to Christ since the year 2000. And many movements are just getting started, with exponential growth in many regions. But most of these new believers do not have Bibles or discipleship materials in their mother tongue. They do not have leadership training or video teaching resources. Small groups are often growing into churches using a national or regional language, and the Gospel is being gossiped from house to house in thousands of mother tongues. House church networks are growing so fast that their leaders can barely keep up with all the new believers.

In 2015, Google initiated a project called “The Next Billion Internet Users.” Many of the people they identified are in the same places as the least-reached peoples of the world; in fact, the regions where movements are growing rapidly. David Garrison, author of *A Wind in the House of Islam*, has challenged Christian leaders to stop asking “What can we do?” and start asking, “What’s It Gonna Take?” Specifically for this article, “*What’s it going to take to disciple one billion new believers?*” Given present growth rates of movements in these most-populous parts of the world, we want to explore numerous possible answers to that question—especially answers to the needs identified by movement leaders themselves.

In early 2020, just days before COVID-19 shut down air travel worldwide, my team leader and I attended a gathering in Thailand of roughly 100 top movement leaders from around the world. There we met with three senior media leaders and presented them this challenge: “Jesus is winning tens of thousands of new believers across the nations. When are you, as media professionals, going to start serving all these new believers in these movements?” This electrified them, and the challenge pierced their hearts! For months, they had been discussing the seeming disconnect between movement leaders and media ministries. God had sovereignly placed the three of them (Calvin, Carol, and Grace) at this meeting to receive this new directive from the Lord through us.

After several months of deep discussions, fasting, and prayer during the COVID lockdowns, the idea for a new coalition called Media4Movements (M4M) began to take shape. Calvin, Carol, and Grace invited me to join the core leadership team of M4M. Our shared goal was to create a bridge, uniting the passion of movement leaders with the knowledge and skills of media, ethnoarts, Bible translation, technology, and orality experts.

Our M4M team has expanded, and we've witnessed valuable collaboration between movement leaders and media-ministry practitioners. Together, we are committed to provide support and come alongside movement leaders and their teams worldwide. We are not a new organization or a new program. We're a bridge between the more established parts of the global Church and the new, highly mobile, multilingual house-church movements. We aim to bridge the gap from an older part of the global Church to its new emerging neighbors.

For several months, a core team listened to various needs of movements that could be supported by new Bibles, media, ethnoarts, or technology. An African leader told a story of a thousand Muslims standing in line to be baptized. A South Asian leader showed us rolls of butcher paper called "fruit charts," mapping churches giving birth to churches, giving birth to more churches, like a giant mind map. Several Southeast Asia leaders said their groups had given birth to groups in eight, 10, even 15 generations, and had spread over a dozen language groups.

We're a bridge between the more established parts of the global Church and the new, highly mobile, multilingual house-church movements.

The needs varied greatly. They needed Scriptures. They needed training materials. Some leaders had too many teams in too many regions to adequately supervise them with direct onsite visits. They needed audio and video messages that could be passed down through provincial, county, and local leadership teams to new believers out on the growing edge of their movements.

As media leaders listened to the exciting progress happening in movements, we realized that we had very different experiences of how believer communities and

daily life worked in formal churches and house-church networks. We saw that we needed to learn much more about each other's lifestyles, language, and ministry culture in order to better understand one another.

Movement leaders didn't necessarily know what questions to ask media experts. Urban videographers, rural ethnoarts specialists, and Bible translation intellectuals also came with different cultures and vocabularies. And the kind of rapid, on-the-fly expansion happening in movements meant any given ministry group we wanted to serve might be far away from the movement catalyst who had started the network.

God was releasing movements via godly people in many places, using methods and tools that were simple, reproducible, affordable, and multilingual. As we listened to movement leaders, a few key goals emerged.



The M4M Coalition exists to:

- 1) **Serve** movement leaders with media strategies and resources that meet their specific field-based needs;
- 2) **Equip** an army of local media storytellers who create and distribute their own content to reach their people and nearby Unreached People Groups (UPGs);
- 3) **Build** a network of media-strategy coaches and mobile-media trainers who share and implement best practices to equip local media producers;
- 4) **Produce** new Gospel content that sparks and accelerates movements among UPGs.

That last part, of course, is not new at all. Media ministry is not new, and wonderful digital artists and tech-savvy

people have used media within the existing Church for generations. For 50 years, global broadcast ministries have used radio and television for evangelism. In recent decades, evangelistic films and social media platforms have been used for outreach into many closed nations. And as God began to release movements in some regions, many of those ministries began intentionally seeking to follow up media contacts.

In early years, that follow-up looked like correspondence courses, but now interaction happens at social media speeds. Some visionaries have launched evangelistic media campaigns and sift through the thousands of contacts in order to funnel truly interested people out to teams on the ground for follow up. One version of this media strategy is called Media to Movements (MTM). These teams broadcast to millions to find the needle in the haystack who might want to believe in Jesus. Their audience is the vast world of not-yet believers, and they are looking for those few who are open to the Gospel.

The M4M coalition serves a very different audience: the tens of thousands of new believers. Movement leaders have “haystacks-high piles of needles”: mountains of new believers with very little access to Bibles, discipleship materials, or leadership training. The M4M audience is already following Jesus but often in messy house-church networks with minimal structure but lots of passion.

So while MTM is primarily focused on the lost and evangelism, M4M is focused on the newly-found and discipleship. Both need Bibles and culturally sensitive materials. God is answering prayers and opening large numbers of people to faith, now the global Church needs to help these believers grow and mature.



In God's providence, the expanding, multigenerational movements we see today are happening during our digital era. Not only audio but also video recordings of Bible teaching, leadership training, and newly-created worship songs can be shared from home to home using phones and tablets. The huge new audiences of hundreds of thousands, even millions of new believers, can benefit from media created by movements and for movements. Local materials created in local languages by local people can address local problems most deeply.

Of course, once we focused on the problems that movement leaders face, we realized that many were already tackling these issues in simple, reproducible ways. Most movement leaders were already using messaging apps to track and train leaders across their networks. They used regional-language Bibles and wrote out key verses by hand, in local languages they knew.



We started to list some of the low-hanging fruit that could quickly be put into the hands of existing movement leaders: short segments of the *Jesus Film*, existing animation, and Bible portions. During our first year, we were able to provide short instructional media on how to use the phones they already had, particularly during the COVID-19 lockdowns. We identified examples of existing online media that might fit their context. A few teams shared tools for creating Bible apps from existing audio or text files. Some field teams were encouraged to share training or testimonies on their phones. A group of 20 very fruitful catalysts were coached for two months in principles of storytelling and soon realized that a shorter, clearer story saved them time in training and improved their impact. But the more we interacted, the more needs surfaced.

As travel restrictions eased, some teams ventured out into the field to serve specific movement leaders with specific skills they had requested. A team in Senegal did a training in smartphone film-making with several movement leaders, and within a week they were not only producing short videos but also training local networks in the same skills. A team in India brought their animations to a technology conference, and members of the M4M coalition learned how they could implement some new coaching training, using similar animation. A Bible translation team, using AI to shorten translation times, met with movement leaders to discuss possible translation projects for newly-won believers in Muslim communities. And an online forum shared parts of the following story with media experts from every continent.

In 2019, Wahid, a Muslim-background believer leading an expanding movement in Southeast Asia, was asked to follow up some media contacts in his region. Because he had small groups in almost every county of the province, his team could not only lead people to Christ using the local language, they could often connect them directly to a Bible study group for discipleship.



In 2022, Wahid sent out 10 teams of two to do media follow-up in several distant provinces. Not only did this penetrate several UPGs, it created a need for more discipleship materials. That same year, Wahid's son Riki and a friend took an online course offered by an M4M

coalition partner, and learned a lot about storytelling, video production, and distribution.

Their local media coach, mostly working with Christian-background believers and MTM, started helping M4M projects happen within the existing movement. Testimonies were recorded on audio. Short videos of Bible teaching and training were edited into small segments and distributed via phones and media players. Not unexpectedly, media created by people *inside* movements is often more effective than media brought into a region by outsiders. The outward-looking broadcasting and contact filtering of MTM, and the inward-focused discipleship of M4M within movements are working together seamlessly.

This fall, members of the M4M coalition are training several young men and women from Wahid's team, and eight other teams, in smartphone film-making. Expert trainers from CREATE International's media teams, who have done similar trainings in Africa, will be doing on-the-ground training in three different provinces. Riki and his partner will take the training to become trainers. Together, they will also help record new worship songs and key testimonies by movement leaders.

What will it take to disciple one billion new believers? It will take all the gifts of the Body of Christ. God is using apostolic leaders—specially-gifted movement catalysts—to break into whole new areas and ethnic groups. Among their first hundreds of believers God is raising up evangelists, pastors, and teachers. All of these gifted people plant simple house churches, centered on God's Word—using tools that are simple, reproducible, affordable, and multi-lingual. Anything not simple, or too expensive, will not reproduce beyond the limits of the available resources. So the key to helping movement leaders serve up very-localized spiritual food at low cost is to model spiritual living and train skills into the upper levels of movements that can trickle downward across the networks. This is the way of Jesus movements. Two thousand years after the first such movements started, they are rapidly spreading again.



You can hear more M4M stories at www.GlobalMedia4Movements.com, and follow the growth of movements through the 24:14 Coalition at www.2414now.net. 📺





Mobilizing Every Believer to Make Disciples

A Call for a New Paradigm

By CYNTHIA ANDERSON

I met her last week as I was speaking at a conference. “How are you doing at making disciples?” I asked. Her response surprised and delighted my heart. “Well,” she said, “I just led my boss to the Lord, as well as her eleven-year-old daughter. Now I am discipling them.” Why did it surprise me? Because she was an ordinary church member, not someone on staff at the church that was hosting me. She was making disciples in an active way. This should be the norm, not the exception. And yet, so often it is!

Churches are filled with good Christians who love Jesus but never share Him with others. They are neither equipped nor sent out to share the Good News of Christ with those around them. This must change.

There is an urgent need for pastors and leaders across the globe to inspire, train, and send out every disciple to make more disciples. Every Christian can (and must) learn to be a disciple-maker. How will this shift take place? Only as we are willing to radically adjust both our mindsets and behaviors.

Does Behavior Match Belief?

Is it possible to say we love Jesus and believe He is the answer to the world's needs yet not actively share His message with others? Hmm. I don't think so.

Recently, I came across a convicting statement made by an atheist. Penn Jillette, a comedian, was doing a show

in Las Vegas. After the show, he was handed a Bible by someone in the crowd. Was his response scorn or anger? No. He said he respected him for it.

Jillette wanted to know, “*How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that? If I believed beyond a shadow of a doubt that a truck was coming at you and you didn't believe it, and that truck was bearing down on you, there's a certain point where I tackle you. And this is more important than that.*”¹

Could it be that failure to share our faith with genuine passion convinces people that the Gospel has no real value? That we don't authentically believe it?

Evangelism in the USA Is in Steep Decline

In recent years, evangelism has been in steep decline in the United States. It is no longer common nor popular, to challenge or train church-goers to share their faith with others. This has resulted in a growing lack of understanding in America about the basics of

¹ www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/atheism-penn-jillette-urges-evangelism/

the Gospel. According to Lifeway's research, only 3 in 10 unchurched Americans say a Christian has ever shared with them one-on-one how a person becomes a Christian.²

Could it be that failure to share our faith with genuine passion convinces people that the Gospel has no real value?

My life's work has been focused on reaching unreached people. Though our children are grown and we have grandchildren here in the United States, we have chosen to continue to work abroad. Our commitment is to live among the least reached people of the world who have little or no access to the Gospel message. Having said this, I have never been so concerned for my passport nation, America, as I am today. Unless the trajectory changes, we may one day be a nation of unreached people as well. It is time for Christians *everywhere* to become disciple-makers, in America, and around the world. It's not an option. We are at a critical stage where without a change of mindset about who can and must make disciples, we are headed toward serious trouble.

Why in a mission magazine focused on Frontier Peoples would I choose to write about this? What happens in America affects other nations. We have been a major exporter of missions and evangelism strategy. Our version of the church gets adopted by other countries through media, music, and other means.

God has given the global Church insight and wisdom about how to make and multiply disciples. Those who are seeing movements abroad now need to be willing to share what we are learning, not only in the least reached areas of the world but everywhere He has given us influence.

Disciples must learn to make disciples and primary models of the church must change globally. The time is now, before it is too late.

Change Isn't Easy

I love routines. Most of us dislike change. We are comfortable with things the way they are. My husband is the main driver in our family. Sometimes, he likes to take new routes to common destinations. It drives

me crazy! "Why are you going *this way*?" I ask, feeling unsettled and confused. I like the *normal way*. It feels right to me. He likes to try new pathways to get to the same destination.

As humans, we are conditioned to want regularity. This is not all bad. Habits can help us in important ways. They also can get us stuck in unfruitful behaviors. Our loyalty can be attached to past methods and systems that previously served us well but no longer do so.

I recently released a book called *The Multiplier's Mindset: Thinking Differently About Discipleship*. It's been well received by most people. For this I am grateful. There are some, however, who are not as sure about it. There can be a loyalty to old paradigms and ways of thinking when it comes to reaching the lost and planting churches.

We must continually evaluate our tools, methods, and strategies in light of fruitfulness. What worked yesterday may not be God's wineskin for today. His will remains the same. *He does not desire than any would perish, but that all would come to repentance* (2 Pet. 3:9). This will never change until His glorious return! New *times*, however, demand new *means* of reaching new people.

Pain and Passion

There are two primary causes of change: pain and passion. Meet someone who has lost 30 pounds in the past few months and ask them about it. They'll often share of a doctor's diagnosis or a crisis that caused them to be willing to change. Pain is never pleasant, but it is one way God motivates us to shift gears. The other cause of change is passion. We can be inspired to change as godly zeal grips our hearts.

What worked yesterday may not be God's wineskin for today.

Let's ask God to use our pain and increase our passion for those who have yet to hear His message of love. The urgency of lostness must beat strongly in our hearts, as it did our Lord's. He wept over Jerusalem's lostness. When was the last time the condition of those apart from Christ drove us to tears? May God break our hearts afresh with what breaks His.

² research.lifeway.com/2021/09/09/christians-dont-share-faith-with-unchurched-friends/

Mobilizing Every Believer to Become a Disciple-Maker

The clergy-laity divide causes many to think that the role of the pastor or Christian leader is to do the work of ministry. Some believe their job as a church member is to attend faithfully, tithe, pray, and support their pastor as he works to reach people in the community. This model may once have had a place, but it is not the future of the church. We must embrace new ways of thinking about the role of every believer as a minister of God. Intellectual assent to this is common, but the practical implementation is severely lacking.

A mindset of ALL is needed. All are appointed to accomplish all activities. (See chapter 11 of my new book—*The Multiplier's Mindset*). Every Jesus follower is a royal priest. We have been commissioned by the Lord to go and make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey His commands.

Recently, I've spoken with pastors about this topic. Some will say, "I try to encourage church members to invite more people to church, but only a handful do it." As I listen politely and nod my head, in my heart I experience deep frustration. Why is the bar so very low, that the most we ask of the people God has called us to lead and shepherd is that they would be willing to invite people to church? Do they know who they are? Chosen by God? Royal priests? Ambassadors of the kingdom? We need to call people to a higher place of anointing and faith—to believe that they can be salt and light in their communities; to know that they can be used by Him to communicate His transformational message and set their neighborhoods ablaze with a Holy Spirit fire! They must be released into their gifts and calling as those who bear His name.

Why are we so timid to challenge and call disciples to be disciples who radiantly display the glory of their Master?

Titles Get in the Way

I'm guessing that many who read this magazine are trained ministry professionals. My education at both North Central University and Fuller Seminary was excellent. Maybe it's because we work hard for our titles and pay money for the education involved, that we so like to use them. We enjoy being called Pastor this or

Doctor that. It sets us apart and shows we are special. People respect us because of our titles and sometimes are more open to receiving from us. But could those same titles also hinder, elevate us above those who do not have them, or make us somehow "above" ordinary believers?



In the "Getting Started in Disciple Making Movements" course (www.dmmsfrontiermissions.com/online-training/) and the community that goes with it, we strongly discourage trainees from using their titles when they interact with one another. We intentionally de-emphasize titles in order to demonstrate that we are all equally called, chosen, anointed, and empowered as royal priests of God. This is difficult for some whose cultural norms of respect for ministers is strong. For others, they feel disrespected when we call them only by their first name rather than Apostle _____ or Pastor _____. It's healthy to return to a more biblical model of how we address one another. Words have power and communicate a worldview. What if we moved back to calling one another brother and sister or disciple-makers rather than by titles?

As I wrap up this article, let's return to the point. Disciples must learn to make disciples and primary models of the church must change globally. Everything we do must be aiming toward the multiplication of His kingdom here on earth. Our own lives need to reflect this as we personally engage in disciple-making and reaching the lost around us. Let's share stories with those we disciple of our own efforts to reach lost people and testify of both our successes and our failures on the journey to increase engagement with the lost. Too many leaders teach others to do things they are not actively doing themselves.

Instead, let's Model, Assist, Watch and Launch (MAWL). Don't be afraid to vulnerably share that it's hard for you to break out of the "churchy" mode and engage with unbelievers; or that you are more comfortable preaching a sermon than praying for a sick person in the grocery store. Let's stretch ourselves and grow. Those we lead will follow us as we follow Jesus. They will go out to become fishers of men. ▣

When Bible Training Falls Flat

By GREG H. PARSONS

October 20, 2023, on a flight from CNX to BKK



I'm returning from two conferences, both focused on the global spread of the Gospel and mentoring believers deeper in their faith. One had a specific track on biblical or theological training. The issue came up at the other gathering as well. Each meeting had a large group of participants attending from Africa and Asia, who recognize this has been a problem for years.

It seems like we could have “solved” the training issue many years ago. Compared to doing Bible translation or even church-planting, it seems much more doable. So many materials have been produced and translated—though less has been locally contextualized. And a *lot* of people focus on training! I've seen *many* cross-cultural global workers get involved in training of some kind later in their ministry, not to mention many pastors.

It causes me to ask: Why are there still problems with believers, including leaders and pastors, not knowing the Bible? Perhaps you have some thoughts? I'll mention how to comment below.

Here are my thoughts:

- **Materials** are usually produced *outside* the culture where the training is happening. While mobilizing seminary students in the West, I have pleaded with them *not* to merely teach from their seminary class notes. If a global, cross-cultural mission worker does not learn language and culture, I have little hope they will communicate well. Teaching on any subject, be it the Bible, or leadership, or... needs to be shaped for the context. But you won't know how to do that if you don't understand the language and culture.

- **Methods** are ineffective. This is true in *most* school classrooms in the U.S., not to mention all who copy us. We all went to school and learned in a classroom with a bunch of others, but that doesn't mean that is a good way to do it. It is handy and efficient to teach a bunch of

people all at once, but it assumes that the students are at the same level. And, the *actual design* of a curriculum is *not* something most teachers know how to do well.

These cultural sensitivities, along with global generational issues, make it even more challenging. People everywhere are reading less and less. Even then, once ideas are taught, there is little opportunity to apply them to real life. We all know if we don't apply something, we don't really learn it well.

Just yesterday, I spoke with a mission worker who is back from international service for seminary training. He is sharp, gifted at learning languages and really frustrated at the approach to how things are taught at the well-known seminary he is attending. He doesn't disagree with the theological approach but said he would redesign the whole program. Now, he reflected, it ends up training the students to teach in a seminary. That is what they see. They don't see a pastor or church planter.

One serious study looked at the effectiveness of Bible schools in East Africa. U.S. workers who had served in well-known theological colleges there wondered what the impact of their work was. They had hints that things were not what we would all hope. While the study is a bit old (1994), I haven't seen anything that shows things have changed that much.

Below is a summary. You can read the details of this study and post your comments on the Ralph D. Winter Research Center website at: rdwrc.wciu.edu (look under Current Missiology for the title of this article).

Summary of Study

The East Africa study surveyed 643 students at 11 Bible colleges (four were not four-year Bible colleges) about what was happening in their home churches. Most were residential programs, but they were producing pastors whose sermons were repetitive and not reflecting ongoing Bible study. Many served more than one church and thus taught in each church less than weekly. Some had additional Bible studies, some did not, *except at one school*.

At that school, they ran modular two-week classes. When they returned to their local, on-going ministry, their teachers would travel out to them and coach them in their ministry. These pastors were leading and creative. They were learning new things about the Word and thus preaching fresh sermons. They were encouraging people in ministry and helping start new ways for their churches to reach out.

Recently, I've found additional hope in the Tools to Equip and Empower (TEE) movement. I was asked to review the book *TEE in Asia: Empowering Churches*,

Equipping Disciples (Langham Publishing, 2021.) Since I studied the beginning of the TEE movement as part of my thesis on Ralph D. Winter's life, I was very encouraged by what is happening now with TEE. At the October conferences, I met some of those who are involved and I am encouraged with what I see in this extensive network.

I hope and pray we will be willing to examine all of our models for preparation and training—no matter the location or cultural context. We can and must do better. It is encouraging that some are looking at various ways to train people who are engaged in ministry. It takes hard work. Teaching involves mentoring, mutual learning, and accountability, all in the context of ongoing relationship.



You can find additional materials just posted on this subject at the newly launched Ralph D. Winter Research Center website, at: rdwrc.wciu.edu. ☒

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JANUARY

■ 1 Hindu Turi of Bangladesh

The Turi are a Hindu people group who live in Bangladesh and northeast India. Their primary language is Bengali. They lead challenging lives; they are rejected by other Hindu communities. They may be hesitant to trust any outsider.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. —Genesis 1:1

- Pray that this people group will be in awe of the Lord for His creation and realize that He is the only one worthy of worship and devotion.
- Pray that believers among them would be elevated in their communities and that the word would be spread to those who need to hear it.
- Pray the church would grow in a healthy way, led by the power and goodness of the Holy Spirit.
- Pray that literacy rates would be improved so they can provide for their families.

■ 2 Uregu Berber of Morocco

The Uregu Berbers are one of the smaller Berber tribes who live in Morocco. As with other descendants of Sub-Saharan Africa, the Uregu Berbers are sometimes marginalized within Moroccan culture. Close knit Berber clans have a strong sense of identity and loyalty. Most Berbers are Sunni Muslim, but many also believe in the power of spirits called jinn.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. —Genesis 1:27

- Pray that this people group will realize that they were meant to be in God's image, and they need to change their ways to get back to Him.
- Ask the Lord of the harvest to send laborers to the Uregu Berbers.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus through dreams and visions.
- Pray that tribal leaders and influential persons would receive Jesus and be able to impact the larger community with the gospel.

■ 3 West Coast Bajau of Malaysia

The West Coast Bajau of Sabah, Malaysia have traditionally been known as sea nomads, dwelling in boats and engaging in maritime trading. While some Bajau continue to derive their livelihood primarily from the sea, others have adopted an agrarian way of life. The Bajau are staunchly faithful to Islam. They believe that to be Bajau is to be Muslim.

And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. —Genesis 12:2-3

- Pray for many leaders in today's people group to seek and find God's blessings, which He intended to give to them since the beginning of time.
- Pray that followers of Christ in surrounding communities would share the gospel with the Bajau.
- Pray that the love of Jesus Christ would touch these masters of the sea in such a way that there would be a spontaneous church planting movement.

■ 4 Raddi of India

The Raddi people are very family oriented; they prefer marriages between cousins. When the father dies, the oldest son takes charge of the family. The Raddi are mostly farmers, and they are vegetarians, which possibly indicates high status.

And he brought him outside and said, Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them. Then he said to him, So shall your offspring be. And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness. —Genesis 15:5-6

- Pray that members of today's people group will understand that they can become part of God's holy family and experience His goodness.
- Pray that the few believers among the Raddi people would be zealous for Christ and his kingdom.
- Pray for believers to be emboldened by the Holy Spirit to study the Word and be filled with a burning desire to share what they have learned with the Raddi people.
- Pray for an entire people movement to the only Savior, Jesus Christ.



■ 5 Batlukh–Gid of Russia

Batlukh–Gid communities are powered by women and depend on them to care for the home, harvest and animals while the men take care of plowing, sowing, security, and travel. Male and female responsibilities are strictly divided, and they frown upon any crossover. Speakers of the Batlukh and Gid languages live in the mountainous regions of southwestern Russia's Dagestan, and they have been fiercely Muslim for hundreds of years.

The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. —Exodus 15:2

- Pray that members of today's people group will look to the Lord alone for strength and victory.
- Pray that the Lord would prepare Batlukh–Gid men and women to hear the gospel.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement to spread far and wide among the Batlukh–Gid People of Russia.

■ 6 Yahia Bedouin of Morocco

The Yahia Bedouins live in Saharan Morocco. Women spin and weave clothes and tent fabrics. Their clothing is vibrant red and orange with multi-colored beads, with some silver jewelry and semi-precious stones. Bedouins are renowned for their hospitality and courage as well as oral poetry traditions, recited by the men. Nowadays the younger generation is leaving traditional nomadic life, moving to and working in cities adding possible outreach opportunities.

Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? —Exodus 15:11

- Pray that today's people group will understand that glory, holiness and power come only from our Lord and king.
- Pray their changing circumstances would create a new openness to know the love of Jesus.
- Pray for a massive movement to Christ among the Bedouin peoples.

■ 7 Chain of India

If you were dying of thirst and starvation, would it matter who fed you or gave you water? Yes, if you were from the Chain community in West Bengal, India. The Chain people are very caste-conscious regarding food fellowship. As landowners, they probably have good status in Hindu society, and there are strong taboos against sharing food and water with those from certain other communities.

Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people. —Exodus 18:11

- Pray that non-believers among this people group will be convinced to follow the Lord because of His miracles.
- Pray that God would open this people to Christian witness and break down the barrier of caste.
- Pray for the Lord to thrust out His chosen vessels as Christ bearers to the Chain people.

■ 8 Darzada of Pakistan

The Darzadas used to be known as a rich Pakistani community, some are now servants while others are famous singers, poets and politicians. They still hold the reputation of being educated and cultured. They are among the Baloch peoples of Pakistan's Baloch Province. There are no known Christ followers among them, and they belong to a strictly enforced and culturally influential form of Sunni Islam based on works rather than the wonderful grace of Jesus.

You shall have no other gods before me. —Exodus 20:3

- Pray for this people group to understand and obey this essential and central command.
- Pray for future Darzada believers to be so committed to the Savior that they will shine as a holy light in Pakistan.
- Pray for a move of the Holy Spirit to sweep through Baloch Province.

■ 9 Yakan of Philippines

Yakan people are probably the original inhabitants of Basilan, an island just off the southwestern point of Mindanao Island in the Philippines. The nuclear family, which consists of the husband, his wife, and their unmarried children, is the most common domestic unit. Perhaps they would respond to Christian families of disciples who could earn their trust and reach out to them with the truth of the gospel.

You shall serve the LORD your God, and he will bless your bread and your water, and I will take sickness away from among you. None shall miscarry or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days. —Exodus 23:25–26

- Pray that many from this people group will serve the Lord and receive His abundant blessings.
- Ask the Lord to bring forth vigorous Yakan churches that will plant others for the glory of His name!
- Ask almighty God to raise up a church planting movement in Mindanao this decade.

■ 10 Karan Kayastha of India

The Kayastha Karan people are among the great scholars of eastern India and Nepal. Traditionally they were the well-educated scribes and administrators. Today many are landowners. They have high status. Few are willing to accept ideas or spiritual input from those from the lower ranks, especially in South Asia where status is very important. It will take well-educated people to reach the Kayastha Karan.

See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship. —Exodus 31:2–3

- Pray that as members of this people group become part of God's holy family that they will also find His purposes for them.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to penetrate the hearts of Kayastha Karan elders so that they in turn can open the spiritual doors for others to follow Jesus.
- Pray for their leaders to begin the process of starting a church planting movement.



■ 11 Hui of Malaysia

The Muslim Hui people who live in Malaysia originally lived in China. Many left China to establish businesses in Malaysia or to escape religious persecution after the communist takeover in 1949. Radio and TV programs can bring the good news about Christ to the Hui. Hui university students who study in Malaysia can hear the gospel from campus ministries.

And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. And he said, If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance. —Exodus 34:8–9

- Pray that members of this people group will soon have as rich an understanding of the need for God's presence as Moses did.
- Pray that each Hui in Malaysia would have the opportunity to hear the gospel.
- Pray for rapid growth of followers of Jesus among the Hui in Malaysia soon.

■ 12 Chenoua of Algeria

What would you teach your children to speak if your own people group was small, and there were three other small languages in the local vicinity? The trade language is what most Chenoua speaking parents use. Their desert home makes access difficult. Muslim extremism and terrorist groups are present in some areas. Foreigners often have trouble obtaining visas since the government wants to restrict outside influences. There is a radio outreach in their language.

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. —Exodus 40:34–35

- Pray for many from this people group to experience the glory of the Lord and allow Him to transform them forever.
- Pray for every hindrance of the gospel's touching the Chenoua people's lives to be removed.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger among the Chenoua people and access to gospel resources.

■ 13 Afshari of Afghanistan

Most Afghan Ashari believe that Ali, Mohammad's cousin, was ordained by Allah to follow Mohammad, and after him came 11 more imams selected by Allah. The 12th one, Hujjat–Allah, is recognized as the promised Mahdi, their messiah, whom they say has been living in seclusion since 874. They believe he will return with Jesus to establish Islam in the world. This is called the Twelver Shia doctrine of Islam.

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. —Leviticus 19:1–2

- Pray that new believers among this people group will seek holiness by allowing the Holy Spirit to transform them from the inside out.
- Pray that God would strengthen the faith of Afghan believers to be His witnesses to the Ashari people.
- Pray that all Ashari would be open to hearing the gospel in their language through radio, gospel recording, and print.

■ 14 Sikh Jat Dhillon of India

The Dhillon Jats of India's Punjab State are often called the Raja Jats due to the large number of kings, royalty and warriors in their history. People with high status such as the Dhillon Jats are often the least open to the gospel message. Christianity got its foothold in India by appealing to the backward castes who eagerly welcomed the gospel. It gave them hope, but it also made the Dhillon Jats see the church as being for "lower status" peoples.

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. —Numbers 6:24–26

- Pray this blessing on today's people group.
- Pray for Dhillon Jats to put their hope and identity in Christ rather than their social standing.
- Pray for a movement to Christ.

■ 15 Queyu of China

The Queyu people are committed to the Buddhist religious system, and few witnesses of Christ's grace have been there since the 1950s. It is an understatement to say they still lack an adequate gospel witness. Chinese workers can set up small health clinics to care for physical ailments, keeping spiritual health at the forefront and seeking to lead their patients to Christ, the Great Physician.

He is your praise. He is your God, who has done for you these great and terrifying things that your eyes have seen. —Deuteronomy 10:21

- Pray that many from this people group will make the Lord their only God, and thank Him for His miracles.
- Pray that the Lord would call missionaries to this lone area, leading to a movement to Christ.
- Pray that the Queyu people would see the glory of the risen Christ and turn to Him.

■ 16 Sidi Bedouin of Algeria

The Sidi Bedouins of Algeria are almost all Sunni Muslims, but some are Sufis who seek a heart–felt response to Allah. Most also believe in spirits known as jinni. They don't marry outsiders because they are suspicious of outside influences. They are hard to reach. Their Sufi beliefs might indicate that some are open to seeking a relationship with the Almighty, and Jesus can be the perfect bridge for such people.

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. —Joshua 1:8

- Pray that many from this people group will not only study but apply what God teaches through His word.
- Pray for God to draw them to Jesus Christ, the only Savior.
- Pray they would have dreams and visions of the one true God.



■ 17 Muslim Jat of Canada

Today the Jat peoples are one of the most prosperous groups in India. It's the more prosperous and well-educated peoples from South Asia who are allowed to immigrate to Canada. Jat farmers are also known to be experts at producing a high yield, so they are welcome in farming areas.

So that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever. —Joshua 4:24

- Pray that the “nation” we are praying for today will know that the Lord’s hand is powerful and will give Him praise.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to give Jat Muslims in Canada the spiritual hunger necessary to seek and find the Savior.
- Pray for the Lord to penetrate entire Muslim Jat families and clans so that they can enjoy the blessings of being children of the King of kings.

■ 18 Hindu Bairagi of Nepal

A proper Bairagi is one whose principal deity is either Vishnu or any of his incarnations, like Rama and Krishna. A mark (tilak) on the forehead and ear are their identification marks. To follow Christ is to risk disturbing community harmony within this Hindu community. Much sustained, focused prayer is needed to prepare the hearts of the Bairagi community to understand and receive the good news.

The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge! —Ruth 2:12

- Pray for today’s people group to seek and find refuge with the Lord and be rewarded.
- Pray they would be zealous to learn of Christ, and that they would be sent teachers and pastors to help them.
- Pray they would live holy lives that honor Christ and draw others to Him.



■ 19 Lashari Baloch of Pakistan

The Lashari Baloch live according to customs and traditions which are conducted according to codes imposed by tribal laws. Since they are a tribal people and their identity as such is so important, changing to a completely different faith will take a great deal of prayer and moving of the Holy Spirit to make this a reality.

There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. —1 Samuel 2:2

- Pray for influential members of this people group to understand that there is no solid rock like our God!
- Pray for God to open their hearts when they hear the gospel.
- Pray for God to provide workers who speak the Balochi language to work with the Lashari Baloch people until they have an unstoppable movement to Christ.

■ 20 Tindi of Russia

The Tindi live very close to one another, in every way! Though they use different dialects, 14 villages all speak the same language. The Tindi dwell in the mountains of Dagestan, almost bordering Georgia. The greatest ministry obstacle to reaching the Tindi people seems to be their intellectual pride. Tindi villages are well known for religious and secular education and they produce many scientists, teachers and doctors.

But when they rose early on the next morning, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the LORD, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off on the threshold. Only the trunk of Dagon was left to him. —1 Samuel 5:4

- Pray that many from this people group will understand that their gods have failed them, but God never fails!
- Ask God to break through cultural, intellectual and religious traditions with a desire for true spiritual understanding and pray that the Lord would point their hearts to Jesus.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among them in the 2020s.

■ 21 Najdi Arab of Kuwait

Najdi is one of the varieties of the Arabic language spoken by Saudi Arabs. Saudi Arabia is sometimes called, “The Land of The Two Holy Mosques,” in reference to Mecca and Medina, the two holiest places in Islam.

Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.” —1 Samuel 17:45

- Pray that the nations will know that they cannot defy the Lord.
- Pray the few believers among the Najdi Arabs will grow in sharing and discussing God’s Word with their families and communities.
- Pray for their protection. Pray they would learn to live in the power of Christ’s Spirit, demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit.
- Pray the Najdi Arabs would hunger to know forgiveness of sin, found only through faith in the work of Christ on the cross.

■ 22 Cochin Jewish of Israel

Did you know there are Jewish people in Israel who speak a south Indian language, Malayalam? Today the Cochin Jews have been incorporated into the Israeli population. Many retain their Malayalam language and spicy cuisine, and in Israel, the Cochin Jews are famous for bringing a delicious hybrid cuisine that incorporates spicy Indian food.

And Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.” And the people did not answer him a word. —1 Kings 18:21

- Pray that today’s people group will indeed see the vast difference between the Lord and any other deity.
- Pray that they will follow Him.
- Pray for the lives and culture of the Cochin people to evidence the rule and reign of the Kingdom of God as they open to the gospel, and for the beauty of Jesus to be seen in them.
- Pray that the spiritual eyes of the Cochin Jews would be opened to see their Messiah.

■ 23 Tihami Arab of Saudi Arabia

The Tihami people are easily recognized by their colorful clothing, flowers in their hair and their large families since they love children. Although most live in Yemen, some live in Saudi Arabia as nomads and some as farmers. These Muslims can be reached by various forms of media: radio, television, the Internet, Facebook, and YouTube.

And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God. —1 Kings 18:39

- Pray that today’s people group will understand the vast power and goodness of the Lord.
- Pray that God would use media to reach them and that they would be prepared for a Christ encounter through dreams and visions.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Tihami people that cannot be stopped by man’s best efforts.

■ 24 Sikh Jat Sidhu of India

Who are the best farmers in India? Some might say they are the Jats who originally came from Iran and migrated to Punjab, India. Their success allowed them to become prosperous landowners and to this day they are some of the wealthiest people in India. Their amazing skills in weaponry and fighting gave them the ability to defend their land from conquerors. Most Sidhu Jats are a proud people who do not see a reason to change their religious life and allow for a savior.

As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD filled the LORD’s house. —2 Chronicles 7:1-2

- Pray for today’s people group to be in absolute awe of the Lord when they hear of His glorious presence.
- Pray Sidhu Jats would be open to a personal relationship with God and enter into His kingdom.

■ 1/25 Hindu Meo of India

The Meo are like chameleons; they blend in. They speak the local language and mix Hindu rites of passage with Muslim ones. This syncretism is a ministry obstacle because it provides additional religious confusion by blending elements of various religions. One must seek “bridges of God.” Faith in Jesus must be presented as culturally compatible, without giving up their culture.

Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. —2 Chronicles 7:15

- Pray that you will be encouraged to pray, knowing that the Lord will hear your prayers that are in accordance with His will.
- Pray that the Meo would not let their syncretism get in the way of a clear understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.
- Pray for culturally sensitive workers with spiritual discernment.
- Pray that the church in their localities would reach out to the Meo.



■ 26 Tai Lue of Laos

Most Tai Lue make their living growing and selling wet rice and other crops. Other Tai Lue fish and make jewelry from silver. Their women are expert weavers and embroiderers. The JESUS Film and God's Story video are both available in the Lu language. The Tai Lue are primarily an oral culture, so these would be good resources for them.

Let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned. —Nehemiah 1:6

- Pray for the Lord to raise up believers from among today's people group that will faithfully and fervently pray for their people.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to soften the hearts of the Tai Lue so that they will be receptive to the gospel.
- Pray that the gospel would spread rapidly throughout the Tai Lue people and that Christ would be glorified.

■ 27 Nail Bedouin of Algeria

The Arab conquests of the seventh century brought about a rapid expansion of the Bedouin tribes. Thousands left the Middle East and began spreading across North Africa, including Algeria, where the Nail Bedouins now live. Apart from tribal affiliations, there is little to distinguish one group of Bedouins from another. Christian missionaries have always been reluctant to live among nomadic peoples. Thus, the Nail and other Bedouin tribes remain with no one to challenge their folk Islamic beliefs.

Then the king said to me, What are you requesting? So I prayed to the God of heaven. —Nehemiah 2:4

- Pray that you will not pass up the chance for short, but effective prayers when you intercede for the nations.
- Pray for bold workers.
- Pray for a movement to Christ this decade among the Nail and other Bedouin tribes.

■ 28 Tsudakar of Russia

The Tsudakar of Russia have been Muslims for more than 600 years. Like most followers of Islam, it is more than just a religion for them; it is part of their social and cultural identity. While Bible portions are available, the Tsudakar are still waiting for a full Bible to be translated into their language.

And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. —Nehemiah 8:5-6

- May this people group have Holy Spirit reverence for the Lord when they hear His word.
- Ask God to call and equip Bible translators who are willing to invest their lives and talents in the Tsudakar people.
- Pray for the Lord to open the hearts of the Tsudakar to His message of good news.
- Pray for the few Tsudakar Christ followers to share the gospel with their families and friends.

■ 29 Muslim Rahmani of India

The Rahmani (or, Rai Bhat) work mainly as farmers. Many do not read, so the gospel will need to be given in oral forms. They are Sunni Muslims, and there is much social stigma about becoming a Christian in their families and communities. They need to find a way to embrace Jesus Christ without alienating the people they hold dear.

And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the LORD had commanded Israel. —Nehemiah 8:1

- Pray for an eagerness to hear and heed God's word among this people group.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger that will draw the Rahmani people to the only One who can save them from sin and death.
- Pray for Rahmani community leaders who will give Jesus a chance to provide their community with the abundant life He offers in John 10:10.

■ 30 Judeo-Persian Jewish of Iran

Most Jews in Iran live in Tehran, Isfahan and Sharaz. In those cities they have synagogues, cultural centers, kosher markets and restaurants. They do not openly express support for Israel, and they avoid contact with Christians or any Messianic Jews. Their goal is peaceful survival as a people.

They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. —Nehemiah 8:8

- Pray for this people group to understand God's word when they hear it.
- Pray that the Iranian church would be strengthened in its faith and outreach.
- Pray for them to reach out to Jews.
- Pray for a people movement to Christ among Iranian Jews.
- Pray for increased openness to the things of Christ, especially among Jewish leaders.

■ 31 Central-Eastern Fulani of Niger

The Central-Eastern Fulani believe that to be a Fulani is to be a Muslim. Many Fulani are revered teachers of Islam; such people get respect for their Islamic pedigree. Because many Central-Eastern Fulani are among the ruling class, they would be able to influence their constituency to consider the claims of Christ. Polluted water is a problem for the Central-Eastern Fulani. Missionaries and engineers might be welcomed in their efforts to make water potable in crowded cities.

And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made confession and worshiped the LORD their God. —Nehemiah 9:3

- Pray that hearing the word will lead to deep repentance.
- Pray for the Lord to move among Central-Eastern Fulani leaders through dreams and visions.
- Pray that this would be the decade when the Central-Eastern Fulani have an unstoppable movement to Christ.

FEBRUARY

■ 1 Sikh Sonar of India

The Sonar community is known for their amazing creativity in the art of designing beautiful gold jewelry. Their very name "Sonar" means gold. Many have done well financially. Some are money lenders or bankers. Though most are Hindus, there are also many Sikhs among them. Most of the Sikh Sonars take pride in their religion and do not see any reason to change.

You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you. —Nehemiah 9:6

- May the hearing of God's word lead to this people group understanding who God is and the fact that He gave them life.
- Pray that Sikh Sonars would humble themselves to be open to the Lord.
- Pray for believers to go to them as Christ bearers. Pray for a movement to Christ among the Sonars.

■ 2 Darwazi of Afghanistan

How would you like to visit a land with snowcapped mountains and rushing streams of water? This is the beautiful geography that both surrounds and isolates the small towns of the Darwazi people of northeastern Afghanistan. Although a few radios have connected them to the outside world, they are still mostly isolated, so medical assistance and medicine are a major need. They have a high mortality rate among their women and children due to difficulties in childbirth.

And you warned them in order to turn them back to your law. Yet they acted presumptuously and did not obey your commandments, but sinned against your rules, which if a person does them, he shall live by them, and they turned a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck and would not obey. —Nehemiah 9:29

- Pray that when this people group hears the word that they will respond with heart-felt obedience.
- Pray that God would thrust out Afghan believers in reaching these people with much needed medical supplies and anointed prayer for the sick.

■ 3 Druze of Lebanon

The Druze religion is an offshoot of Islam and appeared in the ninth century. They are firmly monotheistic. Druze hold the Koran as sacred. They also have their own inspired scripture called the *Book of Wisdom*. Druze believe in the transmigration of the soul. That is, at death, one's soul is instantaneously reincarnated, and it is reborn into another life. Druze do not evangelize or accept converts. If a Druze becomes a follower of Christ, he or she will be excluded from the Druze community.

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. —Psalm 2:8

- Ask now! Ask Him for this people group to become part of His family.
- Pray the Lord would lead Druze to listen to Christian radio programs and find their way to the cross.



■ 4 Sikh Chhipa of India

The word “Chhipa” means to print, and their main occupations deal with dyeing and printing fabrics in red, blue and black patterns. A Chhipa can be a Sikh, Hindu or a Muslim. Confusing? The three different religions within this people group are a huge obstacle. Do Christian workers present a fourth religion that would add more confusion?

O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. —Psalm 8:1

- Help this people group to know from the heart and the head that the Lord is great! Pray that the Chhipa people would see the futility of their conflicting religions and seek and find the only Savior.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to anoint Chhipa families, and to raise up fruitful, disciples of the Lord.

■ 5 Zekara Berber of Morocco

The Berbers lived in North Africa long before the arrival of the Arabs and Islam. They once had a Christian heritage. Many Berber children drop out of school because they are taught in what, to them, is a foreign language —Arabic. There are few followers of Jesus among the Zekara Berbers.

I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds. —Psalm 9:1

- Pray for many from today's people group to tell of God's marvelous deeds to their families.
- Pray they would find each other and faithfully fellowship together, becoming firmly established upon the truths of Scripture.
- Pray the Berbers of Morocco would once again find the faith of many of their ancestors, faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

■ 6 Jaunsari of India

Do you ever want to go back to Bible days? You might feel like you are doing that by visiting the Jaunsari community in Uttarakhand, India. Like the Hebrew Patriarchs, a man can marry more than one spouse. The first obstacle to the gospel is the terrain and elevation, making them hard to access. They speak two different languages and have only some verses of the New Testament available in one of them.

I say to the LORD, You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you. —Psalm 16:2

- Pray that this people group will understand that they have many good things, all of which came only from God the creator.
- Pray that the Jaunsari would see Jesus as the only answer to their fears of ghosts and spirits.
- Pray for a full Bible translation and Christian witness, leading to a Disciple Making Movement.

■ 7 Sirtican Bedouin of Libya

The Sirtican Bedouin of Libya speak Arabic and their primary religion is Sunni Islam, the largest branch of Islam. The Bedouin fall into two basic groups: the “true” Bedouin who live as nomadic shepherds, and the majority group who have embraced farming and are known as the fellahin. The fellahin lead a more settled life on the edge of the desert. Due to the harsh environment, life is hard.

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. —Psalm 16:11

- Pray that many from today’s people group will find joy in the Lord, and the pleasures of being with Him for eternity.
- Pray for Sirticans to become disillusioned with traditional spiritual answers and to understand they need a sin-bearing Savior.
- Pray that they would have dreams and visions of Jesus Christ.

■ 8 Western Baloch of Iran

The Baloch are an ancient, semi-nomadic tribal group that occupy an area of land stretching across Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Balochmayar is the honor code by which the Baloch live. These principles include extending hospitality and mercy, dealing with each other honestly and offering refuge to strangers. The Western Baloch may have acquired an incorrect understanding of what Christianity is by observing people who are Christian in name only.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. —Psalm 19:1

- Pray that many from today’s people group will look to the sky, see God’s artwork, and commit themselves to following this awesome savior!
- Pray for the Baloch people to be delivered from their fear of Christianity and to embrace God’s blessing through His Word for their families and communities.



■ 9 Afghan Tajik of Afghanistan

The Tajiks in Afghanistan have been Muslim for many hundreds of years. Though they acknowledge Jesus as an honored prophet, they do not view Him as the only way to God. Because the Afghans do not have a high literacy rate, the gospel can probably best come to them using oral means. A few possibilities are videos, recordings, radio, skits and stories from Scripture.

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; —Psalm 19:7

- Pray that this people group will find the word of the Lord to be trustworthy and look to it for wisdom and spiritual guidance.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Tajiks of Afghanistan that will bless them abundantly.
- Pray for peace in Afghanistan, for a stable and effective government, and for improved living conditions.

■ 10 Southern Uzbek of Afghanistan

The Uzbeks are descended largely from Turk-Mongol invaders. Most Uzbeks from the former USSR ended up practicing Islam from a more liberal perspective due to the official Soviet policy of atheism. In contrast, Uzbeks in Afghanistan and other countries to the south have remained more conservative.

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. —Psalm 20:7

- Pray that many from this “nation” will boast only in the name of the Lord.
- Pray that believers among the Uzbek would grow in faith and in knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and live holy lives that will draw Muslims to him.
- Pray the Uzbeks would increasingly see Jesus (whom Muslims call Isa al-Masih) as the only way to salvation and would hunger to find out more about Him.
- Pray for a movement to Christ.

11 Gorani of Albania

The Gorani are a folk Islamic people who live in villages in the mountainous regions of what is now Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia. Herding and agriculture are their main form of livelihood. Their hard life, war and determination to maintain their folk Islamic identity has caused many, especially the young, to migrate to other countries.

O LORD, in your strength the king rejoices, and in your salvation how greatly he exults! —Psalm 21:1

- Pray that leaders from this people group will look to the Lord, and only Him for strength and guidance.
- Pray for Gorani believers to have joyous and victorious lives in Christ.
- Pray that God would cause the Gorani to trust God's servants and be open to knowing God through His voice found in His Word.
- Pray for their family heads and community leaders to lead the way to a movement to Christ.



12 Ziban Bedouin of Algeria

Ziban Bedouins are a nomadic people who know how to find water in the desert for their livestock. If they break the rules of their society each clan selects a sheik to determine whether they are guilty. They consider it to be below their dignity to be forced to live settled lives and become farmers. However, many Ziban are being forced to adapt to a more sedentary life, especially as their region becomes dryer.

Be exalted, O LORD, in your strength! We will sing and praise your power. —Psalm 21:13

- Pray that this people group will rejoice in the Lord with singing and celebration when they see His mighty acts of mercy and salvation.
- Pray for the Lord to send dreams to Ziban elders.
- Pray that leaders and individuals of the Ziban clans would be reached so they can lead their people to the Lord.

13 Tajakant of Algeria

The Tajakant are sedentary, engaged in small-scale trading and farming. They mainly live in Morocco and the Moroccan administered territory of Western Sahara, but some live in Algeria. Today their lifestyle and tribal cultures are mixing with modern western practices. Men are more likely to adjust and interact with modern cultures.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. —Psalm 23:1

- Pray that this people group will be satisfied with the Lord alone and turn to no other god.
- Pray for tribes like the Tajakant to be able to make the necessary adjustments while retaining that which is good in their culture.
- Pray that changes within the Tajakant culture would include the lordship and blessings of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for a Christ-ward movement.

14 Eluthassan of India

The Eluthassan people live in Kerala, one of India's most Christianized states. They speak Malayalam, Kerala's language. They remain unreached, even though a high percentage of their neighbors follow the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. The Eluthassan people identify with being Hindus. There are also enough false believers in their area to give them reason to distrust those who call themselves Christian.

He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. —Psalm 23:3

- Pray that this people group will accept and follow the Lord's direction and thank Him for giving them strength.
- Pray for a Holy Spirit sent purification for the church in Kerala, leading to revival and outreach.
- Pray that there would be a Disciple Making Movement among the Eluthassan people.

15 Chinese of Angola

Thousands of construction workers, engineers, doctors, cooks and petroleum engineers have migrated from China to Angola. They are extracting oil and developing Angola's infrastructure. Angola is one of China's largest suppliers of oil. Chinese companies are hiring Chinese people, so this is not providing jobs for the Angolans. The Angolans resent this situation, and there has been a lot of crime against Chinese citizens.



Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. —Psalm 23:4

- Fear is a liar! Pray that this people group will be fear-free when they decide to follow the Lord.
- Pray that Angolan Christians would help lead the Chinese to salvation.
- Pray that Chinese believers would worship the Lord with Angolan believers as an example of unity.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement.

■ 16 Gil Bedouin of Morocco

Gil Bedouins traditionally live a nomadic lifestyle. The word “Bedouin” comes from the Arab word “bedou,” meaning “desert dweller.” It is almost impossible to find Christians who are willing to live the lifestyle of nomadic people for the sake of the gospel. It will take hearty believers who can and will live among them for years, learn their language and share the gospel in a way that makes sense in their culture.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. —Psalm 23:6

- Pray for leaders of today’s people group to put all their hope in the Lord just like King David did when he wrote this Psalm.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to thrust out dedicated workers to the Gil Bedouins.
- Pray the Gil Bedouins will soon see their desperate need for Jesus Christ, the only Savior.

■ 17 Dawei of Myanmar

Most Dawei people inhabit Myanmar. Some have fled to Thailand to escape Burmese authorities who conscripted many to work on a new railroad under inhumane conditions. In the past, the Dawei have proven to be disinterested in the gospel.

The earth is the LORD’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, —Psalm 24:1

- Pray that many from today’s people group will

- recognize that they belong to the Lord, and they can rejoice in that fact!
- Pray for a movement to Christ among these Buddhists.
- Pray that the few followers of Jesus among the Dawei people would be joyful always, praying continually, giving thanks in all circumstances, and willing to give a reason for their faith.

■ 18 Turk of Argentina

Sunni Muslim Turks produced the vast and long-lasting Ottoman Empire. At one time a small number of Turks migrated to Argentina. Sunni Muslims are taught at an early age that Christian doctrine is ridiculous and that the content of the Bible is unreliable. Any Christian believer who wants to reach the Turks will need to start by making a solid friendship with them. The Christ follower will have to prove to be a loyal and trustworthy friend.

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. —Psalm 25:1-2

- Pray for many from today’s people group to give their entire lives to God.
- Pray for an openness to the gospel among Argentina’s Turks.
- Pray for rapid growth of followers of Jesus among the Turks in Argentina that would spread to Turkey.

■ 19 Aghul of Russia

When Jesus spoke in parables about sheep and their shepherds, he was speaking to people such as the Aghul of Russia. Aghul men are renowned shepherds, and the women tend to the village households. Dagestan is a mountainous region where people value toughness and hard work. It is difficult to enter because of its ruggedness and because of government interference.

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long. —Psalm 25:5

- Pray that this very year many from this people group will seek the Lord for the right path to true righteousness and guidance.
- Pray for a growing interest in Isa (Jesus) among the Aghul people.
- Pray the Lord would show them who Jesus truly is: the only way to the Father.
- Pray for those who are serving the Aghul people to be encouraged and for their numbers to increase.

■ 20 Mangrik of India

The Mangrik have traditionally been farmers. They have attained a high level of literacy, and some have even attended universities in Jammu and Kashmir. Even though the Mangrik people may have a high literacy rate, using oral means of communicating the gospel may be the best approach. Films, recordings and stories from Scripture will likely have a favorable result if their hearts are open.

Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. —Psalm 25:8–9

- Pray for many from today's people group to have the humility to learn from the Lord and follow His ways.
- Pray for the Lord to multiply the reception and influence of His Word among the Mangrik people, leading them to love Him with their whole being.

■ 21 Harratine of Morocco

The Harratine of Morocco live in southern oasis towns at the very edges of the Sahara. However, they are said to originally come from further south, in sub-Saharan Africa. It is believed their ancestors were captured and abandoned in Morocco. Today they find employment as day laborers and in various manual trades.

All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies. —Psalm 25:10

- Thank the Lord that He leads with love and faithfulness!
- Pray that many from today's people group will discover that and act upon it.
- Pray for good quality Christian radio to be widely available throughout Morocco in many languages.
- Pray the language of the Harratine people would be included.
- Pray the Harratine would be given a strong desire to find forgiveness for their sin.
- Pray for adequate rainfall, pure drinking water and improved medical care.



■ 22 Middle-Eastern Turkmen of Syria

The Turkmen have deep roots in Central Asia, but a small number of them live in Syria. Though most are Sunni Muslims, some are part of the Alawite religion. The Sunnis among them blend in well with the Syrian Arab majority and even marry into their families.

For your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my guilt, for it is great. —Psalm 25:11

- Pray for many from today's people group to understand that they are sinful and need God as their savior.
- Pray for the Syrian church to become unified in Christ's purposes so that they can and will go to the Turkmen among them.
- Pray for the Turkmen people to respond to Christ.
- Pray that they would see faith in Jesus as an acceptable alternative to the spiritual answers they have embraced for generations.

■ 23 Cocos Islands Malay of Australia

The Cocos Malays are the majority population of the Cocos Islands, a territory of Australia. Because of the unbroken European rule of the islands, the culture has been mostly Western. The Cocos Malay have their own dress code. Those in the Australian mainland, however, conform to Australian dress habits. They have their own language, but to function in Australia, they must be fluent in English.

My foot stands on level ground; in the great assembly I will bless the LORD. —Psalm 26:12

- Pray that many from today's people group will allow their spiritual lives to be transformed by the Lord, and that they will begin to publicly praise Him.
- Pray for a movement to Jesus to multiply among families and communities.
- Pray for the Lord to anoint and thrust our workers to the Cocos Malay people.

■ 24 Mandaean of Australia

Sometimes Mandaeans are called “Christians of Saint John” because they venerate John the Baptist and baptism is their central sacrament. In actuality, Mandaism is based more on a common heritage than on any set of religious doctrines. Until recently, Mandaeans lived mainly in Iraq and Iran, but many have now fled and settled in other countries such as Australia. The Mandaeans are quite insular and protective of their society and their religion. Christian resources are limited in Mandaic, their mother tongue.

One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple. —Psalm 27:4

- Pray for eternal salvation of many from today’s people group.
- Pray for a healthy and growing church among them in Australia.

■ 25 Chechen of Austria

Austria holds the fifth largest Chechen population outside their homeland to the east in the Caucasus Mountains of Russia. Sometimes called the “Mafia of Russia,” these strongly Islamic people are known for fighting. They desperately need missionaries to live among them, earn the trust of the local leaders and courageously share the gospel.

You have said, Seek my face. My heart says to you, Your face, LORD, do I seek. —Psalm 27:8

- Pray that many from today’s people group will crave fellowship with the One True God.
- Ask God to soften the hearts of the Chechen people in Austria, especially the local elders and family heads.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to provide opportunity for a strong church planting movement among them, and for Chechen disciples to grow and bear spiritual fruit.



■ 26 Afghan of Austria

For 45 years there have been waves of Afghan refugees fleeing for safety. Most of them have settled in neighboring Pakistan or Iran, but some have made their way to Europe. One of these European destinations is Austria. They cannot imagine leaving Islam for any other “religion.” Islam is central to their identity.

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD! —Psalm 27:13-14

- Pray for many leaders from today’s people group to put their confidence in the goodness of God and wait faithfully for His deliverance.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to move in Afghan communities in Austria so that they would tire of the old ways of violence and seek holiness, which they will only find in the person of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for workers.
- Pray for the spread of the gospel among Afghans in Austria.

■ 27 Maarulal Avar of Azerbaijan

Avar people are the largest linguistic group of Dagestan in Russia and historically the most powerful. Honor/shame is a high code, deeply ingrained in the Avar cultural psyche. This is most pronounced in the Avar. Some of them live in nearby Azerbaijan. The cultural affinity for revenge prevents them from forgiving or repenting, two things essential for a relationship with the living God.

The LORD is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him. —Psalm 28:7

- May this be the attitude of many from today’s people group.
- Thank the Lord for several new Avar believers and the recently completed Avar New Testament!
- Pray it will find its way to receptive hearts.
- Pray for dreams and visions among the Avar.
- Pray for courageous Avars to find Christ’s grace.

■ 28 Bahraini Arab of Bahrain

Bahrain is the smallest Arab state, being an island country in the Persian Gulf. Its strategic location has brought rule and influence from the Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Persians, and finally the Arabs, under whom the island became Muslim. Oil was discovered in 1932 and has brought rapid modernization to Bahrain. Wealth often stands as an obstacle to faith in Christ since it blunts the sense of need. Bahrain is quite accessible to gospel radio, television, internet, etc.

The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever. —Psalm 29:10

- Pray that many will understand that God is the undisputed King of kings, and beside Him there is no other.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger that would lead them to these resources.
- Pray for believers to take Christ to Bahraini Arabs.
- Pray for an unstoppable movement to Christ among Bahraini Arabs.

■ 29 Rashaida of Eritrea

The Rashaida are a Bedouin people, who populate either side of the Red Sea and came from a major tribe in mainland Arabia about 150 years ago. They are a nomadic people who live in tents made of goatskin, and they are herdsman, raising primarily goats and sheep. Since many do not read, they memorize in detail the pedigree of their animals, keeping mental records of their herds over seven or eight preceding generations of the flock.

May the LORD give strength to his people! May the LORD bless his people with peace! —Psalm 29:11

- Pray for new believers among this people group to be blessed with strength and peace.
- Pray for stability and prosperity in Eritrea.
- Pray for bold and loving workers to go to the Rashaida people to build God’s Church in Eritrea and beyond.

THE MISSIONS

What prevents the Gospel from creating a ripple effect?

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