

# MISSION™ FRONTIERS

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## The Frontier Peoples: Still Waiting to Hear About Jesus



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# THE REMAINING PEOPLES WITH NO CHANCE TO HEAR ABOUT JESUS



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# THE PATH FORWARD IS CLEARER THAN EVER BEFORE.

## WILL WE HAVE THE COURAGE TO TAKE IT?



BY RICK WOOD  
EDITOR OF MF

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

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

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

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

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

### REACHING “THE 31”

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

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

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

### WHY NO PROGRESS AFTER 40 YEARS?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

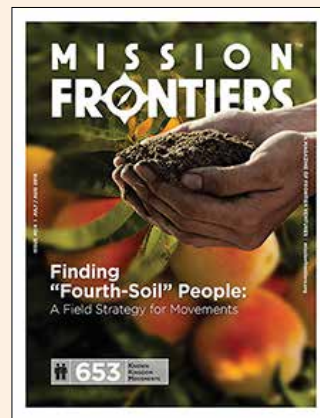
The adoption of Christianity by one group within a generic community would lead to a strengthening of non-Christian identity among other groups within the same community.<sup>1</sup>


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

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

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

## AN UPDATE ON OUR JULY/AUGUST 2018 ISSUE



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

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

# The Remaining Peoples with no Chance to Hear about Jesus

In 1974, while preparing his speech for the first Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, Dr. Ralph Winter realized that thousands of people groups were being completely overlooked by mission agencies and churches around the world. Due to the great success of outreach in places like Korea, sub-Saharan Africa, and island and jungle tribes, some were in fact insisting that missionaries were no longer needed. Others were insisting that missionaries should only partner with and serve the national churches, assuming that national churches were everywhere.

At Lausanne, Ralph Winter explained that an estimated 17,000 people groups had no churches of their own, and never yet had a missionary work among their people group. Winter expected the mission world to be as shocked as he was. Instead agencies responded with disbelief and even resistance, and churches showed no understanding. This awareness had changed Winter, but he realized that churches and agencies would continue to overlook these “hidden” people groups unless they were impressed with the same knowledge. So, Winter resigned from the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary and dedicated the rest of his life to clarifying and mobilizing for what he called the “frontier mission” task: going where no missionary has gone before.

« Forty years ago, in 1978, Ralph Winter put his statistics into a pie chart titled *Penetrating the Last Frontiers*. »

Forty years ago, in 1978, Ralph Winter put his statistics into a pie chart titled *Penetrating the Last Frontiers*, and Roberta wrote the story of the cause in *I Will Do a New Thing* (originally published as *Once More Around Jericho*). The purpose of this chart (shown on page 7) was to clarify which people in the world had no chance of learning about Jesus from someone in their own people group. He divided the world into areas by population. Each pie section shows how far the gospel has penetrated in that area of the world by showing which people are “Active Christians” able to share the gospel with others, and those that still need to hear. Some of the lost are nominal Christians or non-believers able to hear the gospel from the believers in their own culture. But other “culturally-distant” non-believers are beyond the evangelistic outreach of existing believers, because they live in people groups with very different languages, cultures and identity. (See the Key to the colors.)

As tens of thousands of people clearly understood the problem, they pressured their churches and mission agencies for new efforts to these overlooked people groups. Some decided to go themselves, and even founded new agencies for this purpose. Eventually, a great global effort developed to tabulate and reach every Unreached People Group (UPG).

**Look at pages 8 and 9 which update the pie chart to 2018.** The *good news* is that amazing progress has been made in many areas, especially in China. Movements have also been started in many people groups still considered UPGs because they have not yet passed 2% Evangelical. The *bad news* is that NO discernible progress is being made in well over half of the UPGs. Why? As Winter discovered, people don’t go until the task is clear.

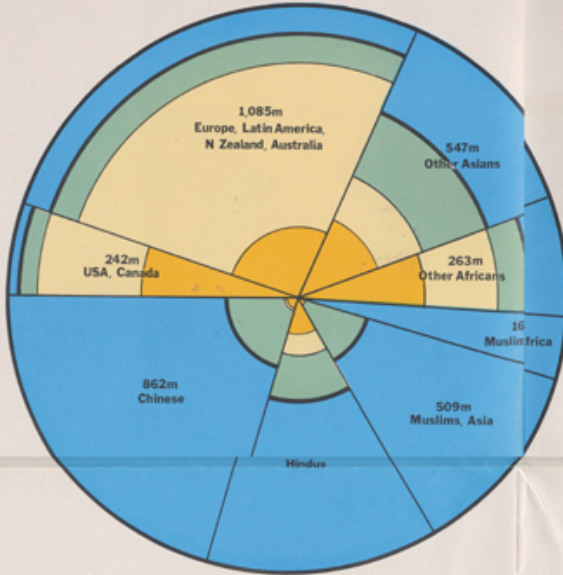
BY **REBECCA LEWIS**

This article is an abridgment of the article by R.W. Lewis entitled “Clarifying the Frontier Mission Task” published in the *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 35:4 (Oct-Dec 2018.) Pie charts copyright: R W Lewis and Chris Maynard, used with permission.

**Rebecca Lewis** has spent 40 years with her husband and family working to see the gift of God’s blessing for families reach the most overlooked peoples on earth.

# PENETRATING THE LAST FRONTIERS

m = 1 million



## The World in Missionary Perspective

- Active Christians**  
These people definitely possess a genuine personal faith and are capable of winning others to that faith. They do need Christian nurture, and many missionaries are involved in this task.
- Inactive Christians**  
These people are culturally within the Christian tradition but hardly qualify as committed Christians. They need "revival." Most evangelize and mission effort (at least one report has it so!) is focused on this group.
- Culturally-near Non-Christians**  
These are those whose cultural tradition and social sphere have already been penetrated by the Christian faith. For these people there are already active, culturally near but hardly qualified as committed Christians. They need "revival." Most evangelize and mission effort (at least one report has it so!) is focused on this group.
- Culturally-distant Non-Christians**  
These are individuals and groups of people who, whether geographically near or far from Christian outreach, are sufficiently different linguistically, socially, economically, or culturally so that they are simply not realistic candidates for membership in existing Christian churches. In the book of Acts the "heathen persons" were Greeks and did not fit with the Jewish synagogue Paul visited. The church as we know it was not truly born until Greeks and other Romans were able to join their own churches.

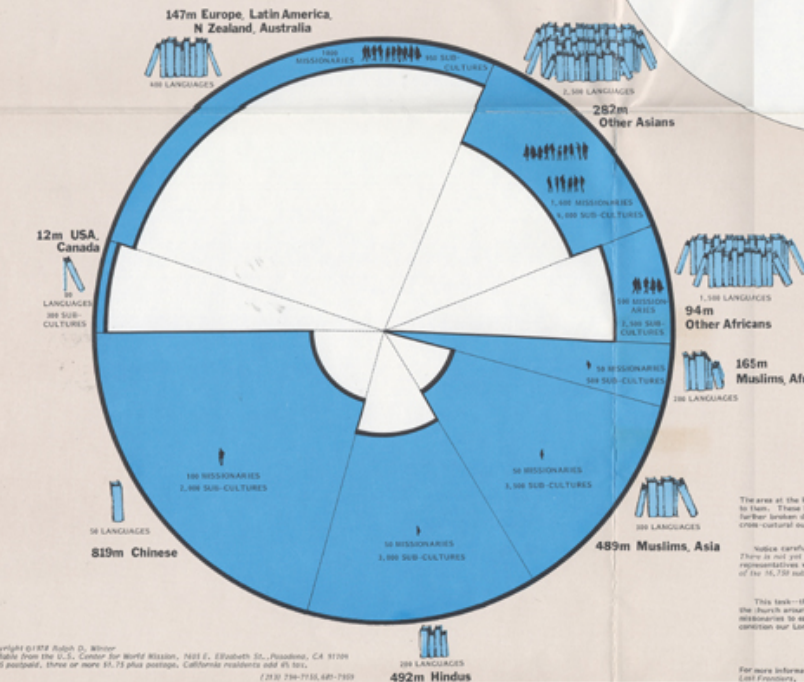
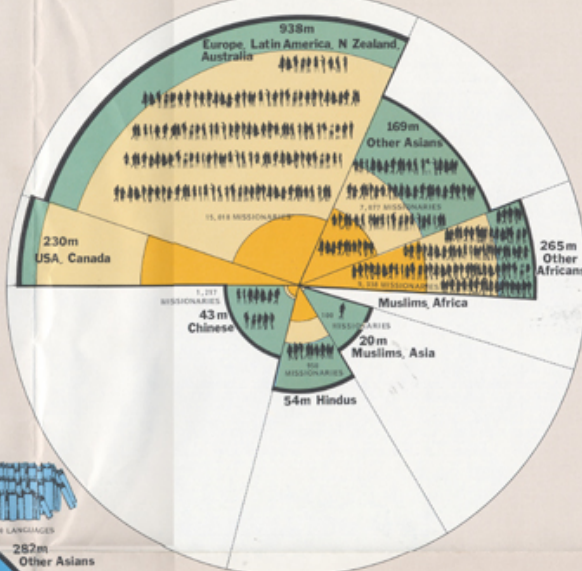
## The Extent of Present Christian Penetration

At the right is shown the degree to which each of the eight pieces of pie has been penetrated by the gospel. Active and inactive Christians plus the non-Christians within their cultural reach constitute almost one-half of the world's population, or 1,719 million people. These three groups, whether or not they are Christians, at least have a church established within their culture.

The people figures in each pie sector, representing the North American Protestant Missionary Force, give you an idea of the number of workers in each section of the world. The U.S.A. and Canada are shown to have no such workers only because they are the "home" countries represented on this chart, and full-time Christian workers working within their own cultures are not considered part of the missionary force.

Note how many more missionaries are here than in the pie below. Please do not let this suggest that there are too many missionaries here! The USCMB does not suggest that missionaries be uprooted and moved elsewhere, nor that present efforts be too much, but it does urge more new effort at the frontiers below.

- 100 Protestant missionaries from the USA and Canada
- 50 languages



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	CHRISTIAN	NON-CHRISTIAN	POP.*	N.A. FOREIGN	DIVERITY OF	LANGUAGES	LANGUAGES	LANGUAGES	LANGUAGES
	POP.	POP.	POP.	MISSIONARIES	LANGUAGES	LANGUAGES	LANGUAGES	LANGUAGES	LANGUAGES
WESTERN WORLD	69	144	213	17	242	—	—	86	300
USA, CANADA	242	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
EUROPE, LAT. AM.	55	688	185	147	1,085	15,018	1,000	680	950
U.K., AUSTRALIA	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
NON-WESTERN WORLD	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
CHINESE	—	819	819	860	1,517	190	50	1,500	—
INDIAN	—	50	50	482	144	300	50	300	1,000
MUSLIM, ASIAN*	—	489	489	500	100	50	50	1,500	—
AFRICA	—	—	—	200	200	—	—	200	500
OTHER ASIAN	—	48	48	100	247	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
OTHER AFRICAN	—	84	84	94	100	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
TOTAL	69	1,085	1,719	1,319	15,799	1,500	1,500	16,750	—
	17%	62%	100%	17%	91%	91%	91%	91%	91%

\* Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C.  
\*\* Note there are an additional 20 million Muslims in the Western World

## The Task Remaining

The area of the left shows the peoples of the world that still have no church or significant mission work reaching out to them. These large blocks of people speak over 1,500 mutually unintelligible languages (see column 8) and are further broken down into approximately 10,000 sub-cultures (see column 9), each of which requires a specialized cross-cultural outreach and its own indigenous church.

Notice carefully that the church cannot normally "grow" into these areas by ordinary evangelistic growth programs. There is not yet a church there to grow. These areas of the world which already have churches must specifically send representatives who will take the time to penetrate these languages and cultures in order to plant a new church in each of the 10,000 sub-cultures which still have no church. Only then can the newly planted churches begin to grow.

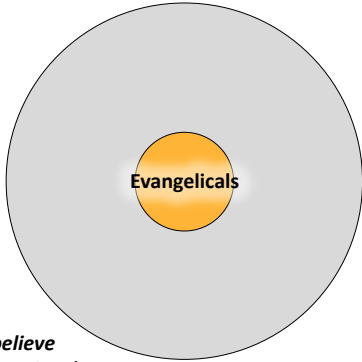
This task—the planting of churches for the first time among the peoples of the world—is the highest priority of the church around the world. Only when the worldwide church deliberately penetrates these last frontiers by sending missionaries to each of them will we be able to confidently say that "every tribe, tongue, and nation has heard"—the criterion our Lord has placed upon His return (Mark 13:35).

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For more information on penetrating the last frontiers, write for the booklet and the film, each entitled *Penetrating the Last Frontiers*.

« The *bad* news is that NO discernible progress is being made in well over half of the UPGs. »  
 Why? People don't go until the task is clear.

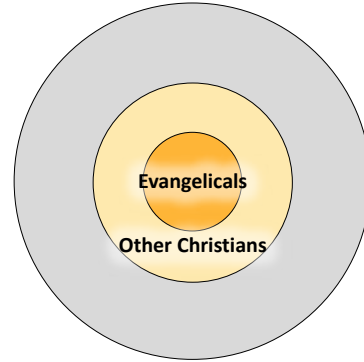
The People of the World



Nearly 10% of the world's population is now evangelical believers.

Evangelicals believe the "evangel" or Good News brings salvation through faith in Jesus.

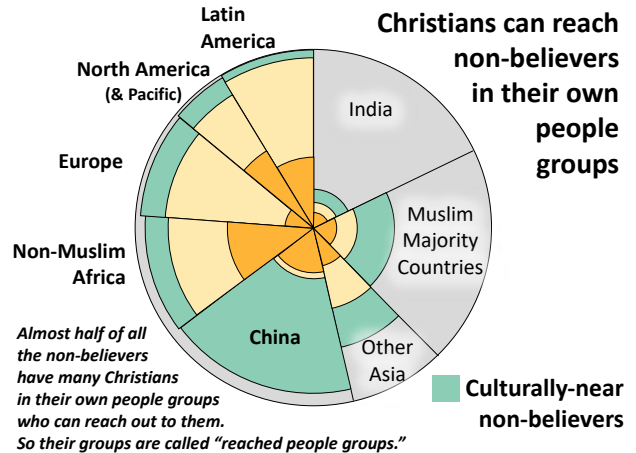
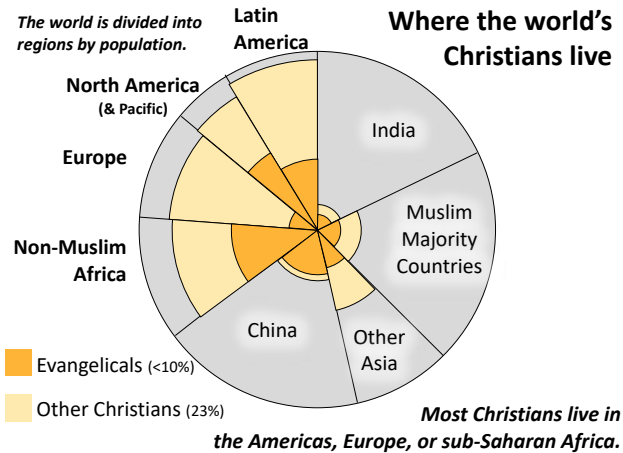
People of the World Who Identify as Christians



About 33% of the world's population identify themselves as Christians

« Each pie section shows how far the gospel has penetrated in that area of the world by showing which people are "Active Christians" able to share the gospel with others, and those that still need to hear. »

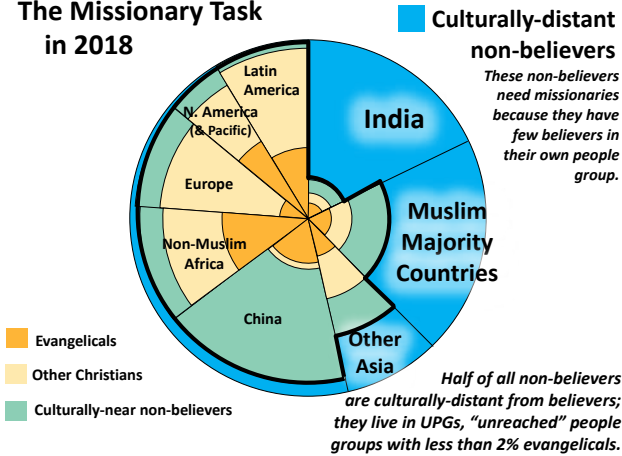
The world is divided into regions by population.



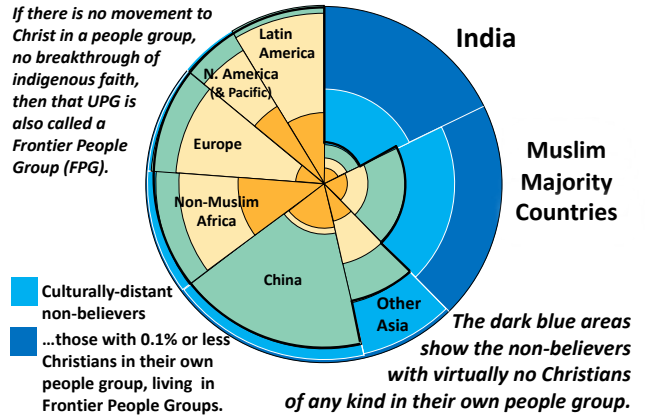
« The purpose of the pie chart presentations, is to show which non-believers can be reached by Christians in their own people group, and which non-believers need help from believers in other cultures. »



**The Missionary Task in 2018**

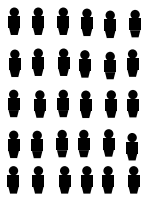


**The Remaining Frontier Mission Task**

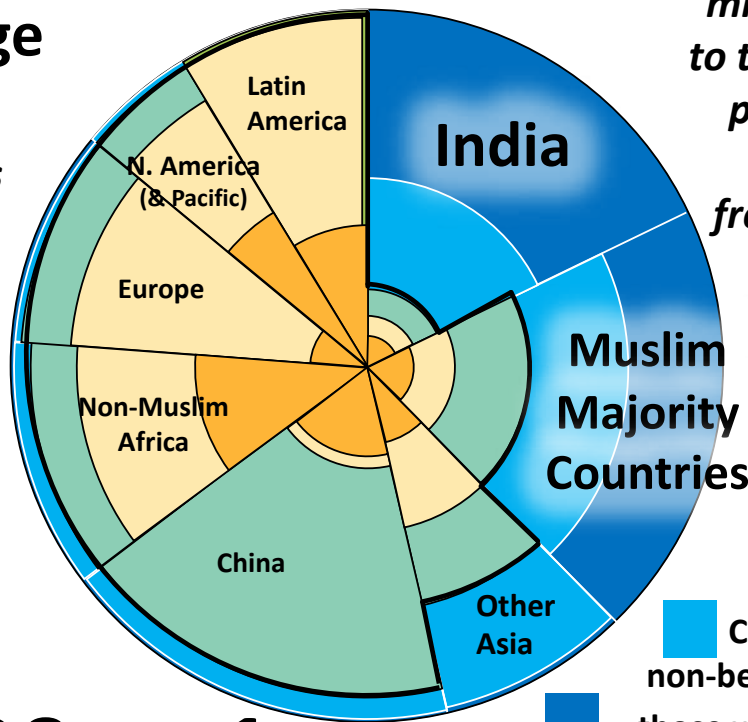


**The Mobilization Challenge**

*For every 30 missionaries that go to the "reached" people groups of the world...*



**30 to 1**



*...roughly ONE missionary goes to the unreached people groups, including the frontier groups.*

**Culturally-distant non-believers in UPGs.**  
**...those with 0.1% or less Christians in their own people group in FPGs.**

« One fourth of the world's population lives in these Frontier People Groups, still waiting to hear that Jesus came to save them also. »

Notice on the pie charts shown on pages 8 and 9, almost half of all the non-believers can now be reached by Evangelicals in their own people group! More than half of the population of non-believers in the world are still in Unreached People Groups, groups with less than 2% Evangelicals. But significant progress is being made in a number of these groups. If we separate out the non-believers that still have almost no believers among them, one fourth of the world's population is left.

To highlight these most overlooked people groups, let us call them “Frontier People Groups” (FPGs)—people groups still requiring “frontier mission” efforts because no breakthrough or indigenous movement to Christ has happened yet. Many factors are obscuring the needs of these remaining people groups. I have detailed some of these in my Jan-Mar *IJFM* article *Losing Sight of the Frontier Mission Task: What's Gone Wrong with the Demographics?* (*IJFM* 35:1).

One fourth of the world's population lives in these Frontier People Groups, still waiting to hear that Jesus came to save them also. Some FPGs have had workers for decades, but with little progress. However by some reports less than 1% of the global missionary force is going to FPGs.

### ***Why is so little progress in Frontier People Groups?***

Some reasons are mostly out of our control:

#### **1) Places**

FPGs tend to be isolated from gospel witness, in places difficult to access politically or geographically. (See page 22 which show that almost 3/4ths of the population of people in FPGs is in South Asia.)

#### **2) Religions**

Most FPGs are members of large religious blocs—like Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism—that provide a global identity and view Christianity as an opposing religion allied with Western political powers. (See the “donuts” on page 22 that show that around 90% of the FPGs are either Muslim or Hindu.)

#### **3) Fears**

Many FPGs may be aware of and respect Jesus, but see Jesus as the savior of just the Christians, not of the whole world. They fear that putting their trust in Jesus will bring shame and ostracism on their family and community.

#### **4) Diaspora**

FPGs tend to stay in their homelands. Less than 3% of the total population of FPGs are in diaspora groups. And those who come to faith elsewhere may be shunned as traitors to their people group or become secret believers with respect to their families.

Other reasons for lack of progress among Frontier People Groups are under our control:

#### **5) Lack of clarity regarding Frontier People Groups**

Efforts to mobilize for UPGs do not make clear which people groups are still waiting to hear about Jesus for the first time and which have strong movements underway or churches simply needing renewal.

#### **6) Lack of clarity about the Frontier Mission Task**

Clarity has also been lost about how to prepare pioneer workers to start Jesus movements in groups untouched by the gospel. Especially in multi-cultural mega cities, “church planting” strategies have shifted from establishing the first community of believing families in a specific people group to starting Western-style (meeting- and program-based) churches that aggregate strangers from many people groups. These rarely result in movements.

## 7) The shift from pioneering to partnership

Wherever the Church *is* established, even if it is in just a small, westernized portion of the population, local believers seek partnership with global churches to help reach their own people group. As a result, churches often bypass agencies and partner with believers in UPGs as a popular church-to-church “mission” strategy. However, such partnership strategies automatically direct mission workers to people groups with believers and churches, and away from FPGs.


## 8) The shift from long- to short-term workers

Mission dollars and interest have shifted from long-term workers to short-term teams, which rarely learn the local language well or go to people groups or areas where there are no Christians. Short-term trips have risen exponentially since 2000, but very few participants return to work long-term among FPGs. Even “career” missionaries today rarely stay more than 5–10 years. This is hardly long enough to effectively establish work among FPGs.

## 9) The shift from implanting the gospel to extracting believers

In most of mission history, missionaries have sought to learn the language of a people group and clearly communicate the gospel to them so that families among them come to faith. New believers in tribal areas have not been removed to other Christian tribal groups—no matter how evil the tribe, even if some were martyred. But when faced with people living in people groups that are modern or aligned with global religions, believers are often encouraged to flee their families and persecution and join another people group that is already Christian. The result is that no progress of the gospel is made among the original people group. The gospel is not implanted; instead, the believers are extracted.

The purpose of the pie chart presentations, like the chart called Penetrating the Last Frontiers, is to show which non-believers can be reached by Christians in their own people group, and which non-believers need help from believers in other cultures. The non-believers in the blue areas need witnesses to come to them from other people groups. The darker blue areas on the 2018 charts are the non-believers in Frontier People Groups, where there are less than 0.1% indigenous Christians and no known movement to Christ. These are the areas that need the most help. To identify these Frontier People Groups clearly, Joshua Project has produced a number of maps and lists, with profiles for each people group. Some of these can be seen on the following pages. To download the 2018 Pie Charts for use in your churches and groups, go to [www.missionfrontiers.org](http://www.missionfrontiers.org). Also available on this site is a narrated version of the pie chart presentation.

Making progress in Frontier People Groups will require both knowing who they are and returning to biblical and historical mission practice for implanting the gospel into people groups with few or no believers. 

# Introducing Frontier People Groups (FPGs)

Editor's Note: The concept of Frontier People Groups is still developing. Rather than representing an established consensus, this article explores potential nuances of the concept. Further insights, clarifications and adjustments may have emerged, even in the time between when this article went to press and you are reading it. For the latest version of this article, and other information regarding FPGs, visit [FrontierPeoples.org](http://FrontierPeoples.org).

*No matter how much one waters and fertilizes,  
no fruit will come forth until after the seed is sown.*

## Seed before fruit

Whenever the only believers inside a people group are scattered individuals estranged from their family and community, the blessing of God remains unknown to that people group, and that people group's interest in the gospel is low.

However, God promised to Abram (Abraham) that every family line of humanity will be blessed (Gen. 12:3, etc.) and Jesus commissioned us to disciple each of these family lines (people groups). And once the Holy Spirit begins blessing the first contagious community of believing households<sup>1</sup> inside that people group, it becomes like the seed of an orchard—bearing the multiplying fruit of God's blessing such as we see on households throughout the book of Acts, and indeed the whole of Scripture.

Such communities of believing households must first experience God's blessing through the kind of *pioneer work* Paul modeled in prayerful collaboration with the Holy Spirit. Only once a community of believing households is modeling God's blessing inside a people group can it benefit from the *partnership work* of outsiders working with those inside the people group in:

- *tending/pruning* for greater fruitfulness, and
- *guarding* against threats to their fruitfulness.

<sup>1</sup> See *The Oikos Hammer—You & Your Household* by Steve Smith, in the Aug/Sep 2018 MF

Inside every people group, the spread of the gospel begins with the first seed of God's blessing—a *contagious community of believing households*. Only after the seed has taken root does *partnership work* become possible—outsiders serving alongside believing families inside a people group.

## FPGs lack this seed

The new designation of *Frontier People Groups* attempts to clarify two very different conditions inside *Unreached People Groups (UPGs)*:

- Among *many* UPGs, the Holy Spirit has already begun blessing a community of believing households. These display to their community what it can look like to follow Christ *inside their own group*. Inside these groups where a community of believing households is enjoying God's blessing, extraordinary things can happen as the Holy Spirit anoints *partnership work* with outsiders. One spectacular example of the multiplying power of the Holy Spirit's blessing through *partnership work* is the T4T movement birthed through Ying Kai's training of 30 believers already present inside one people group.<sup>2</sup>
- *Other* UPGs (here labeled *Frontier People Groups*) still require *pioneer work* for the first community of believing households to experience God's blessing. Steve Smith's years of labor among the Ina people illustrates the *pioneer work* through which the Holy Spirit blesses these first believing households. Once established, these believing households display inside their own people group what it means to follow Christ, and a rapidly spreading gospel movement can develop.<sup>3</sup>

## FPGs need this seed

Ralph Winter described implicitly the importance of the presence of this first community of believing households in his editorial for the Jan/Feb 2006 *MF*. Following is my

<sup>2</sup> *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution* by Steve Smith.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

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**Robby Butler** is General Director for Mission Network, production manager for Steve Smith's "No Place Left" saga and editor for James Nyman's "Stubborn Perseverance." He contributes to Mission Frontiers occasionally and mostly researches what is working best to advance God's kingdom, then distills this to equip others.

own adaptation to reflect Winter's additional concern, expressed explicitly elsewhere, that we learn to think in terms of households rather than just individuals:

Imagine an individual coming to Christ in a *reached* people group. The new believer can observe, interact with and follow the example of believing households inside the new believer's own people group. And others in that people group will have no thought that the new believer has left their people group to follow Christ.

How different it is where individuals are among the first inside their people group to believe. With no patterns yet established for following Christ inside their own people group, these first believers will commonly assume—along with their family and community—that to follow Christ means leaving their own people group to adopt the outside worker's culture, or the culture of some "Christian" people. The outside worker and other Christians may also implicitly or even explicitly encourage such "conversion" away from the new believer's culture and people group. *This common misunderstanding is the primary obstacle to be overcome in pioneer work among Frontier People Groups.*

Inside our own "Christian" peoples we have learned to be quite patient in sowing God's Word and letting the Holy Spirit transform individuals and even "deviant" communities at their own pace. But when it comes to people groups whose identity is wrapped up with "competing" world religions, we are often far less patient about allowing the Holy Spirit to change hearts through the Word of God over time. Too often in such contexts we engage in urging "conversion" of new believers to cultural forms we consider "Christian," but which separate them prematurely from their own people group.

When the first believers in a *Frontier People Group* embrace a new, foreign "Christian" culture, their family and community perceive them as betraying their own people group. This generally provokes both unnecessary and unfortunate persecution of the individual, and community rejection of the gospel, which may have nothing to do with the new believers' faith or the merits of the gospel itself.

For the gospel to spread rapidly inside a *Frontier People Group*, the Holy Spirit must first bless a community of believing households, and guide them in wrestling together through what it means to follow Christ inside their own people group.

This Spirit-led emergence and modeling of new patterns—conforming faithfully to the Bible while remaining inside their own people group—paves the way for many others to follow Christ inside their group. And as God's blessing spreads within this people group, the Holy Spirit will lead the believers there and the rest of their people group to see that connection with the global body of Christ does *not* separate them from their own people group.

As this first community of believing households sorts out how to follow Christ inside their own people group, and the rest of the people group begins to observe that following Christ does not require leaving their people group, biblical faith can spread very rapidly. When this shift of perspective occurs, *pioneer work* gives way to *partnership work*, and the people group leaves the *frontier* category.

## The spiritual and social realities of FPGs

Behind all the statistics, and the physical presence or absence of the first believing households, lie some very significant spiritual and social realities:

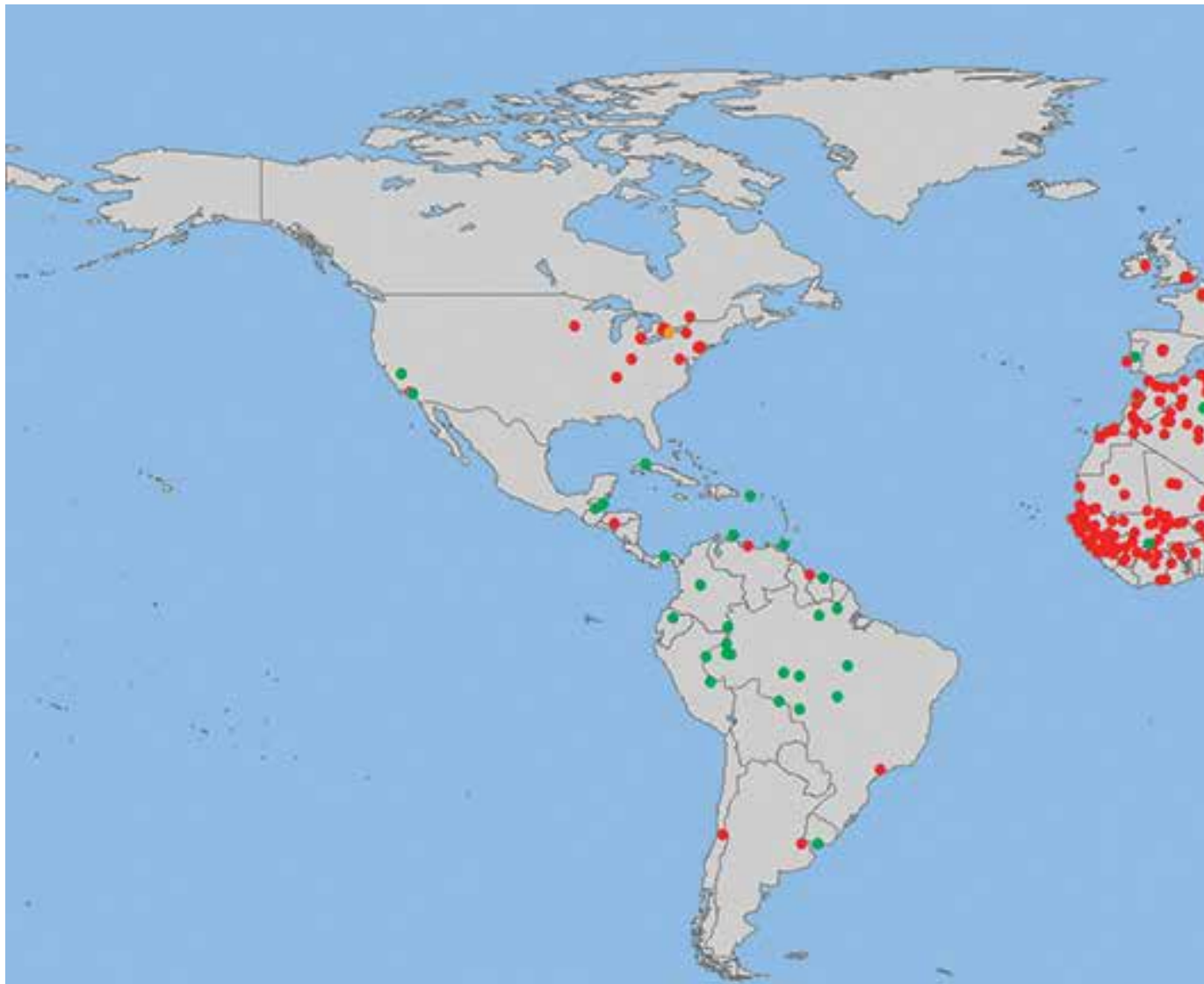
- **Socially**, frontier peoples are commonly bound to a perception of their own religion as central to their identity as a people. They have no living models for following Christ without betraying their people group to join another people. And outsiders commonly share this perception of their religion as central to their identity as a people group. Thus there is often pressure both from inside and outside *frontier people groups* for new believers to leave their people group to follow Christ. This is the dynamic which *pioneer work* must overcome if there is ever to be a rapid gospel movement within that people group.
- **Spiritually**, the families in these peoples remain "separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in [God's people] and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12).

Whenever the only believers inside a people group are scattered individuals estranged from their family and community, the blessing of God remains unknown to that people group, and that people group's interest in the gospel is low.

## The finishable task is among FPGs

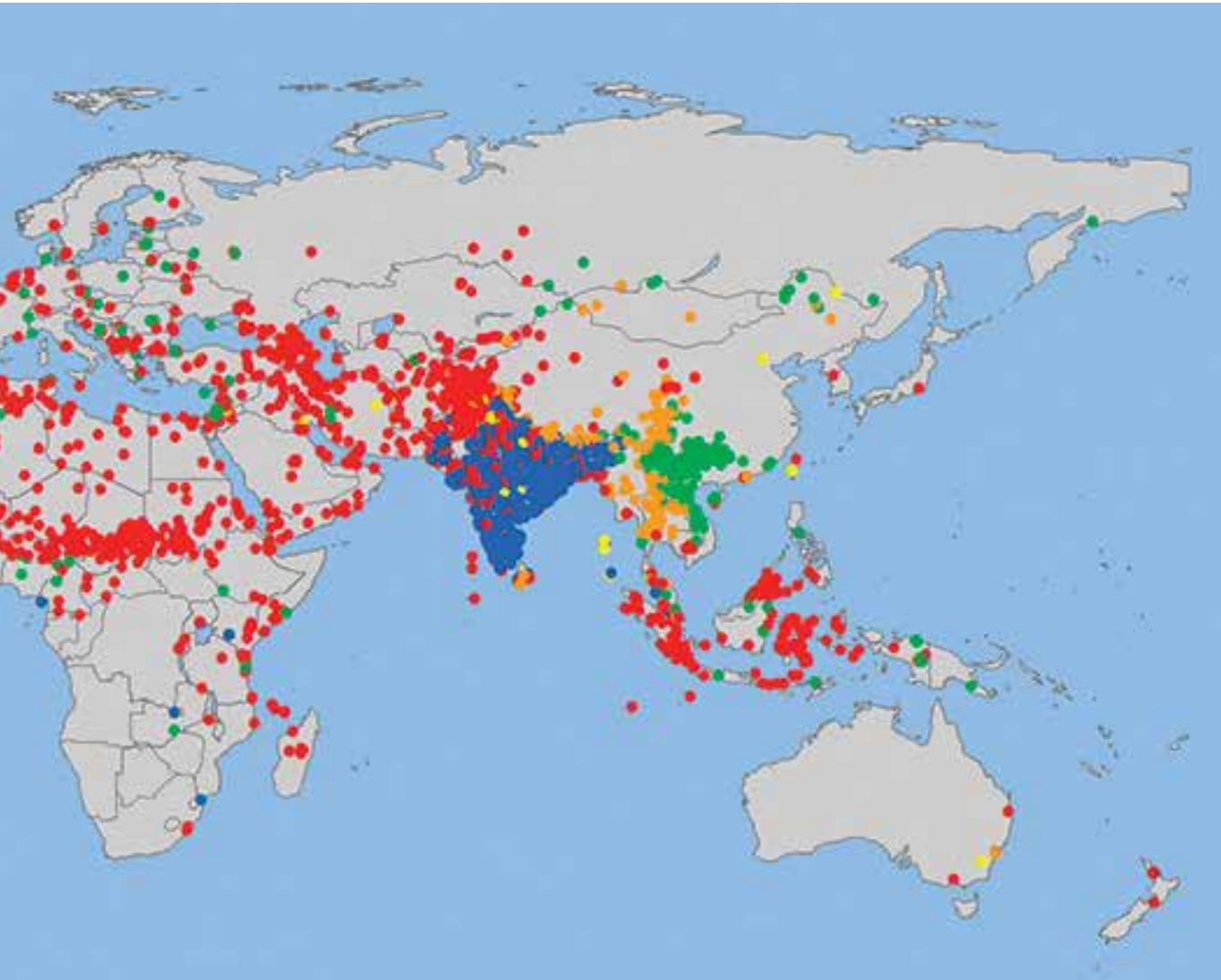
Inside *Frontier People Groups*—where the first community of believing households has yet to experience God's blessing—this initial *pioneer work* is a *finishable* task. Once the Holy Spirit has blessed the first community of believing households, nurturing and guarding this community becomes the ongoing task of *partnership work*.

# Frontier People Groups



Religion (groups)	
● Islam	(2,125)
● Hinduism	(1,858)
● Ethnic Religions	(414)
● Buddhism	(222)
● Other Religions	(132)

Gospel Movements: None Reported Christian Adherents:  $\leq 0.1\%$



From	To	PGs	Population
	< 100 K	3,699	65 Million
100 K	< 500 K	650	149 Million
500 K	< 1 M	158	112 Million
1 M	< 10 M	213	631 Million
10 M	150 M	31	890 Million
Totals		4,751	1848 Million

Direct link to data: <https://goo.gl/pszEhz>

When a people group is blessed with its first community of believing households, it remains *unreached* initially—in the sense of still needing outside assistance as measured by the statistical standards. **But it is no longer in need of *pioneer work*.** It remains *unreached* because the necessary nurturing and guarding require continuing outside assistance in the form of *partnership work*. As these believing households multiply under the blessing of the Holy Spirit, the group becomes *reached*, and such nurturing and guarding can then come primarily from within.

Thus the focus of *pioneer work* is the seed—the first community of believing households enjoying God’s blessing inside their own people group—with the potential for multiplying rapidly.

*Non-Frontier* people groups contain this seed in two categories:

- *Reached* people groups—where the gospel is widely known and has brought widespread blessing—are like mature orchards. These still need renewal (tending) and guarding against the complacency that often comes where there is little opposition. But this kind of ministry can come mostly from inside the people group.
- *Unreached* people groups (no longer in the *Frontier* category)—where the first community of believing households is experiencing God’s blessing—are like orchards that have just begun bearing fruit. Amidst an ocean of non-believing households in their own people group, these believing households need *partnership work*—assistance and encouragement from outside workers to continue multiplying God’s blessing inside their own people group, often amidst greater opposition than in *reached* people groups.

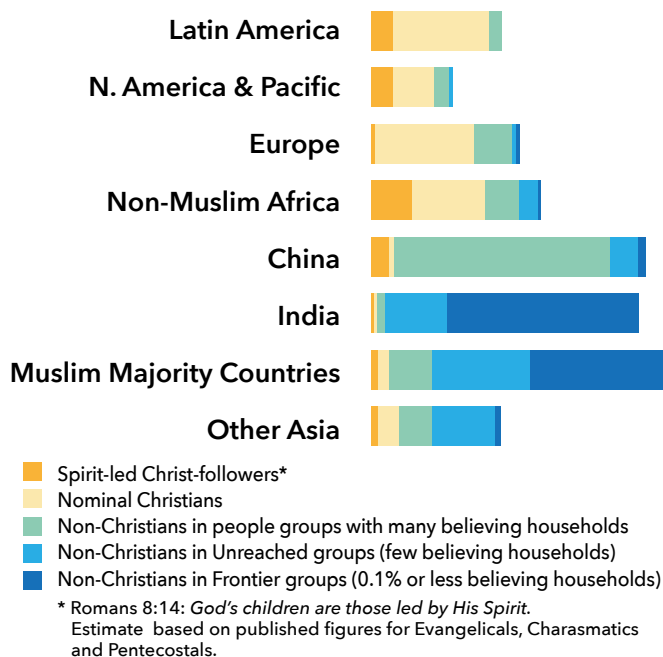
A day will come, perhaps in our lifetime, when the Holy Spirit will complete the finishable task of *pioneer work* inside *every* remaining *Frontier People Group*. Until then, such pioneer work should be the highest priority for those called by God to share Paul’s ambition to preach the gospel where Christ is not known (Rom. 15:20).

## One fourth of humanity lives in FPGs

Three-fourths of the world is estimated to live in people groups, whether *reached* or *unreached*, where a community of believing households is already enjoying God’s blessing.

The remaining one-fourth of humanity is estimated to live in *Frontier People Groups*, where the first enduring community of believing households has yet to be established, and where *pioneer work* is thus still needed.

## Global Distribution of People Groups



As seen in this adaptation of the new “pie chart” (see p. 8), these FPGs are most concentrated where the fewest workers go—India and Muslim majority countries.

## Frontier, Approachable and Responsive Peoples

For 50 years, deployment of workers has been shaped by a simple binary classification<sup>4</sup> in which people groups are considered either:

*reached*—with adequate internal witness, or  
*unreached*—still needing outside assistance.

The additional qualifier *unengaged* was later added to track Unreached People Groups (UPGs) where researchers didn’t know of workers offering such outside assistance.

What these earlier classifications (reached, unreached and unengaged) didn’t adequately reveal is the two dramatically different conditions among UPGs, for which I here suggest these additional labels:

*frontier UPGs*—no community of believing households yet demonstrating God’s blessing inside their own people group. (These need *pioneer work*.)

*receptive UPGs*—a community of believing households is demonstrating God’s blessing to their own people group. (This is the seed of a gospel movement, now able to benefit from *partnership work*.)

<sup>4</sup> This is the core distinction as I understand it from working with Ralph Winter. Strategists of course expanded this dichotomy in more technical language, and researchers established percentage criteria for Evangelicals and Christian adherents in order to apply this dichotomy. But the main point was to establish which groups needed more workers.



Where a community of believing households reveals what God's blessing looks like inside their own people group, non-believing households can see what it looks like to follow Christ *inside their own people*. And they can be invited to follow God in Jesus Christ on the basis of what they have personally observed.

Among *Frontier People Groups*, however, non-believing families have *no opportunity* yet to observe what it means to follow Christ *inside their own people group*. Here pioneer work must follow the Holy Spirit's leading to introduce the first households to God's blessing in such a way that many others will follow.

From this perspective of mission strategy, there are not just two categories of people groups, but three (two sub-categories of unreached). For measurement purposes, the following standards have been proposed:

**frontier**—subset of *unreached*:

- no evidence of a gospel movement;
- 0.1% or less estimated “Christian” based on such available data as a government census;
- *unmet need for pioneer work from outside*

**receptive**—subset of *unreached*:

- early evidence of a gospel movement;
- 0.1% to 5% estimated “Christian” and up to 2% estimated Evangelicals, based on such available data as a government census;
- *ongoing need for partnership work from outside.*

**responsive**—aka *reached*:

- strong evidence of a gospel movement (past or present);
- above 5% estimated “Christian” or above 2% estimated Evangelicals, based on such available data as a government census;
- *little need for outside assistance.*

## How significant is this distinction?

Sixty percent of UPGs are actually *Frontier People Groups* (FPGs).

Until God intervenes, the families in these Frontier People Groups will live and die ...

- without ever knowing a believer
- without ever being prayed for by name
- without the blessing God promised all nations

Yet God *is* intervening...

- Among other unreached people groups, gospel movements have been doubling in number and size every five years since the late 1990s.<sup>5</sup>
- Through a new prayer guide (see p. 20), large global networks are focusing prayer on the 31 largest Frontier People Groups—each of which influences many other people groups. (Half the population of all Frontier People Groups lives in just these 31 groups!)


Among Frontier People Groups, non-believing families have no opportunity yet to observe what it means to follow Christ inside their own people group. Here pioneer work must follow the Holy Spirit's leading to introduce the first households to God's blessing.

## Conclusion

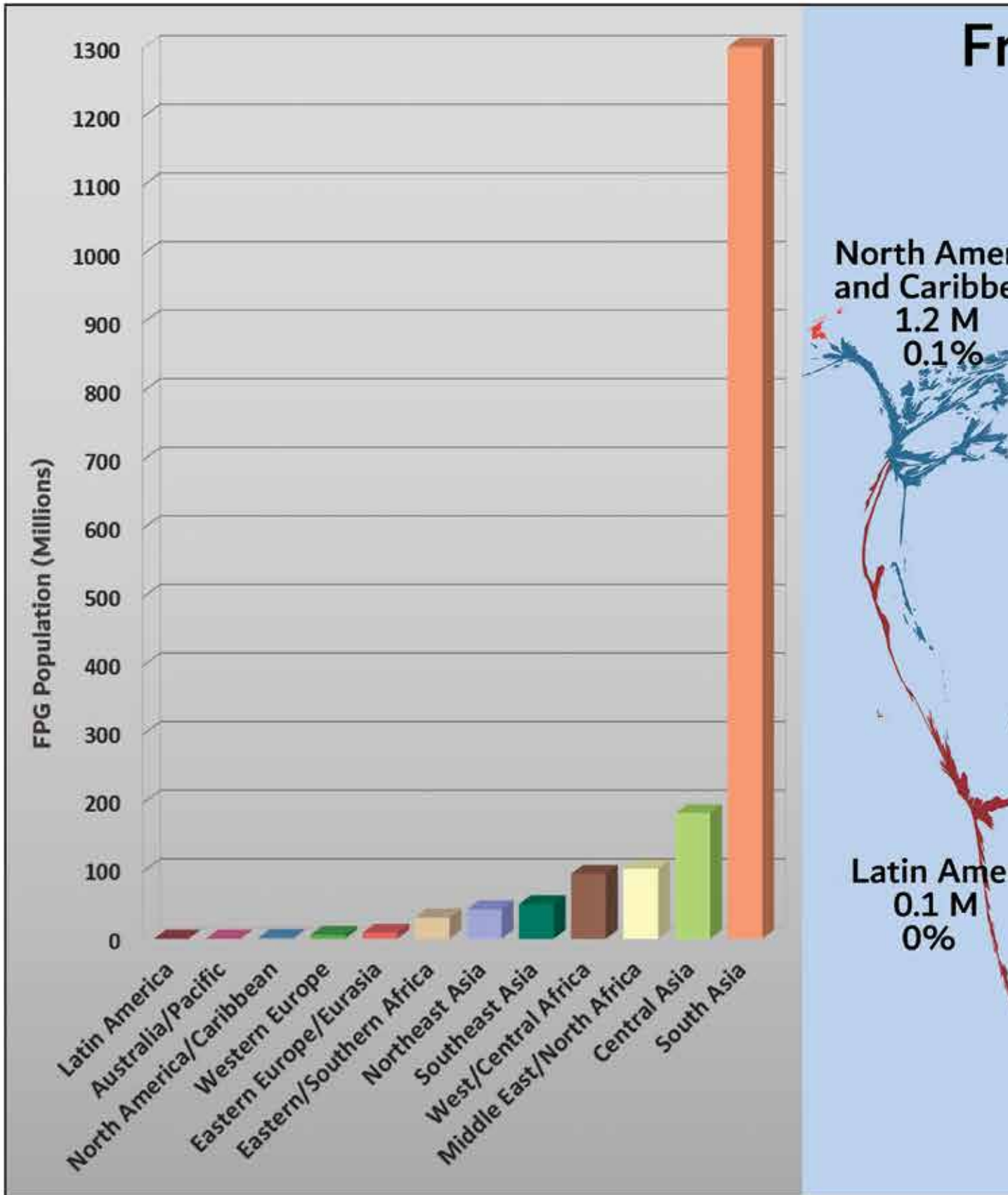
The kingdom of God grows where it is sown.

We now have a clearer view than ever before of where the first believing households have been established and *where they haven't yet been established*.

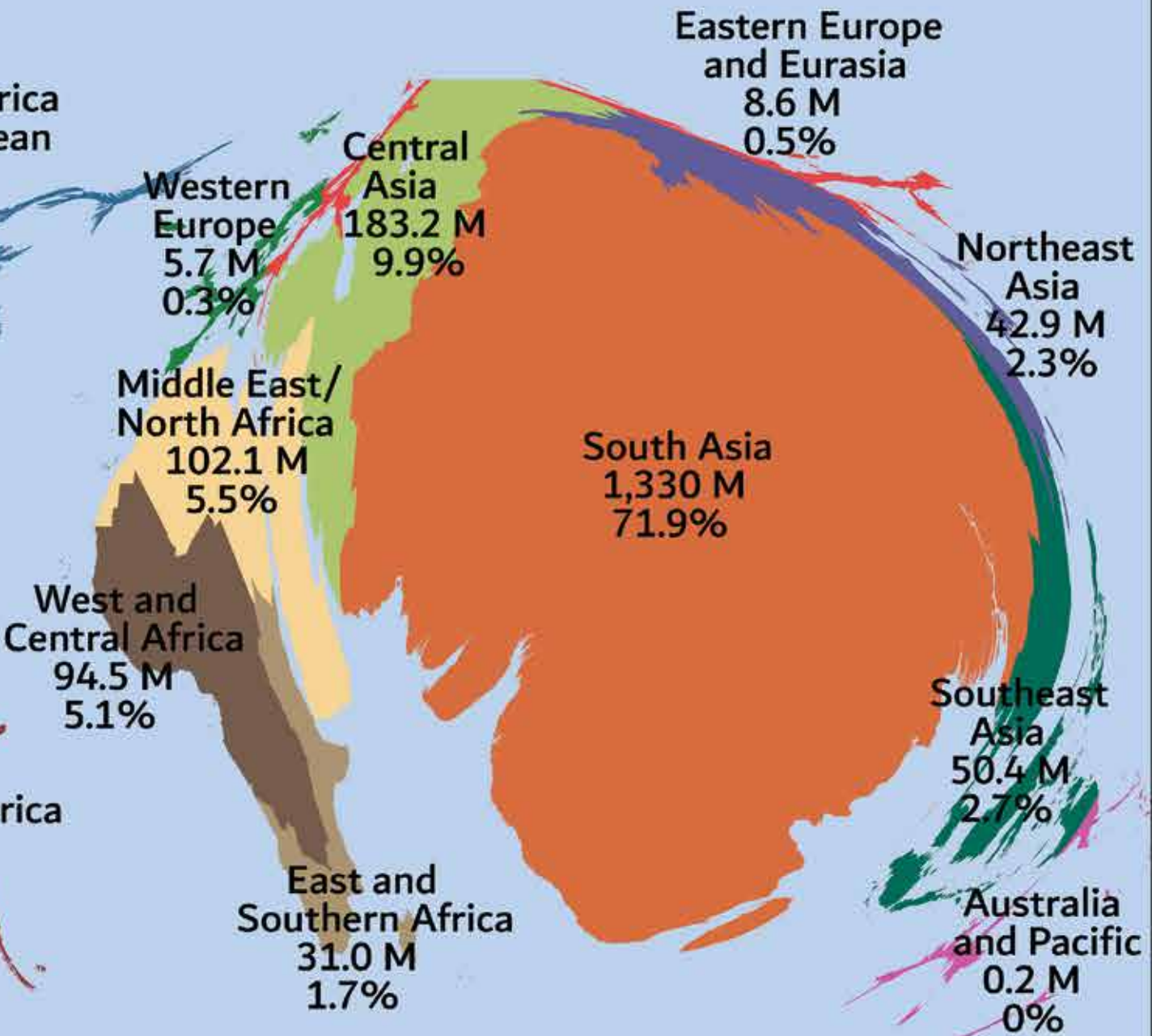
The day will come, perhaps in our lifetime, when the initial *pioneer work* will have been completed in every *Frontier People Group*. Then, in line with God's promise to Abram (Abraham), every family line on earth will have at least begun to experience God's blessing. We are much closer to this day than ever before.

Let nothing delay us further from ensuring that gospel orchards of God's blessing—contagious communities of believing households—are firmly established among every *Frontier People Group* as quickly as possible! 

<sup>5</sup> MultMove.net/astonishing-progress



# Frontier Peoples by Region



Population in Millions  
Data: Joshua Project 2018



# Introducing the Pray for the 31 Prayer Guide

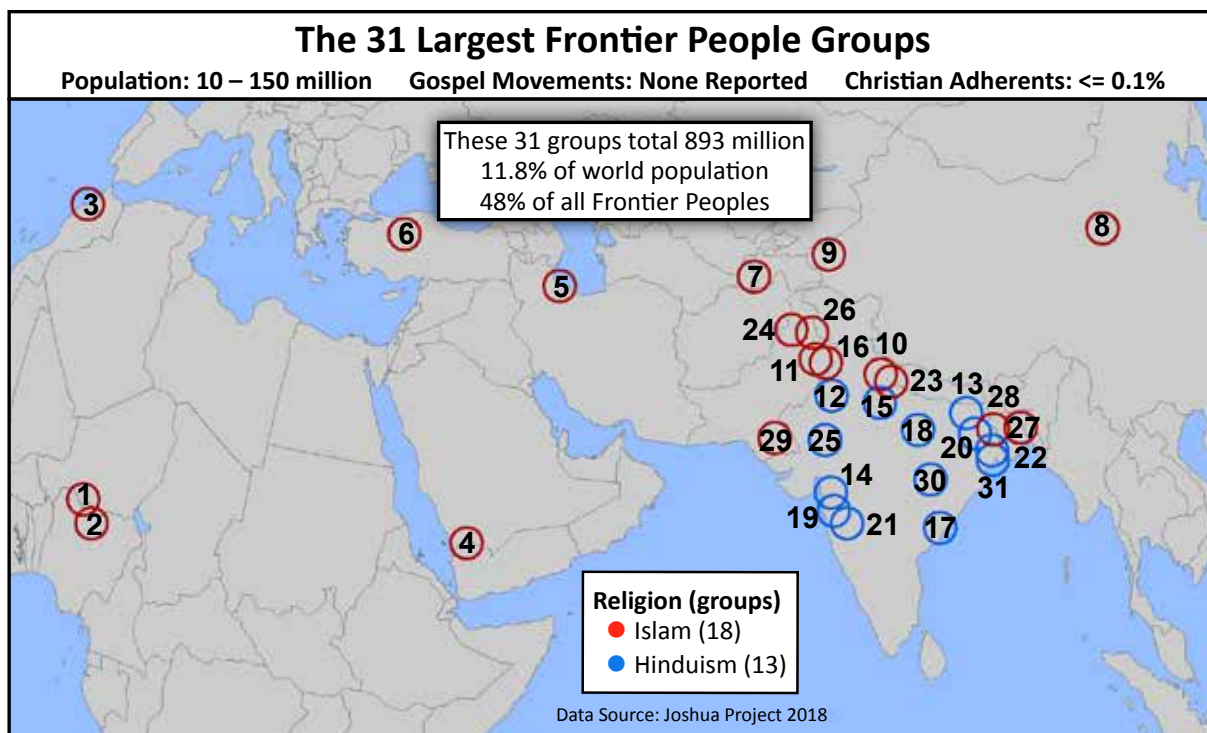
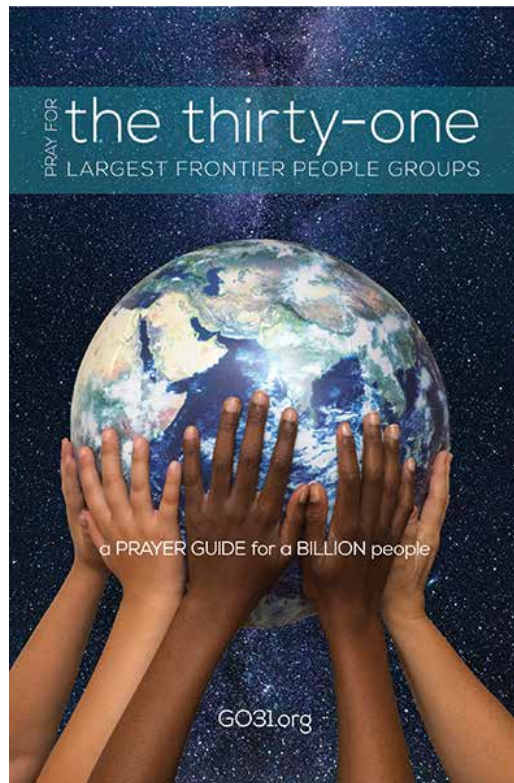
On March 21, 2018, someone who had been studying the new idea of *Frontier People Groups* (FPGs) mentioned to a few prayer leaders the surprising discovery that half the population of all FPGs lives in just 31 people groups with populations of ten million or more.

“Thirty-one is a good number for a prayer guide,” someone observed. Prayer led to quick consensus, then further prayer and sustained collaboration in developing such a prayer guide.

Forty days later, to the day, volunteers had integrated feedback from a variety of prayer and mission leaders and sent to the printer the first edition of a prayer guide for the 31 largest Frontier People Groups.

Global interest was immediate and long before this first edition was back from the printer, volunteers were busily translating it into a half-dozen or more languages.

In subsequent months, a major revision and expansion were completed to form the prayer guide showcased here. To get the latest electronic copy, print copies, or to inquire about translations, visit [Go31.org](http://Go31.org).



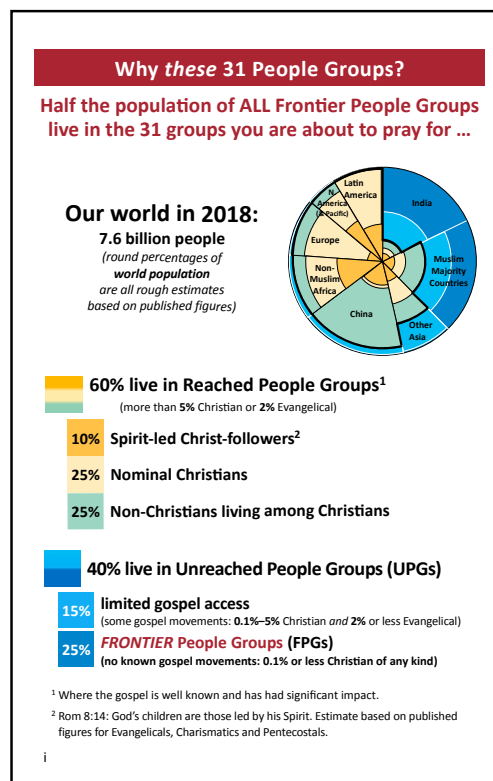
## Frontier Peoples over 10,000,000 sorted by Region, then People name, then Country

West and Central Africa	South Asia	
1 ● Hausa in Niger	10 ● Ansari in India	21 ● Mahratta in India
2 ● Hausa in Nigeria	11 ● Arain in Pakistan	22 ● Nai in India
Middle East / North Africa	12 ● Bania in India	23 ● Pashtun in India
3 ● Arab, Moroccan in Morocco	13 ● Brahmin in India	24 ● Pashtun in Pakistan
4 ● Yemeni (Northern) in Yemen	14 ● Dhobi in India	25 ● Rajput in India
Central Asia	15 ● Jat in India	26 ● Rajput in Pakistan
5 ● Azerbaijani, Azeri Turk in Iran	16 ● Jat in Pakistan	27 ● Shaikh in Bangladesh
6 ● Turk in Turkey	17 ● Kapu in India	28 ● Shaikh in India
7 ● Uzbek (Northern) in Uzbekistan	18 ● Kumhar in India	29 ● Shaikh in Pakistan
Northeast Asia	19 ● Kunbi in India	30 ● Teli in India
8 ● Hui in China	20 ● Kurmi in India	31 ● Yadav in India
9 ● Uyghur in China		

Further research may reveal that some or all of these people groups are actually several related but distinct people groups, each needing one or more movements.

Here are some of this guide’s special features:

- Inside the front cover is the listing above of the thirty-one groups, organized by region. Notice the concentration in South Asia, keyed to the numbered circles on the map shown on the opposite page.
- Colored rings on the map, dots in the table, and banners over the profile show which people groups are Muslim (●) and which are Hindu (●).
- The next page of the prayer guide distills the new pie chart (p. 8–9 of this MF) into one page (right).
- Subsequent pages of this guide cover:
  - A brief overview of *Frontier People Groups*.
  - The key role of prayer in opening these groups to receive God’s blessing in Jesus.
  - The biblical basis and significance of pursuing gospel movements in prayer.
  - Prayer for the Bible to become fully available to all 31 of these people groups.
  - General prayer points for all FPGs
  - Suggestions for involving kids and youth.



## Yemeni (Northern) in Yemen — 4



<b>Population</b>	12,111,000	
<b>Language</b>	Arabic, Sanaani Spoken	
<b>Religion</b>	Islam	
<b>Est. Christians*</b>	0.0%	0
<b>Movement</b>	None Reported	
<b>Written Scripture</b>	None	
<b>Oral Scripture</b>	None	
<b>Workers Needed**</b>	242	

\* based on census reports \*\* for 1 worker per 50,000

### Yemeni (Northern) in Yemen

Northern Yemeni tribes are also known as Sanaani Arabs. The proxy war in Yemen between Saudi Arabia and Iran is putting millions in jeopardy, first of starvation and now of a Cholera epidemic. Children and widows live in extreme danger. The U.N. has declared this the world's worst humanitarian disaster. Cultivation of the narcotic qat dominates agriculture, and war is hindering humanitarian aid.

### Ministry Obstacles

War, atrocities and qat addiction inflict lasting wounds on the psyche of most Northern Yemeni. Islamic teaching contradicts the place of honor which the Qur'an gives to the Bible. And individual "conversion" to Christianity is perceived as betrayal, with the potential of bringing dishonor to an entire clan.

### Outreach Opportunities

Pray for the gospel to spread through NGO's developing businesses run by widows, rescuing both their children and their honor.

Please also see the [prayer points on page vi](#), and the full profile at: [JoshuaProject.net/people\\_groups/14715/YM](http://JoshuaProject.net/people_groups/14715/YM)

Photo: Flickr / Al Jazeera English

### Pray for the followers of Christ

The dangerous environment provides the few Sanaani believers opportunity to exercise great faith and service, sparking multiplication of believing households. (Ps 112:4; Jn 13:35)

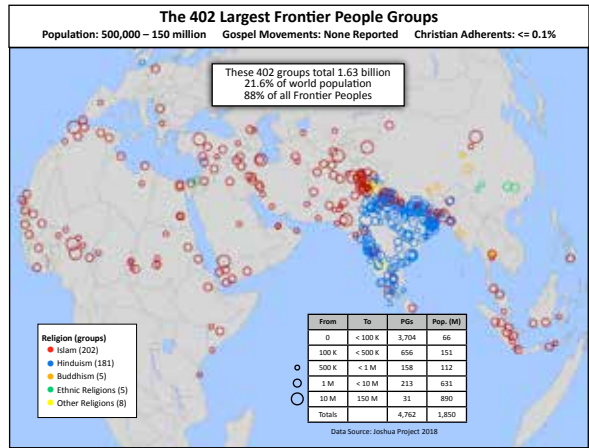
### Pray for the entire people group

Pray for a gospel movement to make this poorest of Arab peoples into a wellspring of blessing for the Muslim world (1 Cor 1:27-30). Islam esteems Jesus the Messiah (Isa al Masih in the Qur'an) as a great prophet born of a virgin. Pray for despairing Yemenis, especially mothers, to have revelations and dreams of Jesus, cry out to God for help, and be drawn to the Bible.

### Scripture focus

"The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth." Psalm 145:18

- The main portion of the prayer guide is a separate page for each of the 31 groups, adapted from Joshua Project profiles, with:
  - a color map, picture, statistics, and
  - background information and prayer points.
- The back portion of the prayer guide includes:
  - Helpful definitions of key terms.
  - Introduction and map of the 400 largest and most influential FPGs, containing 90% of the population of all FPGs.

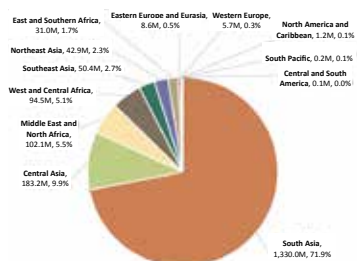


Full map and people group listing at: [JoshuaProject.net/frontier/3](http://JoshuaProject.net/frontier/3)

- Charts showing the breakdown of all FPGs—by region and by religion.
- Other prayer resources.

For a free digital or review copy, for print copies, or to inquire about translations, visit [Go31.org](http://Go31.org)

### Frontier Peoples Population by Region

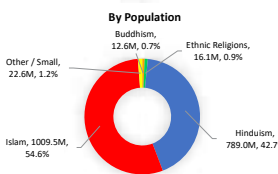
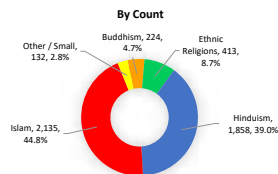


Region (# of countries)	Count	Population (in millions)	% Global Frontier Peoples Population
South Asia (8)	2,935	1,330.0M	71.9%
Central Asia (10)	271	183.2M	9.9%
Middle East and North Africa (19)	238	102.1M	5.5%
West and Central Africa (24)	207	94.5M	5.1%
Southeast Asia (11)	324	50.4M	2.7%
Northeast Asia (8)	292	42.9M	2.3%
East and Southern Africa (28)	160	31.0M	1.7%
Eastern Europe and Eurasia (23)	144	8.6M	0.5%
Western Europe (28)	108	5.7M	0.3%
North America and Caribbean (30)	41	1.2M	0.1%
South Pacific (27)	15	0.2M	0.0%
Central and South America (22)	27	0.1M	0.0%
All Frontier People Groups	4,762	1,850.0M	

Listing of Countries in Regions at: [JoshuaProject.net/global/regions](http://JoshuaProject.net/global/regions)  
Frontier Peoples listings and maps at: [JoshuaProject.net/frontier/1](http://JoshuaProject.net/frontier/1)

### Frontier Peoples by Religion

Religion	Count	% Count	Population (in millions)	% Population
Buddhism	224	4.7%	12.6M	0.7%
Ethnic Religions	413	8.7%	16.1M	0.9%
Hinduism	1,858	39.0%	789.2M	42.7%
Islam	2,135	44.8%	1,009.5M	54.6%
Other / Small	132	2.8%	22.6M	1.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,762</b>		<b>1,850.0M</b>	



Listing of Peoples by Religions at: [JoshuaProject.net/religions](http://JoshuaProject.net/religions)  
Frontier Peoples listings and maps at: [JoshuaProject.net/frontier/1](http://JoshuaProject.net/frontier/1)

This prayer guide is a gift to Christ's body, published in collaboration with these organizations and networks: 24:14 Coalition, 24:14 Inherit the Nations, Alliance for the Unreached, Ethnê Movement, Fellowship of Prayer Strategists, Frontier Ventures, Frontiers, Global Prayer Digest, Go2020, Great Commission Community, International Prayer Connect, International Prayer Council, Joshua Project, Light of the World Prayer Center, Mission Network/MultMove.net, Perspectives, Telos Fellowship, The Seed Company/Pray for Zero, International Orality Network, and many others

## Pray for the 31 - Prayer Guide

25% of the world lives in Frontier People Groups (FPGs), where

- no gospel movement is multiplying God's blessing yet, and
- 0.1% or less are identified as Christian Adherents.

Until God intervenes, the families in these FPGs will live and die ...

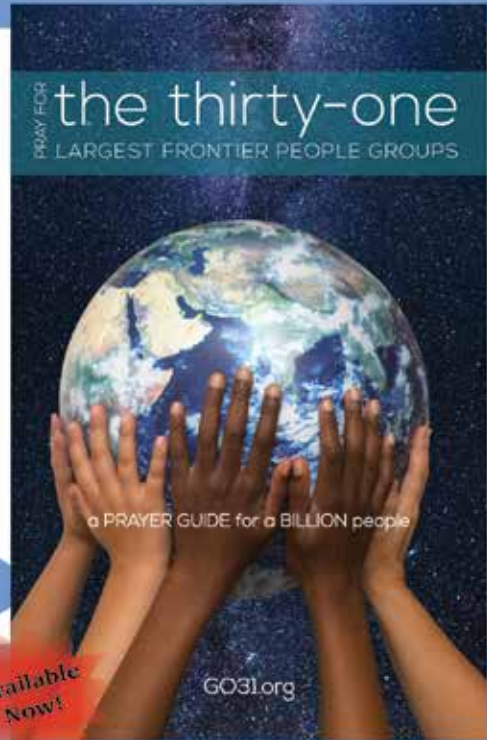
- without ever knowing a believer
- without ever being prayed for by name
- without knowing the Father who longs to embrace and bless them

God is intervening...

- Among other people groups, Acts-like gospel movements have been doubling in number and size every five years since the late 1990s.
- Global networks are now focusing prayer on the 31 largest Frontier People Groups, each with influence over many other people groups.

**These 31 largest FPGs contain  
HALF the population of all Frontier People Groups.**

*Contains the information you need to  
pray strategically for these groups!*

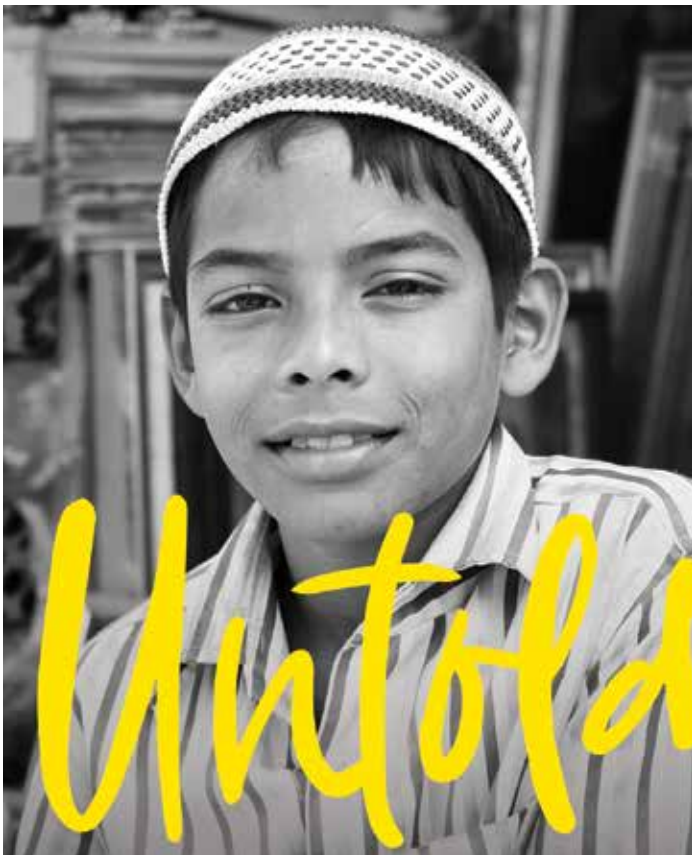


Visit  
Go31.org  
to:

- Get your free digital prayer guide (English/Spanish)
- Request a free print review copy (English only)
- Order a quantity to share with others
- Check for other translations (many in process)
- Join the effort to bring God's blessing to these Frontier People Groups

Available  
Now!

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**Tell God's  
Story  
While Yours  
Unfolds.**

frontiersUSA.org







# How to Reach Frontier Peoples: Following Paul's Principles

Throughout most of Christian history, movements to Christ have developed in new cultures following certain biblical principles. Historically, *not one people group has been won to Christ without an indigenous movement developing at some point within the group.*

The previous articles focused on the “who” of clarifying the remaining frontier mission task—figuring out which people groups still have no indigenous movements to Christ and so still need a pioneering or frontier mission outreach. This article will focus on the “how”—how frontier groups have historically been approached differently than groups that already have indigenous movements.

Throughout the centuries, movements to Christ have been stillborn in a lot of the remaining Frontier People Groups, even when workers have been sent. It seems that when we got to these particular people groups, mostly Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, *we changed our message and our methods.* We did not bring the message as Good News to the whole people group or community, as evangelicals have continued to do with pagan tribal groups everywhere.

Virtually all tribal groups are very religious, but tribal believers have not been encouraged to leave their families and move to a different Christian tribe, learn a new language, change their name, eat differently and not go back, as has so often happened to Hindus, Muslims or Buddhists who become believers. The gospel has been able to penetrate and change animistic tribal groups, often very demonic and violent, because *the believers have continued to be a part of the tribe.*

For some reason, however, when reaching out to people groups that are a part of major religious groups, suddenly missionaries have insisted that those becoming believers must leave their families and communities in order to follow Jesus. When Hindus come to Christ, their faith is suspect if they refuse to eat beef. Likewise, Muslims are sometimes expected to prove their faith in Christ by eating pork, removing their veils, or not fasting during Ramadan.

Such behavior insures that their families will be shamed, and their communities will ostracize them. Sometimes believers have even been encouraged to change their names from their family names, which sound Hindu or Muslim, to names that sound Christian. Is it any surprise that the community they come from becomes very resistant to any further wooing away of their relatives?

*We need to return to following biblical principles of spreading the gospel into new cultures, whereby God establishes His Fatherhood in relation to believers in all people groups.*

Throughout the centuries, movements to Christ have been stillborn in a lot of the remaining Frontier People Groups, even when workers have been sent. It seems that when we got to these particular people groups, mostly Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, *we changed our message and our methods.*

## Paul sets the precedent and principles for frontier missions

Paul was specifically called by God to stop focusing on winning his own people group, the Jews, and to focus on winning the Gentiles, meaning non-Jewish people groups. In doing so, Paul set the precedent for a distinct calling to “frontier missions” by making it his ambition to go “where Christ has not been named” (Romans 15:20).

BY **REBECCA LEWIS**

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Paul also firmly established the foundational missiological principle of frontier missions, with the approval of the Jerusalem council in Acts 15. This principle was that new people groups coming to Christ did not have to get rid of their own people group identity and take on the identity of another socio-religious group, such as Judaism, in order to follow Jesus. Salvation was by faith alone.

The other apostles agreed to “not make it difficult” for the new people groups turning to God (Acts 15:19), by adding on to their faith Jewish religious requirements, because “God who knows the heart, had shown that He accepted them, through giving them the Holy Spirit” just as He had to the apostles (Acts 15: 8). This verse refers to Peter’s visit to the home of a Roman Centurion, where the Holy Spirit fell upon him and his family, before Peter had finished speaking and before they had been baptized.

Paul called this breakthrough in missiological understanding “the mystery of the gospel” revealed to him by God (Rom. 16:24-26, Eph. 3:1-20). Paul asserted that God’s plan from the beginning was that all the peoples of the world could enter into relationship with Him through faith in Christ alone, joint heirs of salvation by faith, all children of God and a part of the body of Christ, *no matter how different they were*. The gospel was, in fact, the power of salvation to all who believed, whether Jewish or from any other people group, the very power of God to bring righteousness by faith alone (Rom. 1:16-17).

Throughout most of Protestant mission history, Paul’s principle has been followed. And, through faith, the gospel has overcome small tribal religions with witchcraft and idols, cannibalism and violence.

*“But isn’t it another thing entirely to be a part of a massive people group, united politically, with a clear religious hierarchy and specific religious requirements? Surely, in that case, leaving your people group identity to join another more identified with Christ is important!”*

Let’s see.

### **Was Roman citizenship a socio-religious-political identity?**

The Romans were the Jews’ political enemies and worshippers of a whole pantheon of gods, including their own emperor. Peter was shocked that God asked him to visit a Roman Centurion. He said to Cornelius, “It is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come into (the house) of one from another nation” because that home was “unclean” (Acts 10:28).

The last thing that Peter and his companions expected was that God would fully accept these uncircumcised “unclean” Romans. The Roman Empire was not a secular society, but included a state religion that preceded Christ and continued for the following three centuries. Just like in some modern societies, the religion and politics of Rome were completely intertwined. Why would God affirm Roman believers *who stayed Romans*?

But God did just that. He gave His Holy Spirit to the whole family of a Roman military officer. Thereby, God revealed clearly that He accepted the faith of Roman citizens, *just as they were*. There is no suggestion in Acts that Cornelius was required to leave either his Roman citizenship or even his military office. Seeing other Gentiles also blessed by God, Paul realized that Roman believers could remain Roman citizens and not become Jews (even though their Roman citizenship identified them with an emperor who demanded to be worshipped as a god).

Over the next 250 years, from time to time Roman believers in Jesus were required to prove they worshipped the emperor or suffer imprisonment or even death. Notice that Rome considered people to be political traitors if they were religious traitors. Some Roman Christians bought fake proofs of worship and others gladly took their punishment. But, following Paul’s command they still did not change people groups and become Jews, even though being Jewish would have exempted them from Roman religious expectations of emperor worship. A change of socio-religious identity would have not only protected Roman believers from times of persecution but also protected the Jewish believers from harassment (from both Roman and Jewish authorities).

Because Paul understood the “mystery of the gospel”—the importance of salvation through faith in Jesus alone—it was able to spread in Roman society, producing an indigenous movement of believers. In 250 years, the gospel movement among the Romans transformed the Roman Empire.

In his letters, Paul repeatedly insists that *the only “conversion” be to allegiance to God through Christ himself*, not to any worldly identity or religious pattern. Paul even took the pen into his own hand, at the end of the letter to Galatians, to underscore the crucial nature of the revelation he had received from God, concerning how the gospel is a matter of faith in Christ, not socio-religious conversion. Paul wrote, “*Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to the Israel of God.*” (Gal. 6:15-16).

## Paul's frontier mission principles throughout the ages

For most of Christian history, those bringing the gospel to new people groups have followed the principles revealed by God to Paul. The believers in various peoples, whether Ethiopian, Armenian, Persian, Irish, Slavic or Indian, were not required to take on a Roman Christian identity to have faith in Christ. Each retained their own people group identity as the movement to Christ grew in their midst.

Thankfully, where Paul's biblical principles are being applied, movements among some of the most "resistant" people groups are now appearing.

However, later, contrary to what Paul preached, a coercive Roman Catholic hierarchy modeled on Roman government principles began to insist that believers in other cultures swear allegiance not just to Christ but also to Roman Catholic councils and to the Pope in Rome (ironically making him god-like similar to the Roman Emperor). So, two hundred years after the Irish Celts came to Christ and became outstanding missionaries to much of Europe, they were forced into the Roman ecclesiastical fold at the Synod of Whitby (664AD). Even later in 1600, the Catholics tried to force the Indian St. Thomas movement to join them but with little success. The Protestant Reformation was in part a revolt against this socio-religious-political domination and was seen as a heretical tragedy by institutional Roman Christianity, but seen as a return to genuine faith and Spirit-led movements by other peoples.

During most of the Protestant mission era, Paul's insistence that conversion be to Christ alone has prevailed. Even former cannibals have not been removed from their tribe in order to be better believers in another culture. As the gospel was brought to tribes in Africa, the Amazon, and the Pacific, *believers remained in and identified with their own people groups* while consistently being delivered from their idolatrous, violent or sexually-depraved ways. We did not make it difficult for movements to develop in these people groups, even though most went through various kinds of syncretism as they grew in their faith, similar to our own histories.

**Only in some contexts have Paul's biblical missiological principles been called into question by Protestants, and actively stigmatized by some.** Believers from Hindu and Muslim people groups, in particular, have been taught to "come out from among them" (2 Cor. 6:16-18, Isa. 52:11). But Paul used this phrase concerning demonic practices, *not* in reference to people group affiliation. Paul is reminding the Corinthian believers that God has become their Father, and now lives and walks among them, making them His own people (*without* becoming Jews). The transformation of character, the new creation, happens to believers within their own families and people group, affecting the whole like yeast in the dough.

Evangelicals have had great success establishing the gospel in tribal groups where the revelation God gave to Paul has been applied. But there has been very little success in 200 years among Hindu, Muslim and other groups where we have encouraged a break with their families and/or people group in order to become believers in a different culture. When new believers are isolated from their families and people group, no movement to Christ develops within that people group. In fact, the opposite happens, as their families and people group become determined not to let Christianity "steal" their family members.

### A Call to Return to Paul's Principles for Reaching Frontier People Groups

*I believe unless we fully understand and return to Pauline principles of implanting the gospel into families, without removing them from their socio-religious-political communities, we will continue to make little progress in today's largest remaining Frontier People Groups.*

If the apostles released the Romans becoming believers to remain in their families and remain Roman citizens, in spite of the religious requirements and heinous sins of that powerful extensive society, should we not apply the same principles today? Thankfully, where Paul's biblical principles are being applied, movements among some of the most "resistant" people groups are now appearing.

***It is not enough to identify which groups have the least help and are making the least progress in receiving the Good News. We also need to go back to following the biblical and historical principles God has shown us for sparking indigenous movements in Frontier People Groups and training global workers in these principles.***



# The Family— God’s Blessing to All Peoples



*We thought it would be safer<sup>1</sup> and faster to win individuals.*

*We found it to be safer and faster to win households and other groups.*

— Trevor Larsen, \*coach for rapidly multiplying movements

However, when movement coaches urge winning households rather than individuals, some react:

*What about Jesus identifying those who do God’s will as his mother and brothers? What about Jesus saying he came to divide families? And what about Jesus telling us to hate our families?*

Do these rare “hard sayings” overrule the Bible’s emphasis on honoring our parents and providing for our families?

## Individualism vs. Family

In recent centuries, Western society has embraced *individualism*—valuing the independence of individuals above family and societal expectations. Individualism says, “Save your own life and pursue your own dreams, regardless of how that affects others.” This contributes to the breakdown of families.

Throughout most of history, however, societies have held the opposite value system. In the Bible, and much of the world still (especially Frontier People Groups, or FPGs), is valued service to family and community above personal dreams and independence. independence: “Don’t seek to save your own life. Pursue the benefit of your family and your people in the generations to come.”

At a Pakistan university a Western guest speaker said:

*“I am not here to tell you how to succeed by yourself, because that is not important. What is important is for your families and communities, back in your homelands, to become healthy and strong and have all their needs met. What I am telling you today is not just for you, but for your family and people for generations to come.”*

The students began clapping—slowly at first, then rising to a standing ovation.

“I have never seen our students clap before!” the department head later told the speaker. “What you said has touched our hearts.”

<sup>1</sup> Less likely to invite a negative backlash from the community. See [FocusOnFruit.org](http://FocusOnFruit.org)

BY **ROBBY BUTLER** AND **CHUCK WHITE**

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Does Jesus' sacrifice for the rest of humanity represent a family centered or individualistic value system?

Does our gospel urge individuals to break with their family and people in order to follow Jesus, or to become God's blessing to their household and the generations to come?

## Family (Mishpachah) in the Bible

*Mishpachah* appears more than 300 times in the Old Testament. There is no direct parallel in English, as *mishpachah* includes "generations yet to come." *Mishpachah* is just one in a set of Hebrew and Greek words with a generational perspective, variously translated clan, family, tribe, people, or nation. In English we could think of all of these as "family lines" of varying sizes.

In God's foundational promise to Abram (Abraham) in Gen. 12:3, the final recipient of God's blessing will not be every individual, but **ALL** *mishpachah*. Paul labels this promise "the gospel preached in advance to Abraham" (Gal. 3:8). Blessing and salvation aren't *just* for individuals, but also for households and whole family lines.

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

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

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

*The adoption of Christianity by one group within a generic community would lead to a strengthening of non-Christian identity among other groups within the same community.<sup>2</sup>*

When our evangelism methods win individuals away from their families among FPGs, we reinforce these fears within the FPG.

<sup>2</sup> *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818-1940*, by Jeffrey Cox (Stanford, 2002).

## What about "Hating Our Families"?

Two statements of Jesus seem to support evangelizing individuals rather than families:

- His call to hate father and mother, spouse and children and brothers and sisters (Luke 14:26),
- His statement that He came to divide families (Matt. 10:34-37).

How do we reconcile this with God blessing all of earth's family lines?

Consider the context. What other command does Jesus give alongside hating our families?

- In Luke 14:26-27 Jesus continues, "yes, and [he must hate] even his own life. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."
- Jesus concludes the Matthew passage similarly: "He who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:38).

So Jesus parallels hating our families with hating and losing our very lives.

These commands are no mere hyperbole. Jesus not only laid down His own life; He was also misunderstood by His brothers. Millions of Jesus' followers have literally given up their families and their lives as well.

Just as none of us finds our life until we lay it down for Him, none of us properly loves and honors our family until we love and honor Jesus more than them.

Yet while any of us may be called to die for Jesus' sake, we don't take that to mean we should kill ourselves or seek martyrdom. Rather we understand implicitly and from Scripture that Jesus intends us to avoid martyrdom: "When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another" (Matt. 10:23). Paul was ready to die for Jesus, but he often fled to stay alive (Acts 9:25, 30; 17:14; 19:30; 25:10-11).

Similarly, we see God's intent for believers to bless their families in:

- God/Jesus' commands to honor father and mother (Exod. 20:12, Deut. 5:16, Matt. 15:4-6, etc.),
- Paul's instructions for church leaders be solid family men (1 Ti 3:2-4, Tit 1:6) and for believers to provide for their families (1 Tim. 5:8).

## Wanted: Frontier People Group Advocates

Every day, thousands of believers unite in prayer for a people group, then do the same the next day for a different people group, using one or more of these excellent resources:

- Joshua Project's *Unreached People of the Day* ([JoshuaProject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/today](http://JoshuaProject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday/today)),
- Frontier Ventures' *Global Prayer Digest* ([GlobalPrayerDigest.org/issue/day](http://GlobalPrayerDigest.org/issue/day)),
- seasonal prayer guides for Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists ([WorldChristian.com](http://WorldChristian.com)), and
- the prayer guide for the largest Frontier People Groups ([Go31.org](http://Go31.org)).

Both the *Unreached People of the Day* and the *Global Prayer Digest* are also available by email and through smartphone apps, and starting May, 2019, the *Global Prayer Digest* will devote 13 months to covering each of the 400 largest Frontier People Groups (FPGs). The prayer generated in prayer for a different people each day is a wonderful development, fueling real progress among the peoples prayed for.

However, there is no concerted effort yet to see that each of the 400 large, influential, gateway FPGs receives daily prayer by name for the multiplication of God's blessing through their households.

Would you like to become an advocate for one of these 400 FPGs:

- asking the Lord's blessing for that one FPG by name each day,
- becoming part of a growing team to learn about that FPG and seek together to bless them, and
- coordinating with other teams so that all 400 large, influential, gateway FPGs are covered?

Learn more at [GreatCommissionChallenge.com](http://GreatCommissionChallenge.com).

Note: If you are already part of a prayer team ready to partner with a field team, or want to learn more about partnering in prayer with a field team, visit [InheritTheNations.net](http://InheritTheNations.net).

## The Father loving ALL mishpachah back to himself

Woven throughout Scripture, we see God's intertwined commitment to bless individuals, households and family lines (nations/peoples):

- **Individuals** blessed by God receive redemption, adoption into God's family, a commission to be fruitful (reproduce) and a physical or spiritual family line (generational blessing and destiny).
- **Households** blessed by God experience healing, strengthening and unity to become His stable, reproducing vehicle of blessing to other households and future generations.<sup>3</sup>
- **Nations/peoples** blessed by God temper their fierce independence to embrace a new and better identity and destiny—in Him. They too become "His *mishpachah*."<sup>4</sup>

Even before the Fall, God blessed mankind (the first household) with a commission they were to fulfill as households (to reproduce, Gen 1:28). God later blessed Abram with a commission for his family line to become God's blessing to all mishpachah. Israel was thus chosen as the first family line to bless the rest, for other family lines to follow suit. As each of our family lines is adopted into God's family, we too share in this commission/blessing.

HisStory (and the gospel) can be summarized this way:

*God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is patiently loving estranged individuals, households and family lines back into His family line, then calling our family lines to join Him in loving the rest of the estranged human family—in every family line—back to Himself.*

Even before the Fall, God blessed mankind (the first household) with a commission they were to fulfill as households (to reproduce, Gen 1:28).

God later blessed Abram with a commission for his family line to become God's blessing to all mishpachah.

<sup>3</sup> see Steve Smith's "The Oikos Hammer: You & Your Household" in the Sep/Oct 2018 MF.

<sup>4</sup> see Steve Hawthorne's "The Father Who Names the Nations" on p. 32 of this issue.

« The “Great Commission” of Matt. 28:18-20, along with the parallel commissions in the other gospels and Acts, are all in direct fulfillment of God’s commission to Abraham. »

## The blessing/commission throughout Scripture

This blessing/commission, through Abraham’s seed for all peoples (family lines), is repeated directly to Abraham two more times (Gen. 18:18, 22:18), then to Isaac (26:4), then to Jacob (28:14). The Old Testament, especially the Psalms, carries many more explicit and implicit references to this blessing/commission. In the New Testament, more explicit references include:

- Acts 3:25 (Peter references Gen. 22:18 and 26:4): “You are heirs of ... the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, “Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.”
- Galatians 3:8 (Paul references Gen. 12:3, 18:18 and 22:18): “Scripture ... announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’”
- Hebrews 6:17 (the author references Gen. 22:16–18): “Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.”

The “Great Commission” of Matt. 28:18–20, along with the parallel commissions in the other gospels and Acts, are all in direct fulfillment of God’s commission to Abraham.

## The commission starts with intercession

*Then the LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and **all nations on earth will be blessed through him**. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, **so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him**” (Gen.18:17–19, emphasis added).*

In the larger story where these verses appear, God sets up Abraham to bless others through intercession. Abraham responds by pleading for God’s mercy on Sodom and Gomorrah, where Abraham’s nephew Lot lives.

## The commission is for our children and disciples

In the verses above, we also see that the commission is not for Abraham to fulfill alone, but for the generations to come. We (Abraham’s spiritual children) carry this commission as well, along with responsibility for teaching it to the next generation. Our main responsibility (next to intimate friendship with God) lies in what we model and teach our children and disciples, not just in what we ourselves accomplish for God’s kingdom.

## Practical implications

Movements happen only when the gospel blesses and multiplies through households and other natural groupings. In 1982 Donald McGavran observed that 90% of missionaries among the unreached were attempting to draw individuals away from their families rather than bless these families with a view to starting movements.<sup>5</sup>


Might FPGs more readily embrace Jesus if we present the gospel in Paul’s terms, as:

- God’s desire to redeem and bless their households and their full family line through following Jesus together,
- rather than urging individuals to break with their family and community to follow Jesus?

Breaking with family should not be the common practice our evangelism sometimes makes it into. Let us learn to invite families to pursue God together, just as we see throughout the Bible.

Jesus came to give life, and to bless all the families of the earth (John 1:10 and Gal. 3:8). This was His practice, and it should be ours also.

Thus we must ask, individually and collectively, do our ministry approaches aim to:

- produce a visible bouquet of flowers cut off from their roots (winning individuals away from their families to produce a church of gathered strangers such as we are familiar with back home), or
- plant gospel seeds that can spread to produce a forest in the years to come (blessing households with God’s word in a way that multiplies throughout a people)? 

<sup>5</sup> See the on-line 2018 reprint with expanded introduction, at [MissionFrontiers.org/issue/article/a-church-in-every-people1](http://MissionFrontiers.org/issue/article/a-church-in-every-people1)

# The Father Who Names the Nations

BY STEVEN C. HAWTHORNE

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Seeing things from God's point of view may be the best way for us to envision an evangelized world. Our promise-keeping God has made it clear that He will bring forth blessing amidst every people. To bring forth blessing in every ethnicity, Christ has been unfolding His work throughout every ethnohistory, pursuing His purpose in the intricacies of every passing season. To fulfill our work of world evangelization we must think clearly, not only about how to bring the gospel to all *nations*; we must also consider how God's blessing will abound to all *generations*.

## We Live in a Generational Story

Since the very beginning of languages and diverse cultures at Babel (Genesis 11:1–9), God has displayed His loving concern for all humanity by speaking of families, or all the peoples of the earth. How did He show His concern? In Genesis, the very next event after the Babel disaster is God speaking to Abram (Genesis 12:1–3). He promised not only to bring God's life and blessing to all peoples, but also that He would do so with the succeeding generations, the descendants, the "seed," of Abraham (Genesis 22:18, 26:4, 28:14). In the Abrahamic covenant we see God dealing with the totality of humanity as a family of many families with generational longevity and identity.

## God the Father of All Peoples

In the coming of Jesus, God marvelously reveals Himself as Father. Jesus taught us clearly to trust the Most High God to act toward His people with devoted, vigilant parental love (Luke 11:13). In Christ, each person is known and loved by the heavenly Father as a daughter or a son. But the magnitude of God's fatherly love surpasses concern for each individual. Our God pursues

the redemption and honor of multigenerational peoples, as if each one of them were to Him a daughter or a son. The Father is bringing His entire family—a family of peoples—back to Himself.

## Every Generational People Named, Known and Prized

Consider again Paul's prayer in his letter to the Ephesians:

"For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name..." (Ephesians 3:14–15).

Paul prays to the Father—the same "Father of glory" to whom he prayed earlier (1:17). He is also the Father of all humanity, described by Paul as "every family in heaven and on earth." The Greek word for "family" is a specialized word, *patria*. This word was used to emphasize the multigenerational lineage of enduring peoples. The word implies an ongoing identity in ancestry and an expectation of descendants. The Father's family consists of peoples with any kind of generational depth.

Why does Paul say that these multigenerational peoples are named by God? In the honor-shame culture of that day, a name called out one's destiny, identity or anticipated honor. The Father knows and names each one of the peoples, like a human father would know the name, nature, the distinctive worth and likely destiny of each of his sons and daughters. Paul can sense the Father's joy and delight with the unique beauty and unfolding story of each of the peoples. Paul also knows the heartbreaking sorrow of the Father as He grieves for the people lost to Him. No wonder Paul bows his knees before this magnificent Father. It is all we can do to number the peoples. Our Father God names them.

To understand what and why Paul is praying, we should recognize who he's praying for. Paul was praying for Gentiles—non-Jewish people who, before being joined with Christ, understood themselves to be "excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise" (2:12). Paul wanted to assure them that because of Christ's work on the cross, they had been reconciled to God, joined as a single entity, "in one body," with the people of Israel to enjoy "access in one Spirit to the Father" as God's people (2:16–18).

## The Glory of the Nations

All of that matters because Paul was praying for "their glory" (3:13). Really? Glory somehow coming to the Gentiles? Isn't all glory supposed to go to God? What is this glory? The glory God has in store for the Gentiles is



the fulfillment of God's purpose for His global people—that together as one people, all the diverse nations would experience and display the relational fullness of His glory.

Paul uses the biblical imagery of a living temple to express the splendor of relational nearness that God desires with His people. The foundation of the building is already laid. Construction is underway:

“...Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit” (2:20–22).

Paul prays that God would act “according to the riches of His glory” (3:16) so that ultimately a temple made without hands, the “dwelling of God in the Spirit” (2:22) consisting of “all [not just some] of the saints” (3:18), would be filled with “all the fullness of God” (3:19).

It's tricky to imagine or value such an ineffable, ethereal thing as “the fullness of God.” That's why Paul clearly alludes to the biblical accounts of the construction of the tabernacle and the temple. God called for the tabernacle, not because He needed a house to live in, but because He desired a concrete way to be relationally near His people. “Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8). To “dwell” is not a matter of physical location. This kind of dwelling is God's way of being immensely near His people in celebratory, relational fullness.

When they finished building the tent, “the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” as a visible cloud (Exodus 40:34–35). And generations later, when the son of David finished building the greater temple, again “the glory of the LORD filled the house” (2 Chronicles 7:1–3).

Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:16–21 reveals that he was confident that Christ was in the process of constructing what these biblical stories had pre-figured: God would gather His entire people to Himself. They would be His people. He would be their God. And He would dwell in their midst.

Already the foundation of the later, greater temple had been laid. Paul says that it was being “fitted together” and somehow was organically “growing into a holy temple in the Lord” (2:20–21). So, Paul prays that those reading this letter (yes, that includes me and you!) would, together with “all the saints,” somehow comprehend the unknowable beauty and magnificence of the house that the son of David is now finishing. When complete, when


“every family” is gathered home, like the tabernacle and temple of old, God will fill His people with His glory—with “all the fullness of God” (3:18–19).

Paul adds this doxology, which might also serve as a manifesto of hope: “to Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen” (3:21). The glory of God resounding in the manifest beauty of Christ and the Church will somehow encompass all generations. There never will have been a day or a generation in which God has not been seen as ultimately working to bring forth the fullness of Christ and His Church.

**Our God pursues the redemption and honor of multigenerational peoples, as if each one of them were to Him a daughter or a son. The Father is bringing His entire family—a family of peoples—back to Himself.**

### Knowing the Father's Joy and Zeal

Paul tries to persuade his Gentile friends “not to lose heart” when they hear of his “tribulations on your behalf” (3:13). He assures them that the pain and shame of apostolic labors that he has endured are well worth it. Why? I think Paul knew the heart of the Father of glory. This is the Father who constantly gazes on all of humanity, seeing us all as a great family of many families. He is unperturbed and never confused about intermarried or blended ethnicities. He sees, knows and values each of the peoples in all of their overlapping, intertwining multicultural complexity.

Like those to whom Paul was writing, we, too, can lose heart for any number of reasons. The tedium and grief of constant opposition is daunting. The costly hassle of cross-cultural labors can be discouraging. Let's bow our knees before our Father, the Father of glory, delighting in His growing joy as He draws His full family to Himself. As we celebrate the Father's relentless zeal to gather to Himself some from every tribe and tongue, every language and lineage, we will find our hearts encouraged in the hope of their glory in Christ. 

# How Does Saying “No” Mobilize Local Resources?

While sipping an iced coffee, I intently listened to a friend who serves as a missionary in Asia share about a recent experience. A local leader asked her if she would pay for his expenses to attend a leadership gathering within the organization in which he serves. With kindness, and declining to oblige to his request, she redirected him to share his need with his local church and suggested he pray for God to supply for this need.

No doubt he was disappointed that his need wasn't met immediately, and, he committed to doing those two things—he prayed and shared his need with his local church family during a church service. After the service, a man in attendance gave him some money to help him attend the leadership gathering—a whole month's salary! Based on the donor's meager economic level and job, this was definitely a sacrifice for him. In addition to boosting this local leader's own faith, the testimony of how God provided through fellow believers thoroughly encouraged other local leaders. Local resources can be mobilized!

This story could have gone very differently if my friend didn't say, “No,” and redirect him toward a healthier, self-sustaining solution. The end result would have been like what

is typically exercised: *If you have a need, ask the foreigners. The foreigners give because that is what they are supposed to do. End of story. No glory to God, and no inspiration to foster local interdependence, local giving, and local support.*

As difficult as it might seem, saying, “No,” along with redirection in non-crisis situations, leads to mobilizing and giving of local resources. Dr. Charles Brock powerfully words this phenomenon: “Stingy? No! A growth producing stewardship? Yes! Such growth is desirable wherein independent self-hood is realized with full dependence on Christ.”<sup>1</sup>

How can saying, “No,” produce stewardship and independent self-hood? When cross-cultural workers say, “No,” they are inviting and redirecting the cultural insiders to seek-out God and interdependence from their own

BY JEAN JOHNSON

Quoted in Jean Johnson, *We Are Not the Hero: A Missionary's Guide to Sharing Christ, Not a Culture of Dependency*, (Deep River Books. 2012), 77.

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networks, churches, and communities. Essentially, they are promoting healthy local-interdependence and self-giving with full dependence on God, rather than unhealthy global dependency.

When the cross-cultural workers and visitors say, “No,” with a redirect, they open the door for the local ‘Boaz’ (Ruth 2) to rise up and take care of their own widows and poor. When they say, “No,” they create more room for local ‘Tabithas’ to use their skills to support the poor at their own doorsteps (Acts 9:36-43).

Perhaps the apostle Paul had growth-producing stewardship with full dependence on God in mind when he gave these instructions:

Take care of any widow who has no one else to care for her. But if she has children or grandchildren, their first responsibility is to show godliness at home and repay their parents by taking care of them. This is something that pleases God . . . If a woman who is a believer has relatives who are widows, she must take care of them and not put the responsibility on the church. Then the church can care for the widows who are truly alone. (I Timothy 5:3-4, 16, NLT).


I deduce Paul to be saying: Don’t seek out churches to take care of widows in your family circle, look to yourselves! This is your God-given stewardship responsibility and privilege, and because this action pleases God, He will provide. I am taking some liberty, but I also hear Paul saying: *The local church is commissioned to take care of widows who are truly alone, don’t shift this responsibility to outsiders.*

Saying, “No,” with a kind and thoughtful redirect, should not translate as stingy, but rather the opposite — it can spur on local stewardship, generosity, and interdependence, which pleases God.

You might be thinking, “How can we possibly say, “No,” when we have access to so many resources?”

**Take care of any widow who has no one else to care for her. But if she has children or grandchildren, their first responsibility is to show godliness at home and repay their parents by taking care of them.**

If mobilizing local resources is part of our mission aim, we may need to convert this question to: *How does bringing in outside funding stifle growth producing local stewardship, healthy independent self-hood, and local-interdependence?* Being a “yes-man/woman just because we can is not enough reason to give in ways that actually lead to long-term languishing and learned helplessness, which is the opposite of local-interdependence and faith in God to provide for what He has called people to.

Kindly saying “no” along with redirecting local leaders, disciples, and churches is actually generosity when it serves as the impetus to mobilizing and giving locally. Perhaps, add “no” with a healthy redirect to your mission strategies. 



# 24:14 Goal



## Movement engagements in every unreached people and place by 2025 (86 months)

by Chris McBride

Church Planting Movement practitioners believe CPM methods follow the ministry methods of Jesus. Perhaps the time has come for our *missionary training* methods to follow the mentoring models of Christ as well.

With some exceptions, the “shocking secret” about missionary training is that the large majority of workers sent to the mission field receive little to no practical field training prior to their deployment.

However, over the last several years, mission leaders have been encouraging the growth of missionary training models that produce more effective and fruitful movement catalysts in shorter time. Veteran practitioners implementing these models are excitedly reporting that new workers are making progress towards Church Planting Movements (CPMs) much faster than those trained in traditional patterns of classroom or workshop-based trainings. Regional leaders are beginning to ask for candidates that are prepared in these disciplines. Some are even requiring this more experiential and mentoring-based training approach for new missionaries because of the observed higher implementation rate than workshop-based patterns. To expand and accelerate adoption of these models, the 24:14 Coalition is promoting a flexible, networked CPM Training Hub system to better prepare field workers to implement effective movement practices. This could serve as a standalone approach or be paired with workshop-based trainings.

I have a great appetite to see this vision become reality. As mission workers, our family labored on the field for the first seven years without seeing anyone become a disciple of Christ. After receiving CPM training we worked for an additional seven years, pioneering a local Church Planting Movement. Knowing the burden of laboring without fruit,

I am passionate to deploy laborers who are well trained, who will not repeat our same mistakes (though they will make others) and who can become fruitful much more quickly.

### A Hub System

The CPM Training Hub concept envisions several “phases” of training to experientially equip workers seeking to catalyze a movement among the unreached.

**Phase 1**—This involves people beginning their CPM training in their home-culture context. Unless a missionary candidate came to Christ within a CPM, numerous paradigm shifts are needed on the journey to CPM fruitfulness. Mission leaders are observing that it is easier for people to ingest these concepts when their learning is not started in a cross-cultural environment with the additional culture shock and language learning stress that muddy the CPM learning process. Phase 1 offers the opportunity for learning in an environment where mistakes are easily correctable by an experienced mentor. Practicing within one’s own culture also gives the missionary candidate an opportunity to affirm a call to church planting before they embark on the challenges of advanced missionary training, support raising, language acquisition and cultural assimilation.

**Phase 2**—Before deploying to a “final destination,” Phase 2 equips the new missionary within a cross-cultural context that is as close in affinity as possible to the

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unreached people group they desire to reach. This hub is led by national or expat mentors who ideally are seeing a movement in the training location, or are at least seeing some multiplication in the area using CPM principles. This hub trains in contextualized movement principles while helping the mission workers begin language and culture acquisition. Their home culture hub experience helps them understand and apply general movement principles. Then the cross-cultural hub allows the new missionary to visualize and experience CPM in a culture similar to their intended focus culture. There they can assimilate contextualized CPM principles under the helpful guidance of movement tutors.

**Phase 3**—In Phase 3, the mission worker deploys to their target unreached people group (UPG) with a great deal of experience and potentially with other national or expat co-laborers they met in Phase 2. Their trainers/coaches from Phase 2 will continue to help and guide them into this third phase.

**Phase 4**—We have realized that if/when a movement starts, rather than moving on to another assignment, it is more strategic for these outside catalysts to go into Phase 4. This consists of helping to send movement laborers from their focus group to one or more nearby UPGs to start new movements—multiplying movements.

## A Closer Look

With the goal of catalyzing movement engagement in every unreached people and place by 2025, the 24:14 Coalition is urgently working to grow a network of CPM Training Hubs. We have identified emerging training hubs training Phase 1 missionaries in their home cultures (all around the world), as well as a number of teams and organizations that have started Phase 2 Hubs, receiving trainees from Phase 1 experiences.

As 24:14 analyzed the early-stage effectiveness of this approach, we noticed that Phase 2 Hubs reported an accelerated learning process and effectiveness for missionary candidates who had been through Phase 1. Because they practiced movement principles in their home culture away from the “learning clutter” of language and culture acquisition, candidates hit the ground running and developed good movement habits in their language and culture acquisition phase. We have seen a strong correlation between the amount of practical experience in movement practices someone has in Phase 1, and how quickly they effectively implement movement practices in subsequent phases. Some have already begun to see fruits of movement in their Phase 2 Hub experience!

The time commitment to Phase 1 and 2 Hubs varies, depending on the background of workers being deployed, the sponsoring organizations and unique curricula, and the focus region. Some Hubs focus on giving candidates basic experience in movement principles, while completing a missionary training program. Some hubs direct candidates to become proficient in CPM skills before allowing them to progress in their training. Many hub locations worldwide have an initial focus on catalyzing a movement in that location, after which mobilization occurs naturally.

We have found that requiring more experience and fruitfulness from candidates before proceeding to their target destination does not have a negative effect on mobilization. It actually helps mobilize more people for the field. We also anticipate it will have a positive impact on missionary retention levels.

Several have noted that a hub system can't be prescribed for the global Body of Christ as a requirement all missionary candidates must pursue. However, a robust CPM Training Hub system would serve well the vast majority of missionary candidates who would benefit from an opportunity to learn in the context of active coaching.

## Creating a Lattice to Grow Hubs

While hub sponsors employ numerous curricula for missionary candidates, many organizations are working together to develop a lattice of criteria to help evaluate CPM Hub Training and candidate readiness. 24:14 is proposing standards of training and care gleaned from these hub leaders that could potentially serve as a global “airline alliance,” collaborating together to better train candidates.

With so many organizations and approaches out there, how can we envision a lattice that facilitates collaboration? One popular approach has been to use a simple “Head, Heart, Hands, House” framework to describe the competencies needed for a missionary to thrive at the next stage. Figure 1 is a conglomeration of what several organizations and networks have listed as competencies for people completing a Phase 1 Training Hub and deploying to Phase 2. Figure 2 shows a similar vision for competencies for Phase 2 learners transitioning to the coaching-intensive Phase 3. Many of these standards spring from years of missionary training programs, yet the focus on practical experience and implementing these skills before deploying from one stage to the next is a new and unique focus. While these competencies can be achieved through a variety of curricula and learning processes, the key underpinning of the 24:14 Hubs Network is the idea that missionary candidates are

asked to become skilled in CPM principles and practices before deploying to their next phase. These training processes may be developed at a hub or out-sourced, but having a general set of recommendations allows hubs to adapt organically and facilitate collaboration between organizations.

In the months to come, the Hubs Task Force has the following plans:

- Continue to find and document new hubs.
- Gather hub leaders to develop best practices and further refine the competencies.
- Create connections between organizations sponsoring hubs, to decrease duplication and make the network stronger.
- Network interested people and organizations who want to join the hub system.
- Assist, through resources and consulting, organizations and churches that want to create CPM training hubs and become mobilization centers.

We in 24:14 sincerely believe this model can greatly increase the frequency of CPMs among the unreached of the world. You can receive more information on the hub system and the hubs survey project via our website (<https://www.2414now.net/hubs>) or by contacting [hubs@2414now.net](mailto:hubs@2414now.net).

### Fig.1 Phase 1 Competencies

#### HEAD

**Culture Training:** Understanding basics of culture, worldview, contextualization and cross-cultural expectations. **Theology:** Understanding basics of Theology of Salvation, Overview of Scripture, Missions, Personal Calling, Suffering and core Christian Doctrines

**CPM Training:** Understands the basic DNA of movements and their biblical justification using one of the common movement training templates (Transition Points of Movement, DMM, T4T, Four Fields, Zume, etc.). Understands a simple plan and process that leads to reproduction.

**Language:** Preparation for how to learn a language.

**Pastoral Care:** Knows of and is able to use available resources.

#### HEART

**Spiritual Authenticity:** Focus on seeing that the trainee has a healthy degree of the following and is making consistent progress: humility and teachability; walking in honesty and integrity; hearing and obeying God; exercising faith that God will start a movement with his/her people group;

love for God and others. **Perseverance:** Has demonstrated perseverance in difficult circumstances. Displays a dogged tenacity to do the right things to complete the task, pressing through obstacles. Has counted the cost of personal risk. Has a long-term commitment to God's calling.

**Personal Spiritual Disciplines:** Demonstrates a lifestyle of prayer, time in God's Word, obedience, fasting, accountability, hard work and rest, abiding in Christ and personal transparency. Understands basics of spiritual warfare.

**Personal Holiness:** Has a lifestyle free from addiction. Lives in moderation in all things. Seeks to avoid being a stumbling block for others.

**Personal Wholeness:** Is in a healthy place working through personal issues (addiction, depression, self-image) and family of origin issues (divorce, trauma, abuse), has a healthy marriage (if applicable), is in a healthy place working through parenting issues. Has been evaluated by a counselor for field readiness.

#### HANDS

**Engagement and Evangelism:** Has extensive practice in engaging lost people, finding potential Persons of Peace and sharing the gospel message in a way that intentionally moves the lost toward becoming disciples of Jesus. **Demonstrates the Kingdom:** Has learned to pray blessing over people and pray for the sick.

**Discipleship and Church Formation:** Has practice in making disciples that form churches (preferably from the lost) and has worked toward reproducing them generationally.

**Vision Casting:** Has practice in envisioning others in disciple making and Church-Planting Movements.

**Training:** Has practice training others in disciple making and church planting using one of the common movement training templates.

**Developing Prayer Strategy:** Has learned the basics of planning and executing a prayer strategy for their people group.

**Planning and Evaluation:** Learns to plan, evaluate the brutal reality and adapt based on the fruit he/she sees.

#### HOUSE

**Personal Skills:** Has good people skills, communication skills and conflict resolution skills. Can manage anger, disappointment and anxiety.

**Team Life:** Has learned healthy patterns of team life.

**Team Training and Development:** Has learned to resolve team conflict and value different roles in a team environment.

**Team Experience:** Preferably has extensive practice “teaming” with others as they reach out to a local target population.

**Finance:** Is free from significant debt and has received adequate support raising training. Has raised full support before deploying.

## Fig.2 Phase 2 Competencies

### HEAD

**Culture:** Has learned regional culture, history and religion to a level of competency necessary to understand contextual tools and navigate roadblocks to gospel inroads.

**Language:** Language acquisition plan developed in conjunction with trainers and coaches in Phase 2 with accountability in place.

**CPM Training:** Has learned CPM applications in the cultural context. Works to learn innovations and cultural applications of movement theory to the region. Has exposure to advanced movement leadership applications. Persecution and Perseverance: Has learned likely avenues of persecution in the target culture. Has learned biblical patterns for dealing with persecution and minimizing unnecessary persecution. Has learned to persevere in difficult circumstances.

### HEART

**Spiritual Authenticity:** Demonstrates willingness to learn from others, especially locals. Shows cultural humility as a lifestyle. Has demonstrated a lifestyle of surrendering rights.

**Personal Spiritual Disciplines:** Has continued and cultivated a lifestyle of prayer, time in God’s Word, obedience, fasting, accountability, hard work and rest, abiding in Christ, and personal transparency in target culture. Has learned to engage in spiritual warfare.

**Perseverance:** Has demonstrated perseverance in difficult circumstances. Displays a dogged tenacity to do the right things to complete the task, pressing through obstacles. Has counted cost of personal risk. Has a long-term commitment to God’s calling.

**Personal Holiness:** Has a lifestyle free from addiction. Lives in moderation in all things. Is aware of not being a stumbling block for others.

**Personal Wholeness:** Continues to be in a healthy place working through personal issues (addiction, depression, self image) and family of origin issues (divorce, trauma, abuse), has a healthy marriage (if applicable), is in a healthy place working through parenting issues. Has been evaluated by sending organization for continued field readiness.

**Culture:** Willing to adapt to and appreciate host culture.

### HANDS

**Engagement and Evangelism:** Has extensive practice in engaging lost people, finding potential POPs and sharing the gospel message in a way that intentionally moves the lost towards salvation. Has learned reproducing evangelism tools that can equip locals in the use of these.

**Demonstrates the Kingdom:** Has learned to cross-culturally pray blessing over people and pray for the sick. Discipleship, Church, and Leadership: Has learned how to make reproducing disciples in target culture and has learned a strategy for church formation and leadership development that can work in the target culture. Demonstrates comfort in allowing Holy Spirit and the Word to lead through locals rather than needing to be the leader.

**Training:** Has ability to train the basic DNA of movements and the biblical justification of them using one of the common movement training templates (Transition Points of Movement, DMM, T4T, Four Fields, Zume, etc.). Can train and envision a simple plan and process that gets to reproduction.

**Developing Prayer Strategy:** Has begun to recruit and incorporate other believing locals and expats into a prayer strategy for the area. Has recruited a number of daily intercessors to cover the work.

**Planning and Evaluation:** Is engaged in regular rhythms of planning, ruthless evaluation, and adaptation based on the fruit.

**Tracking:** Has learned to effectively track movement growth in the cultural context and apply learnings to planning and evaluation rhythms.

### HOUSE


**Presence and Platform:** Has developed a strategy to implement that will minimally explain the reason for being in country and at most will give opportunities for engagement and a platform and visa for extended stay in country.

**Team Development:** Has adapted team life rhythms to interdependent overseas context.

**Local Partnering:** Is spending majority of time with local partners and the lost and is not overly dependent on expat team. Understands how to build effective partnerships.

**Team Contributions:** Has identified giftings on the team and has figured out ways for the team members to contribute. Has developed team agreement/ protocol and all team has reviewed and approved it. Networking: Has surveyed the mission work (especially movement related) in the area. Has learned about fruitful evangelism and discipleship processes. Maintains good relationships for partnership.

**Security:** Has developed contingency plan and emergency protocol document for the team. Understands and implements basic security protocols (social media, internet security, computer security, personal document security).

**Leadership Development:** Does not need to be “the leader.” Looks to empower, develop, and mentor others. 

# Why Some See Movements and Others Don't

I was at a meeting with him in a large city in India. We were gathered for an organizational event that would start at 9 am. Waking early, as was my habit, I went into the hallway to get some filtered water. I heard a strange noise coming from down the corridor. It was still early, only 5 am. Who was making noise down there?

Curious, I wandered down the hall. There he was, sitting on the couch, a light blanket covering his head. His eyes were closed. He sat with head bowed, rocking back and forth a bit. I listened in and heard him calling out the names of people in his congregation. He was thanking God for them in his indigenous language. I wondered how long he had been there and how long he would stay.

« There is a difference between doing things we don't value because we must, and doing what we know is important because we want to. »

A few hours later, yet another need propelled me back into the hallway. I could still hear him, seeking God, interceding on behalf of his people. Each day that week, it was always the same. This brother was there praying. His normal habit was to start his day with several hours of intercession. It didn't matter where he was. There was never a change.

Since then, I've been with this man in many contexts. There has never been a day I didn't see him practicing this same rhythm in his life. Perhaps that is why his movement is exploding. Maybe that is why some of their streams now have more than eight generations.

## One Thing Isn't Flexible

There are many things about starting a Disciple Making Movement that are adaptable and flexible. We have overarching principles to be followed for sure. There is a lot of room, though, to adapt things to your particular people group or context. In fact, this is quite important to do.

But there are also a few "foundation stones" of starting movements. These are things that absolutely have to be present for a movement to take place. One of these stones is an apostolic leader who has a genuine, regular and deep prayer habit.

## Give Attention to Prayer

In the book of Acts, we read of the apostles getting busy as the Church began to grow. There was much work to be done. The needs of the poor were great. Discipleship demands were pressing. One on one meetings with various key leaders were necessary. There were conflicts to resolve and widows to feed. Finally, they arrived on the strategic decision to appoint deacons. Their stated reason was this.

*"We will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word"* Acts 6:4 NIV (italics added).

Movement leaders and those who want to launch them, *give attention* to prayer. It is not a side activity or something they occasionally emphasize. It is a primary part of their lives.

BY C. ANDERSON

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Ministry of the Word doesn't usually go by the way-side. Most of us are preachers by trade. Prayer, however, can.

## Lessons from a Modern-Day Apostle

Let me tell another story. We were leading our first ever conference with Ying and Grace Kai, the creators of Training 4 Trainers or T4T. I was excited to sit at their feet and learn from them. They had seen thousands of churches planted where they worked. Since then, they had trained and equipped many others to do the same. It was a great opportunity to rub shoulders with these legendary, modern-day apostles. I felt very privileged.

What would I learn? What key would I pick up from them that I could take to our own ministry among the unreached forward?

As is typical in the country we were in, there were last minute changes. Our prior plans for the day after their arrival had to be altered. I wondered how we could best bless and host our speakers well. Maybe we could take them sightseeing in our city? Or out to a nice restaurant? I didn't want them to feel bad that we now had nothing specific for them to do that particular morning.

I explained the situation to them and offered some suggestions. "It's no problem," they said. "We will pray."

They spent those hours and much of that day seeking the Father. This was much more productive and important to them than sightseeing, though they had never before visited our country. Hour after hour, they lifted the names of those they would be training before the Lord.

It was one of the greatest lessons I learned from being with them. People who want to see movements default to prayer as their most critical activity.

## Prayer in the Earliest Disciple-Making Movements

This should be no surprise, for it is indeed the pattern we see in the book of Acts. The apostles had developed solid prayer habits in their lives. They instilled these habits in those who they trained.

Here is a quick overview:

Acts 1:14—The apostles "joined together constantly" in *prayer*.

Acts 2:42—The new believers "devoted themselves" to *prayer*.

Acts 3:1—Peter and John did a miracle as they were on their way to an afternoon *prayer* meeting in the temple.

Acts 4:24—When faced with challenges and threats, the believers *prayed*.

Acts 6:4—The apostles appointed deacons so they could be free to give attention to *prayer*.

Acts 10—God responded to Cornelius, a God-fearing man, who regularly *prayed*.

Acts 14—Paul and Barnabas spent time in *prayer* as they chose and appointed elders in each new church.

Acts 16—Paul frequented places of *prayer*.

Acts 28—Paul *prayed* and believed God for miracles. And they happened!

Many more references could be explored. Prayer was so clearly a major part of the first Disciple-Making Movements that rapidly grew.

Both the apostolic leaders and the new believers embraced prayer as their *default mode*. Troubles...pray. Persecution...pray. Too much work to do...pray. Need miracles...pray.


Yet for many of us, prayer is our secondary option. We often look first to strategy, mentors or our experience to solve problems. When faced with obstacles, like not being able to find a Person of Peace in our area, we search for answers. Nothing wrong with that, as long as we know that the real source of those solutions is God himself. He holds the keys in His hands to unlock our region for gospel advance. Who are the receptive people there? God knows them by name. He also knows how to put you in touch with them. As we pray, He will transform the hearts of those who seem so hard to reach today.

It seems an obvious point. It bears repeating. If we want to see a Disciple-Making Movement happen, we absolutely must adopt radically committed prayer habits. The same is true if we want to grow and sustain the movement that is starting to take off.

To be clear, I am not advocating for legalism. There is a difference between doing things we don't value because we *must*, and doing what we know is important because we *want to*.

## Vital Prayer Habit—It's Our Choice

Do you struggle to make prayer a vital habit in your life? Has your prayer life gone cold and dry? Go to the Master disciple-maker and ask for help. Find another church planter or friend to hold you accountable.

Our habits shape our ultimate outcomes. This is true of prayer and many other areas too. The unreached need our outcome to be the release of a movement. Let's pray! 

# Kingdom Kernels: Momentum for a Movement— Pushing Through Generational Hurdles



BY **STEVE SMITH**

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**Steve Smith** (Th.D.) was part of a church planting movement in Asia. He currently leads a global effort to catalyze biblical church planting movements in every unreached people group and place by 2025. He is the author of *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution* with Ying Kai (WigTake Resources, 2011) and *Hastening and Rebirth* in the “No Place Left” saga (2014 Ventures, 2015 & 2016). Steve serves as VP of Multiplication for East-West Ministries and Global Movement Catalyst for Beyond.org.

Momentum is paramount in movements. With the right impetus by human catalysts and the divine empowering of the Holy Spirit, Church-Planting Movements (CPMs) can and should continue in momentum generation after generation as they spread to saturate a people group or area. Many CPMs also cascade into other unreached people groups. CPM practitioners understanding the nature of this momentum is critical if the human catalyst side of the equation is to be effective.

Ninety percent of my efforts in relating to church-planting or disciple-making movements are focused on this issue of momentum—gaining and maintaining momentum in the face of the inevitable hurdles. These hurdles typically come in the first four generations of a budding movement. We label pre-existing missionaries and national Christians as the baseline generation—Gen 0 (zero). Gen 1 consists of new churches formed of new believers, not simply new churches formed of Gen 0 Christians. Gen 2 churches are formed from Gen 1 churches, and again primarily include new believers that have come from Gen 1 efforts. This progression carries on generation after generation. When we can track at least multiple separate relational streams of 4<sup>th</sup>-plus generation churches (and usually 100 churches or more), a movement has begun.

The moment a new generation starts, the clock starts ticking for them. How many days, weeks or months will it take for that generation to reproduce a new generation? What is the gestation period before they have children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren? This gestation period, which we call a generational rate, must be understood and cultivated by CPM catalysts.

In the beginning, the generational rate is not often on their minds. With the euphoria that comes from seeing a Gen 1 church started with new believers, a church planter gives primary attention to their basic discipleship and making sure the new church grows in health, and rightly so. In the excitement and celebration of that season, however, is anyone actually saying, “How long will it take for us to birth our own Gen 2 church?”

A critical precedent is being set from Gen 1 to Gen 2, and from Gen 2 to Gen 3. That precedent is how long it will take for each generation to push through the natural hurdles of birthing a new generation. The precedent is a fight for a healthy generational rate. Without attention, the generational rate can slow down into months or years, and years are too slow for it to become a movement.

Therefore, the majority of my time as a consultant and trainer is to help CPM catalysts from around the world understand how to keep momentum moving forward, especially as they push through the hurdles of each new generation. I have discovered that if a movement can push through the first four major generational hurdles, it will probably push through any other later hurdles resulting in churches that number 13 generations, 18 generations, or even 30+ generations.

However, examining the three foundational areas of movements will often solve the problem by revealing that one of the foundational areas is deficient. In this article, I will unpack how deficiencies in any foundational area can slow down momentum in a movement, while in my subsequent article I will deal with common generation hurdles and their solutions. These three foundational areas are the *most simple way I know to do an overall assessment of a movement*. Master these and you are on the way to diagnosing problems and finding solutions.

### Three foundational areas of movements

In the Jan/Feb 2016 edition of *Mission Frontiers* I outlined these three basic areas and refer you there for a fuller explanation. To make things more memorable through alliteration, I’ve changed the name of first area from Spiritual Climate to Spiritual Posture:

1. Spiritual POSTURE
2. Clear, simple PATH
3. Reproducing discipleship PROCESS

No movement can emerge or last very long in a healthy manner without attention to these three areas:

1. **Spiritual POSTURE**—Are the spiritual elements in place that invite God to enter into the ministry? Core elements include 1) vision among the believer to pursue what is on God’s heart not their own vision, 2) deep abiding in Christ, full of His Spirit, 3) fervent prayer and 4) willingness to die (John 12:24) or pay the price to see the vision on God’s heart fulfilled.
2. **Clear, simple PATH** (sometimes called “four fields”)—Once the vision is clear and believers are surrendered in faith, a path is laid out for them to 1) engage people, 2) evangelize the lost, 3) immediately disciple those who believe, and 4) form them into healthy churches. The tools or methods of this path must be simple enough

that new believers from the harvest can implement them in new generations. If so, in the process 5) leaders will emerge as the generations multiply and healthy movements begin.

**3. Reproducing discipleship PROCESS** (three-thirds process) – It is not enough to put CPM tools or methods in the hands of these new disciples. Each week, they need to gather together in groups that equip and encourage them to obey God’s Word, as well as use the tools they are learning. We most often call these three-thirds groups because they divide their meeting times into three parts:

- a. *Look back*—a time of worship, personal care, encouragement (fresh vision) and accountability to evaluate how effective they were at obeying whatever God told them the prior week
- b. *Look up*—time in the Scripture to hear God speak afresh
- c. *Look ahead*—time to set some goals based on what God is telling them, to practice the tools they will need in the process and to pray for each other as they go out in anticipation

To be a healthy movement, a CPM needs these three areas to remain balanced. Finding what is out of balance often solves the generational hurdles.

### 1. Spiritual Posture Deficiencies

A few years ago, I began to spot a common problem in CPM ministry attempts. CPM practitioners were becoming excited to implement CPM principles in areas two and three above. In the area of a **2) clear, simple path**, they were finding very reproducible methods to enable better evangelism—evangelism that could be implemented by new disciples arising from the harvest. Discipleship tools that were worldview appropriate were enabling these new disciples to start down the path of short-term discipleship, and many of them could do the same with family and friends they led to faith. Perhaps most exciting were some revolutionary new tools based on Acts 2 and other passages for helping small groups truly cross the line into being healthy churches in both identity and function. One missionary told me that when he came to his region thirty years earlier, the average time to form a church was 22 years. He was ecstatic to find a way to form healthy churches within weeks and months.

Because the methods were reproducible, a lot of church planting ministries were finally bearing second and perhaps third generation churches.

Second, as many CPM practitioners began to equip believers with these methods using a **3) reproducing discipleship process** (three-thirds meetings), the implementation rate by new disciples was increasing. With such an environment of better, culturally appropriate biblical tools and a context in which believers could be lovingly equipped with freedom to fail, but always encouraged to keep trying, some multiplication was inevitable—but not for the long term.

A problem was developing to such an extent that it prompted me to emphasize foundational area one (spiritual posture) almost out of proportion to the other two areas. For example, with five hundred missionaries I oversaw in Southeast Asia, a few ministries were achieving Gen 2 and Gen 3 churches, but stopping there. The problem was not in the methods, but in the spiritual posture of the ministry. It was all too easy to rely upon these newly discovered methods and processes and ignore the leading and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

This prompted me to begin teaching more on the spiritual posture of a movement, how to seek the vision on God’s heart, how to pray fervently for that vision and a willingness to pay the price to see the gospel go to the hardest places. But even more than these was helping our missionaries and their national believers learn to truly abide in Christ. They needed to learn how to be full of the Spirit daily and follow His leading.

Without this vital ingredient, we were ignoring Jesus’ command to wait until power came from on high before going out to do the work (e.g. Lk. 24:49). By and large, we had thousands of believers doing the work without fully understanding how to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:25). This prompted me to finally write my latest book *Spirit Walk* to help CPM practitioners and believers in general take the fear out of the Spirit and learn what it is to truly live in relationship with Him daily.

Recently, a dear brother (who I consider one of the most faithful CPM practitioners and who is bearing fruit) finished reading *Spirit Walk*. He said, “Steve, this was the missing ingredient for me.” When we read the book of Acts, we are impressed at how the disciples, and especially Paul’s team, followed the guidance of the Spirit. A deficiency in

this area keeps us from bearing fruit for the long term. This is because we have the tools and a discipleship process, but only the Spirit can tell us where and with whom. He guides us to the people God has prepared.

## 2. Clear, Simple Path and 3. Reproducing Discipleship Process Deficiencies

My next article will detail numerous challenges practitioners face when they encounter generational hurdles from Gen 0 to Gen 4. The vast majority of these fall within these latter two foundational areas. *Assuming that spiritual posture is in place*, then solving these other issues can propel a movement through the most common hurdles.

Finding answers in these two areas is critical. We must avoid the attitude of a missionary who told me 20 years ago, “I don’t do any planning or use any methods; I just follow the leading of the Spirit.” Perhaps that works for a few highly gifted individuals, but Jesus clearly gave His disciples methods to use in outreach and the evangelists in Acts used these same methods. A very fruitful friend of mine has said, “I find it a lot easier to follow the leading of the Spirit when I have lots of tools in my toolbelt.”

We *all* need the methods and tools that come from a clear path that moves us through entry, evangelism, discipleship, church formation and leadership development. And more importantly, disciples from the harvest need these tools. They need to know how to share the gospel. They need to know how to pray. They need to know how to be church.

But simply putting tools in their hands is not enough. I remember teaching my sons to use a power saw. There was no way I was going to put that saw in their hands without modeling how to do it and then a lot of assisting and watching until they got it right *safely*. The reproducing discipleship process helps new disciples pick up each tool they need, see it modeled, personally practice it and then confidently implement it in the world outside of their small group or church as they are led by the Spirit.

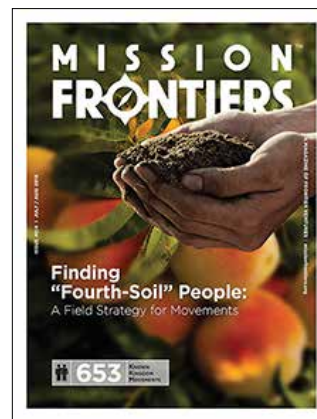
As you look at your work or the work of others, I encourage you to ask questions such as these:

1. Are the basic spiritual elements in place for believers to rely upon God to achieve what is on His heart? Are they postured in an attitude of surrender and fullness of the Spirit?

2. Do these surrendered disciples have methods that are simple enough that each generation can use? Do they naturally connect in one path from 1) entry (who to talk to and how to start) to 2) evangelism to 3) discipleship to 4) church formation to 5) leadership development?
3. Are these methods being implemented in a healthy discipleship process where 1) they can look back and evaluate in a safe, loving environment, 2) they can look up to receive instructions from God’s Word and 3) they can take the time to practice a method or tool and make plans to obey what God said? Is this three-thirds process helping them effectively implement the methods of the simple path above at each new generation?

When these three areas are in balance, you will find that most of the issues you need to overcome to press through generational hurdles will be solved. Each generation will then find the God-prepared people who will bear fruit 30, 60 and 100x. I call these individuals by several interchangeable names: Person of Peace, Fourth Soil Person, Worthy Person (Matt. 10:11) or simply God-prepared person as a summary. Two editions ago, my friend Kevin Greeson drew a distinction between these. After considering it, he is posting this update to that edition.

### Statement from Kevin Greeson on Persons of Peace



*In my article in Mission Frontiers (July-August 2018, Finding “Fourth-Soil” People: Fourth-Soil Person or Person of Peace), I offered similarities and distinctions between the Fourth-soil Person and a Person of Peace. The possibility of them being one and the same exists. Regardless, both are found through sowing of the Word of God and seeing who responds. Aiming for one or the other falls within Jesus’ field modus operandi. A CPM practitioner stands on solid ground when sowing with the intent of finding Persons of Peace and Fourth-Soil individuals.* MF

# A Decade's Progress—In Just One Year!

Behind the global turmoil that preoccupies so much of the world's attention, God is quietly reaping the greatest spiritual harvest in history, while preparing an even greater harvest.

And at the center of this global outpouring is prayer, along with the intentional pursuit of movements, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to motivate and equip disciples and small churches to *reproduce* rapidly (rather than just gathering believers to *receive* ministry).

Following are the significant developments I have seen over the past year in this global revolution, with links to related resources. (Suggestions for improving or expanding this list are welcome at [Robby-Butler.MultMove.net/encouraging-developments](http://Robby-Butler.MultMove.net/encouraging-developments))

- 1. Focused prayer:** In May of 2017, global prayer network leaders met with mission leaders to focus prayer on gospel movements among the remaining unreached peoples (watch the inspiring 9-minute video at [vimeo.com/244739881](https://vimeo.com/244739881)). This has accelerated a growing global focus on prayer for movements to complete the Great Commission.
- 2. Closure focus:** Shortly after this prayer initiative, the 24:14 Coalition formed—dedicated to pursuing movements of rapidly multiplying small churches and disciples in every remaining unreached people and place by 2025 (read about the Coalition at [2414Now.net](http://2414Now.net) or see their five minute video at [vimeo.com/272854525](https://vimeo.com/272854525)). Several years earlier Steve Smith wrote the *No Place Left* saga about movements emerging among every people by 2025. The 24:14 Coalition is turning this fiction into reality. Request your FREE review copy of *Hastening* at [npl2025.org/review-copy](http://npl2025.org/review-copy).
- 3. New awareness:** The circle of trust created by the 24:14 Coalition ([2414Now.net](http://2414Now.net)) led many movement leaders to share for the first time what God was doing through their movement. This replaced the earlier April 2017 *estimate* (162 movements with 20 million new disciples) with a 2017 year-end *confidence* of nearly 650 movements, with 50 million new disciples. (See [MultMove.net/pub/Astonishing-Progress.pdf](http://MultMove.net/pub/Astonishing-Progress.pdf))
- 4. Rediscovery of Jesus' Movement Strategy:** The July/August 2018 *Mission Frontiers* exposes the pivotal relevance to movement practitioners of "The Parable of the Sower" (This is the title Jesus Himself gives the parable in Matt. 13:18). We Evangelicals have often misunderstood and misapplied this parable to identify what what kind of soil or seed we ourselves are, when the parable actually reveals the strategy Jesus modeled, as a sower starting a gospel movement. A couple years earlier I helped publish *Stubborn Perseverance*, the story of how to start a gospel movement. Request your FREE review copy of *Stubborn Perseverance* at [StubbornPerseverance.org/review-copy](http://StubbornPerseverance.org/review-copy).
- 5. Refugee and disaster dynamics:** God is using the global refugee crisis and other disasters to bring blessing to peoples that were previously isolated from the gospel: [MultMove.net/pub/The-Refugee-Crisis.pdf](http://MultMove.net/pub/The-Refugee-Crisis.pdf) (observations from my family's 2017 participation in refugee ministry in Europe).
- 6. Household blessing:** Gospel movements—the Word of God blessing and spreading through households and other relational networks—are an important corrective to the tendency of many evangelism and church planting efforts to focus on *individuals* without regard for their *household* relationships. I excerpted two books on this for the Mar/Apr 2016 *Mission Frontiers*: Steve Smith addressed this further in *The Oikos Hammer* in the Sep/Oct 2018 *MF*. In this current *MF*, Chuck White and I carry this further on p. 28, including a sidebar addressing the most common misuses of Scripture in this regard.
- 7. Fear exposed:** Satan's hold over many Frontier Peoples is partly through their fear that Christianity will tear apart their households and communities. Evangelism of individuals away from their households compounds this fear. Movements correct this by drawing households together in discussion of and obedience to God's Word. An adaptation of McGavran's article explaining this dynamic was presented at the September 2017 meeting of the International Society of Frontier Missiology, then ran in the Mar/Apr 2018 issue of *Mission Frontiers*. A further refinement is available at [MultMove.net/pub/Movements-How-peoples-are-reached.pdf](http://MultMove.net/pub/Movements-How-peoples-are-reached.pdf).
- 8. Disparity recognized:** India has long received only the prayer and laborers proportionate to its classification as a *country*, when in fact India has a larger population and more complexity than most continents. India is home to nearly half the population of all Unreached People Groups, with more complexity than all of Africa

BY **ROBBY BUTLER**

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**Robby Butler** is General Director for Mission Network, production manager for Steve Smith's "No Place Left" saga and editor for James Nyman's "Stubborn Perseverance." He contributes to Mission Frontiers occasionally and mostly researches what is working best to advance God's kingdom, then distills this to equip others.

([MultMove.net/pub/2017-Ineq-in-Miss-Dist.pdf](http://MultMove.net/pub/2017-Ineq-in-Miss-Dist.pdf)). And while most countries receive an average of one missionary for every 1,000 people in their unreached people groups, India receives only one missionary per 46,000. Awareness of this disparity of needs and resources is stimulating increased prayer and efforts toward starting movements on the Indian subcontinent (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh).

« Behind the global turmoil that preoccupies so much of the world's attention, God is quietly reaping the greatest spiritual harvest in history, while preparing an even greater harvest. »

**Frontier People Groups:** In early 2018 the concept of Frontier People Groups (less than one Christian adherent per 1,000 in population) brought fresh clarity to the remaining task ([JoshuaProject.net/frontier/3](http://JoshuaProject.net/frontier/3)). Joshua Project has posted a short article explaining Frontier People Groups ([JoshuaProject.net/assets/media/articles/frontier-peoples-introduction.pdf](http://JoshuaProject.net/assets/media/articles/frontier-peoples-introduction.pdf)).

**9. Distinction between Pioneer and Partnership Mission work** (p. 12 again): A long-standing concern of Ralph Winter's was to clarify the core difference between:

- **pioneer work** (in peoples with a generational identity they consider incompatible with Christianity), and
- **partnership work** (where outsiders can serve alongside indigenous believing households).

Pioneer work involves different skill sets and must precede partnership work, just as a midwife's skills differ from and must precede a teacher's. Pioneer work brings people groups their first introduction to God's desire to bless their households and communities. Partnership work builds on that introduction to extend God's blessing from family to family throughout the people group. Partnership work will continue until Jesus returns, but the remaining pioneer work to be done may be completed very soon!

Unfortunately, the way Unreached People Groups have been measured has blurred rather than illuminating this distinction between pioneer and partnership


work. Thus most missionaries to unreached peoples are involved in partnership work (in peoples where up to 1 in 50 are Evangelicals or 1 in 20 are a Christian adherent).

The new category of Frontier People Groups addresses this confusion.

- 11. Prayer focus continued:** God continues stirring global prayer for movements among the largest remaining Frontier People Groups. In recent months, a small network of global prayer and mission leaders has pulled together a 31-day prayer guide for the largest Frontier People Groups ([Go31.org](http://Go31.org)).
- 12. Reliance on the Holy Spirit:** Steve Smith's *Spirit Walk: The Extraordinary Power of Acts for Ordinary People* ([amzn.to/2yEzVBg](http://amzn.to/2yEzVBg)) reintroduces the ancient fruitfulness of following the Holy Spirit's leading in the pursuit of movements (p. 44 in this issue).
- 13. Movement Training Hubs:** This issue of *MF* reports on the rapid and significant development of intentional movement training hubs to accelerate the equipping of more disciples to start movements among peoples that most need them (p. 36).
- 14. Cascading Movements:** Movement experience over the past decade reveals that movements among larger groups can also carry over into neighboring Frontier People Groups. This reinforces the value of a strategic focus on the 400 largest and most influential Frontier People Groups, which contain 90% of the global population needing pioneer work (p. 30 sidebar).
- 15. Breakthroughs Among Unreached Peoples:** The population of unreached people groups has roughly doubled since the concept was introduced in the late 1970s, but this is changing rapidly. Movements have recently cut the *lost* population of unreached people groups by an estimated 45 million, turning this number into disciples with experience in rapidly reproducing churches (see again [MultMove.net/pub/Astonishing-Progress.pdf](http://MultMove.net/pub/Astonishing-Progress.pdf)).

Never in history has the Holy Spirit prompted such global collaboration in focused prayer and labor toward biblical, multiplying discipleship among the peoples and places still waiting in darkness.

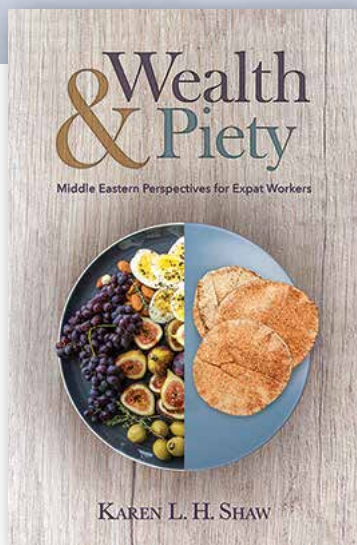
**Visit [MultMove.net/join-gcc](http://MultMove.net/join-gcc) to become part of a team to bless just one of the 400 strategically large, neglected Frontier People Groups.**

*He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. — Rev 22:20.* 

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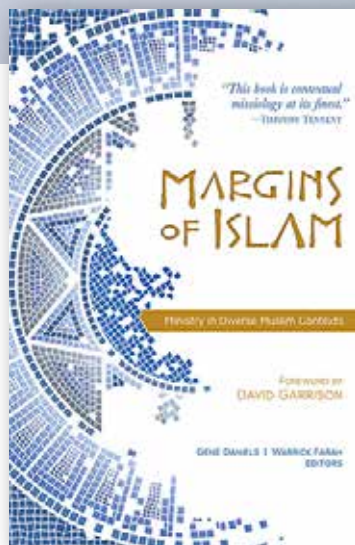
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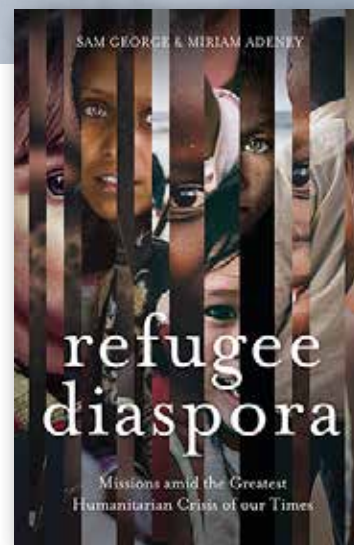
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# Further Reflections: No Shortcuts to Jesus

BY **GREG PARSONS**  
DIRECTOR OF  
GLOBAL CONNECTIONS  
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Since my wife and I arrived in Pasadena in 1983 to join the staff of the U.S. Center for World Mission, I've heard lots of strategies from global workers trying to reach the Unreached. Some hear and learn cultural, historical or religious stories—which they hope might impact whole people groups for the gospel. For example, I've heard how certain Chinese characters have underlying meanings that point to spiritual truth. Or how various Sanskrit scriptures have epic stories that make for great analogies to share with Hindus.

The thinking behind this is that if we can understand and use these stories, we might understand their thinking and be able to soften people's hearts so they might turn to God. It seems like some may be either, 1) looking for a shortcut to the hard work of deeply learning language and culture, and/or, 2) using some sort of "contextualized" strategy where they think they know the answers before they even start. Paul Pennington said that contextualization is "Christian code too often for cosmetically enhanced imitation of our assumed essentials."

So, after hearing another example like this today, I wondered: *what is it that seems to draw people to Jesus?* I realize it is different in different situations, but I wondered if there is a pattern. We know that Jesus will draw people to Himself (John 12:32), and yet He has instructed

us to pray, among other things, that the Lord of the harvest would thrust out laborers (Luke 10:2). Since we are to pray for God's will, one of our greatest ministries is to *pray that God will draw people* from specific people groups to Christ.

I've also heard from some who have tried a simpler approach. They too learned language and tried to understand the context/culture where they live—often living in-country for a long time. And they might use a story that connects with the spiritual climate or background of the culture, but they are mainly *pointing people to Jesus through God's Word*.

It is easy for those who grew up in the church and/or became Christ followers long ago, to forget the power of the Word of God to transform lives. We have this as head knowledge. But we may need to be reminded of how this truth plays out every day around the world by people who grow up in very different contexts.


For example, one worker I know was serving in South Asia. He sought to live a holy life, even though it made him stand out. Eventually, he saw whole families meeting together in the evening to study about Jesus in the gospels. Another brother studied Jesus' life with leaders in his Middle Eastern country. The group decided to compare Jesus with others—like Buddha or Ghandi. Eventually, they gave up on everyone *other* than Jesus! And they were increasingly drawn to Him.

In both contexts, the expatriate worker sought to keep his own views out of the way and let the Word speak—making sure to answer all spiritual questions with the Word.

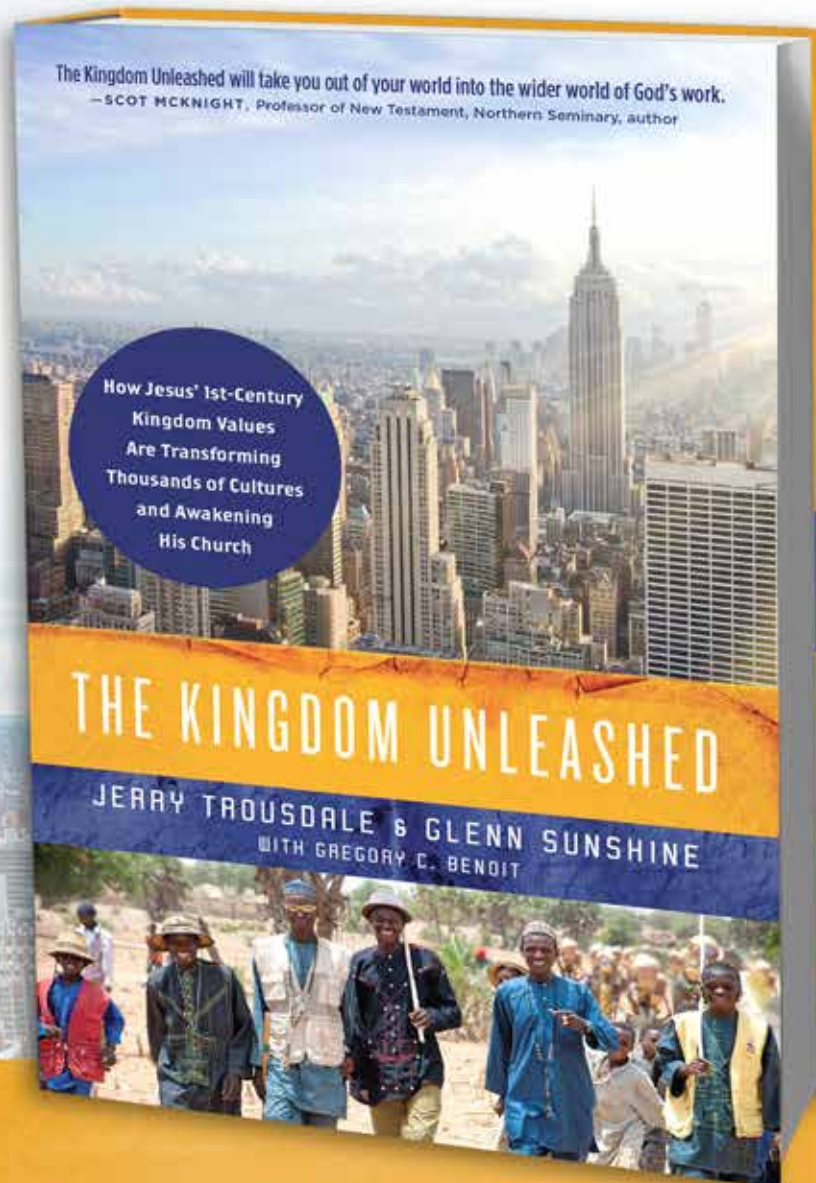
While I am reluctant to second guess someone who has lived or is living in the local situation, at times I've wondered if some workers wait too long before sharing more directly about how Jesus and the Scriptures have impacted their lives. Of course, sometimes, people share too boldly for their context and get themselves into trouble or are completely misunderstood. A while back, workers from a large Asian country were killed in a Muslim country because they were too aggressive. We should only call it "boldness and courage" when it is tied to wisdom from above.

I want to be clear that I believe it is very important that we understand our context. I don't think I can say that too strongly. History matters. We have all seen situations where people—perhaps out of youthful zeal, perhaps out of immaturity—did things that seemed to us to be counter to the gospel in other contexts. We have all seen people close the door to God—perhaps in our own families.

But there are so many people in the world around all of us, who have not heard and would be willing to listen—even among the unreached. So yes—gain understanding of the context where you are (or will be). Learn from the language they speak. Walk with them through life's difficulties. Understand an individual's life, family, or local history. Listen. Pray. How you live your life speaks volumes.

All of that can help show *you* how *they* think. That leads both you and them to the Word of Life. 

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