

# MISSION FRONTIERS™

## India: The Greatest Challenge to World Evangelization

ISSUE 41:3 MAY / JUNE 2019

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**708**

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MOVEMENTS

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# INDIA: THE GREATEST CHALLENGE TO WORLD EVANGELIZATION



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# THE ONLY WAY TO REACH INDIA IS THROUGH MOVEMENTS



BY **RICK WOOD**  
EDITOR OF *MF*

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There are unreached people groups in almost every country on Earth. But no other country in the world has a greater concentration of unreached and Frontier Peoples than the country of India. Half the population of all Frontier Peoples live in India and 90% of all the people of India live in unreached people groups. No other country in the world has such a diverse and complex society with thousands of different communities all separated by caste, language and religion. Each of these communities will likely need a separate movement of disciple making and church planting—thereby making India the greatest challenge to world evangelization that the global mission force faces today. No matter how you slice the data, the gospel must become good news in every community of India.

If India is the greatest challenge to world evangelization, then it should be receiving an appropriate level of attention and resources to meet this challenge. But it is not. India has 1,000 times as many people living in Frontier People Groups as does the United States. But the USA receives four times as many cross-cultural workers as India. India has by far the greatest need for workers and yet receives far less than what many reached areas receive. This will have to change if we want any hope of reaching the peoples of India.

## No Ordinary Mission Work Will Suffice

Sending tens of thousands of “missionaries” to India to “convert” people from any other religion to join the Christian church is simply not a workable, desirable or biblical plan. Even if the manpower could be sent, it would create such a tremendous societal and political backlash that any workers sent would likely be expelled from the country and greater persecution of the existing believers would result. But more importantly, this method of mission is not what Jesus has asked us to do. Jesus has not asked us to extract people from their family and community in order to join a foreign community with all the upheaval that brings. Our job is to bring the blessings of the gospel to every family and community so that it is welcomed as good news for that family and community. This is the only possible way India can be reached with the gospel.

In this issue of *MF* we provide you with multiple examples of this model of ministry successfully bringing tens of thousands of people to faith in Jesus without extracting them from their family and community. On page 16 we interview Victor John, the initiator of one of the largest Church Planting Movements in the world. He started the movement among the Bhojpuri in 1998. It has since

brought thousands into the kingdom and has fostered multiple movements in other peoples. This is the type of ministry that can bring the gospel to millions of Indians in thousands of communities with the least amount of disruption to Indian society.

The task of bringing the Good News of the gospel to every community of India is an enormous task, but God has also given the Church enormous resources to accomplish this task. The “technology” of knowing how to work with God to foster movements to Christ has spread across the globe. Many movements are currently taking place in India. We just need to take what we know, train up new workers in how to catalyze movements and then deploy them to every community in India. We also need to back them up with the prayers of millions of faithful prayer warriors. Pick up a copy of the “Pray for the 31 Prayer Guide” at [www.Go31.org](http://www.Go31.org). Reaching India is doable.

## That Number On The Cover: What Does it Mean?

Since our May-June 2018 issue of *MF*, we have posted the number of Known Kingdom Movements on the cover of each issue. Some have wondered where this number comes from and what defines a Kingdom Movement. This number is being compiled and tracked by the 24:14 Coalition research team. The leader of this team is Justin Long, a global movement researcher with the mission agency, Beyond. The 24:14 leadership and research teams have contact with hundreds

of mission leaders and movement catalysts from around the world who report progress to the team. Justin regularly says this number is “the floor, not the ceiling.” There are certainly more Kingdom Movements out there, but we only publish the number of movements that are known and attested to by a third party—therefore the title, “*Known Kingdom Movements*.” So what constitutes a Kingdom Movement? A Kingdom Movement is usually defined as “four or more generations of churches in multiple streams.” Each time a church plants another church, that is one more generation. When there are four or more streams of church planting four generations or more deep, that is the initial threshold of becoming a movement. Each of these streams will eventually have multiple streams itself. We refer to these as *Kingdom Movements* because the focus of these movements is to make disciples who seek to obey all that Jesus has commanded us to do, thereby bringing the fullness of Christ’s kingdom to that area.

## The Passing of Dr. Steve Smith, 1962-2019

For the last seven years it has been my great pleasure to work with Dr. Steve Smith to produce his Kingdom Kernels column and other articles in each issue of *Mission Frontiers*. His last column, “The Problem of Weeds,” appeared in the March-April 2019 edition of *MF*. His regular column was a joy for me to read each time and an inspiration to relentlessly pursue God’s glory through Kingdom Movements in every people. As co-director of the marvelous 24:14 Coalition, Steve has made an incredible contribution to world evangelization by seeking to foster movements of discipleship and church planting in every people and place by 2025.

Sadly, Steve will not be around to witness the accomplishment of this great goal to which he devoted his life. On March 13, 2019, Steve died from liver cancer. As Steve reported in his Kingdom Kernels column in the July-August 2018 issue of *MF*, Steve’s cancer was caused by a parasite that he picked up overseas while successfully fostering a Church Planting Movement. That column was titled, “Death, The Spiritual Triggering Effect.” It is my hope and prayer that Steve’s death will trigger the effect of launching thousands of faithful gospel workers into every unreached people to catalyze tens of thousands of Kingdom Movements. A good and faithful servant of Christ has fallen in battle. May there be many among us who will honor Steve, his vision and passion for God’s glory in all peoples, by taking up his mantle to spread the vision for which Steve gave his life.

Steve’s passion for God’s glory overflowed into the writing of an end-of-the-age, two-book, *No Place Left* saga, including the books, *Hastening* and *Rebirth*. The story chronicles the final generation of God’s people rising up to complete our commission in preparation for Jesus’ return. Thousands have been inspired to greater obedience through this saga.

Steve also inspired thousands of faithful workers to effective action through his landmark books, *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution* and *Spirit Walk*. I will greatly miss Steve’s clear clarion call in each issue of *MF* to reach the unreached peoples through Church Planting Movements. Now it is up to us to take up the 24:14 Coalition goal of fostering movements to Christ in every people and place by 2025 and run with it. Are you in?

## A Special Offer from Mission Network

In honor of Steve Smith’s life, Mission Network has posted online an anonymous tribute to Steve, a one-minute video of Steve sharing his passion, and an offer for a free copy of *Hastening* (Book One in the two-book saga) in a variety of formats: PDF, Kindle, ePub, Word, Audio and Print.

If you haven’t yet read the *No Place Left* saga yourself, or if your life has already been touched by the *No Place Left* saga, request a free print copy to share, and Invite others to get their free digital or print copy at <http://NPL2025.org/tribute>.

### *What It Took* by NPL/2414 Movement (Excerpted)

What would it take for the whole world to hear?

What would it take for every nation to draw near?

What if God’s people would finish the task? What if this generation was truly the last?

Steve’s cry was so clear:  
Who ought we to be?


To all who would hear,  
“Will you run with me?!”

I know a man, who carried the baton,  
We all know his vision and must carry it on!

The pace is set, it’s 2025. The herald is dead, but His God is ALIVE!

Steve started a movement but not for his glory,  
The *Hastening* saga was always God’s story!

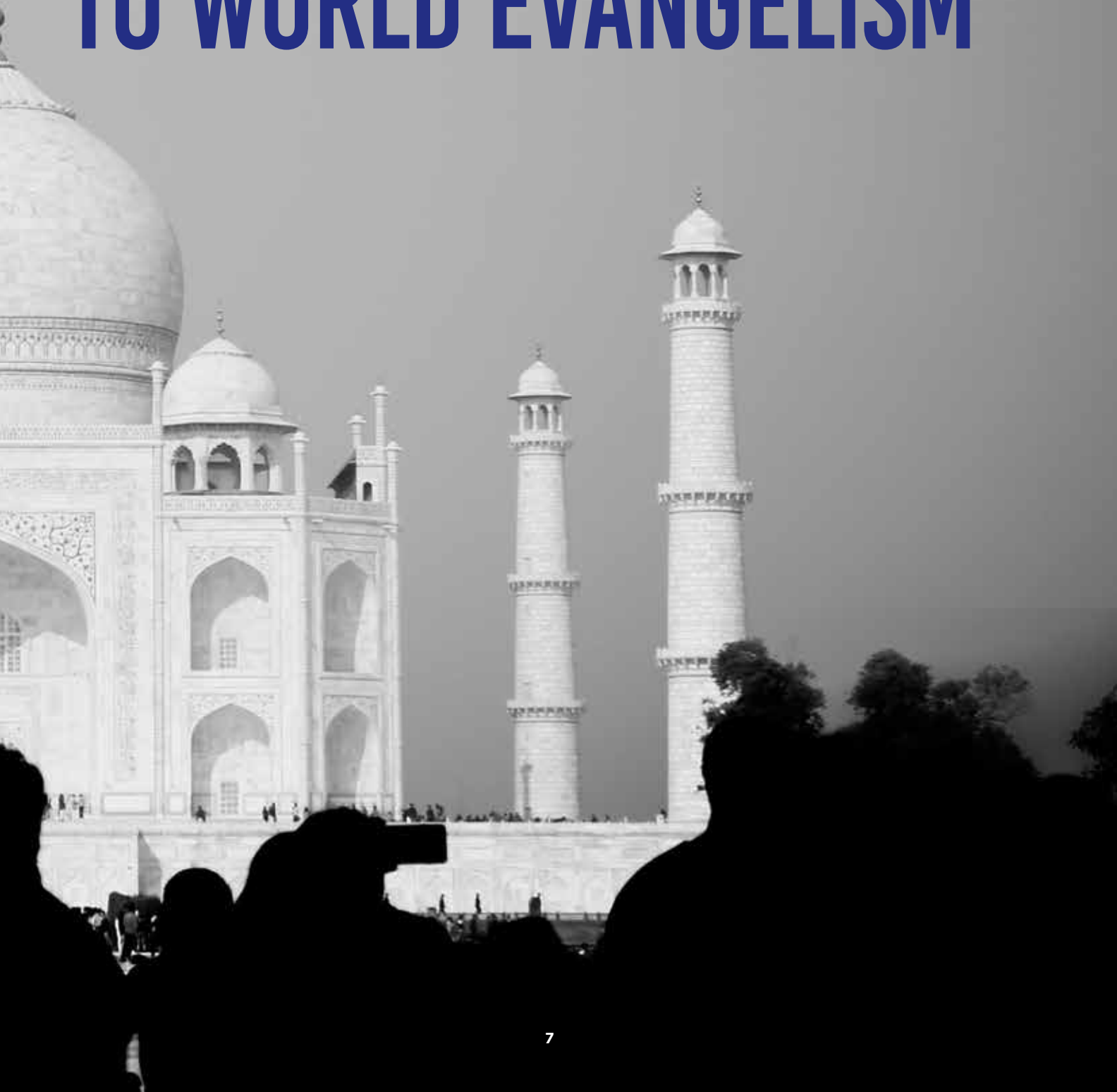
Now we’ve watched the wheat fall into the earth,  
By God’s Holy promise we will see *Rebirth*!

This promise is true, to all who would die. Lose your life, give it all, and multiply. 

# india



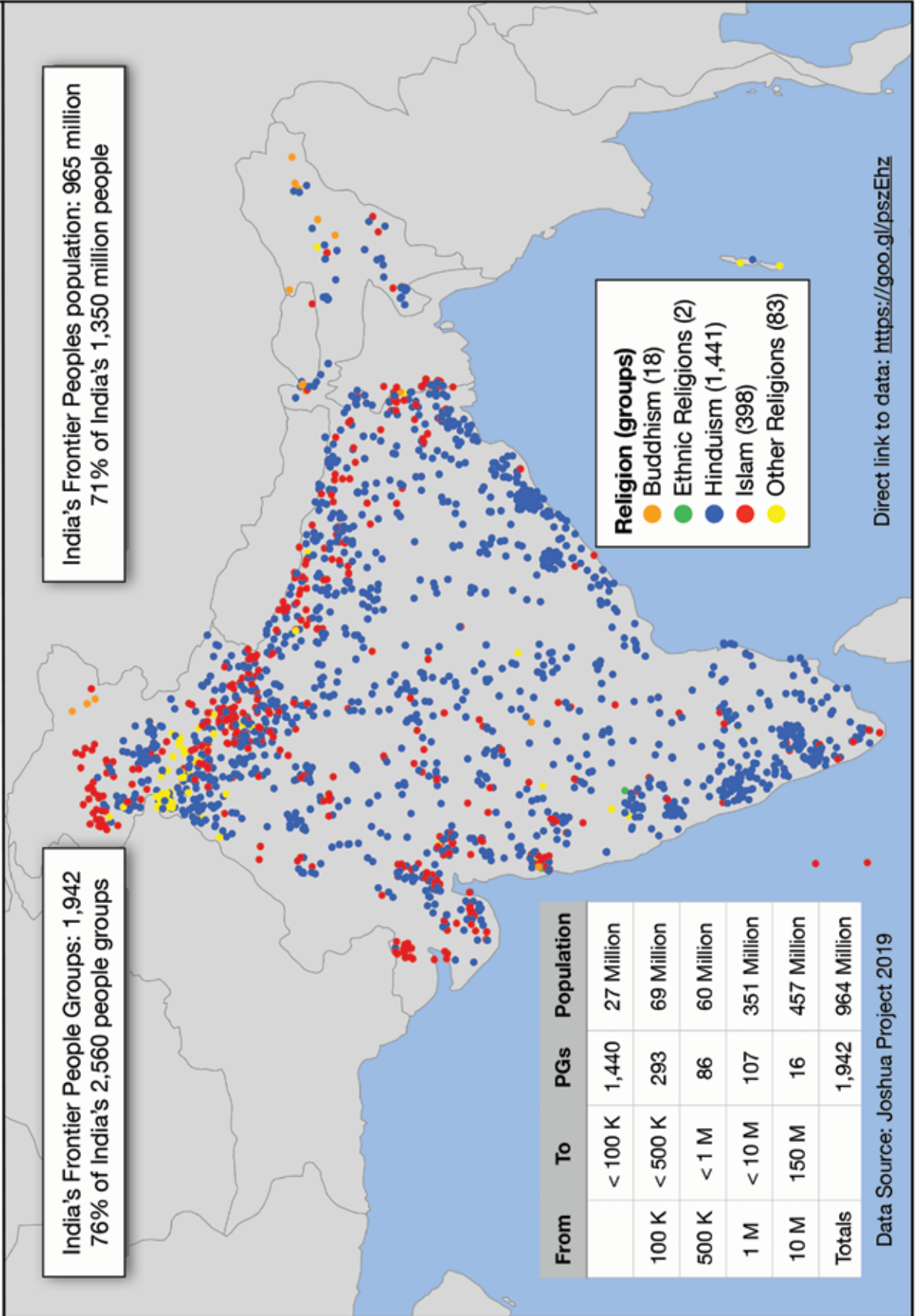
# THE GREATEST CHALLENGE TO WORLD EVANGELISM



## India's Frontier People Groups

No Sustained Jesus Movements Reported

Less than 1 in 1,000 (0.1%) identify with Jesus



India's Frontier People Groups: 1,942  
76% of India's 2,560 people groups

India's Frontier Peoples population: 965 million  
71% of India's 1,350 million people

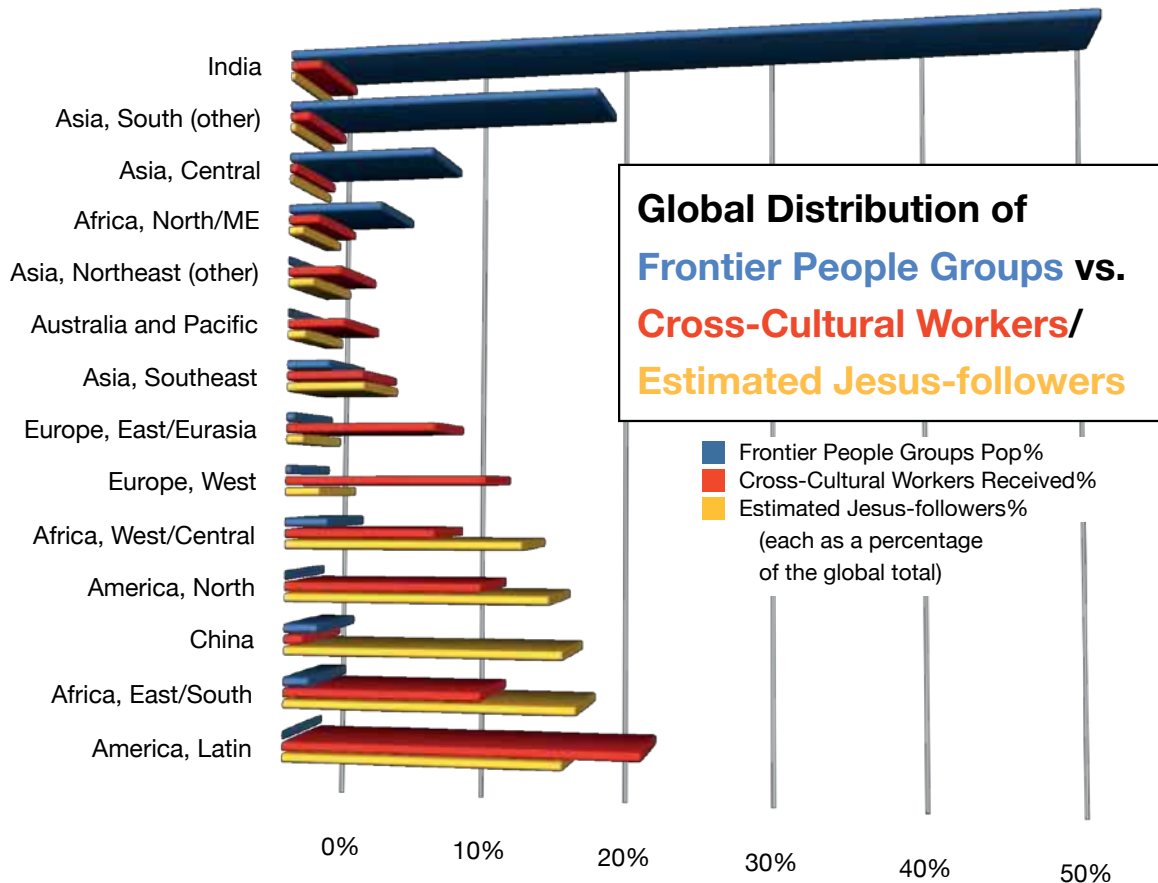
From	To	PGs	Population
	< 100 K	1,440	27 Million
100 K	< 500 K	293	69 Million
500 K	< 1 M	86	60 Million
1 M	< 10 M	107	351 Million
10 M	150 M	16	457 Million
Totals		1,942	964 Million

**Religion (groups)**  
 ● Buddhism (18)  
 ● Ethnic Religions (2)  
 ● Hinduism (1,441)  
 ● Islam (398)  
 ● Other Religions (83)

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

Data Source: Joshua Project 2019



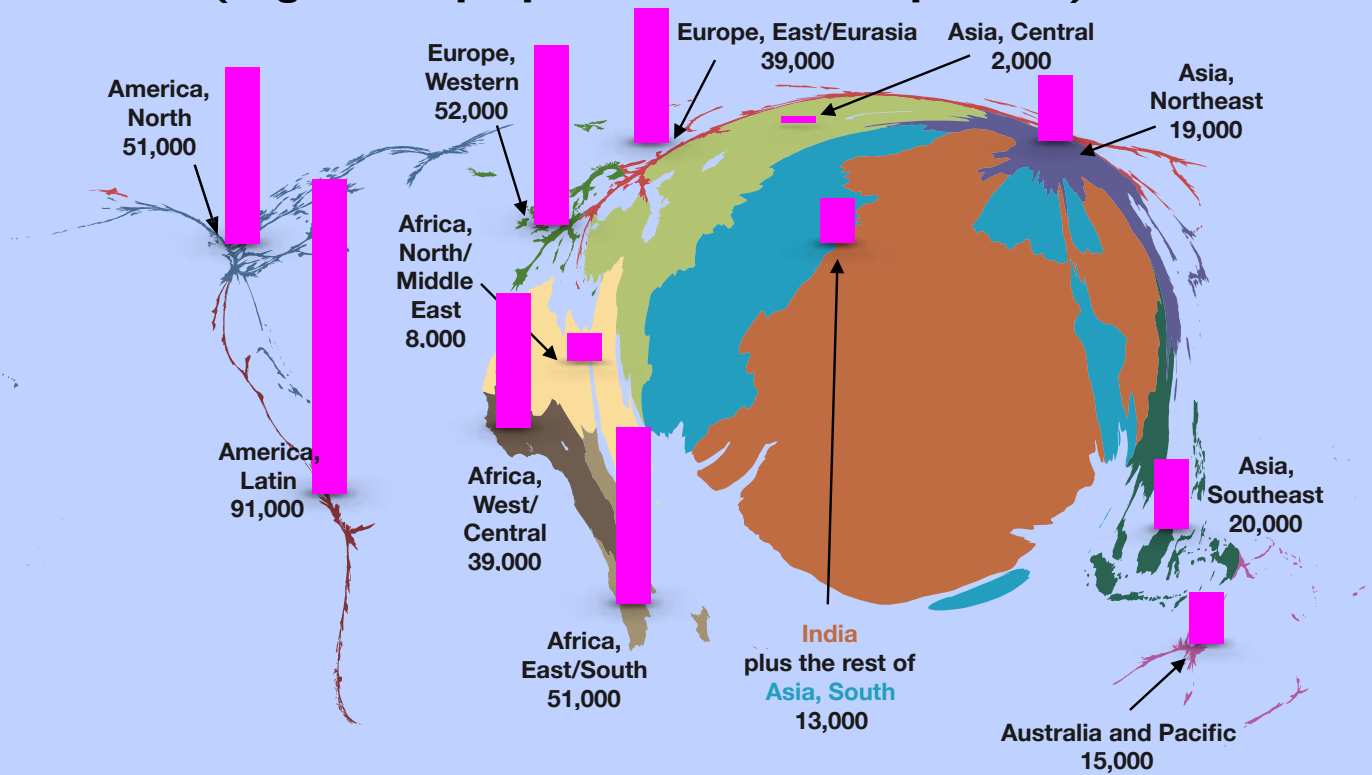


**India has 1,000 times as many people in Frontier People Groups as the USA. But the USA alone receives 4 times as many cross-cultural workers as India.**

Region	World		Frontier People Groups		Estimated Jesus-followers		Cross-Cultural Workers Received	
	Population (Millions)	%	Pop (M)	%	Pop (M)	%	Thousands	%
India	1,350	18%	970	54%	1.5	0.3%	8	2.0%
Asia, South (other)	420	6%	360	20%	2	0.3%	5	1.3%
Asia, Central	285	4%	170	9%	1	0.2%	2	0.5%
Africa, North/ME	370	5%	110	6%	5.5	1%	8	2.0%
Asia, Northeast (other)	230	3%	0.1	0.01%	10	2%	14	4%
Australia and Pacific	40	1%	0.2	0.01%	7	1%	15	4%
Asia, Southeast	660	9%	50	3%	30	5%	20	5%
Europe, East/Eurasia	340	4%	9	1%	6.5	1%	39	10%
Europe, West	400	5%	6	0.3%	13	2%	52	13%
Africa, West/Central	520	7%	50	3%	90	15%	39	10%
America, North	400	5%	1	0.1%	100	17%	51	13%
China	1,410	19%	40	2%	105	18%	5	1%
Africa, East/South	570	8%	30	2%	110	19%	51	13%
America, Latin	600	8%	0.1	0.01%	105	18%	91	23%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>7,595</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,796.4</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>586.5</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>

Regional totals, Frontier People Group populations and estimated Jesus-followers all from JoshuaProject.net (2019). 2015 Cross-Cultural Worker figures from: *World Christian Database*, Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed March 2019).

## Population Distribution of Frontier People Groups (FPGs) (Region size proportional to FPG Population)



### International Cross Cultural Workers by Region (See bar graphs above)


Region	FPG Pop (Millions)	Total CC Workers	CC Workers*/M in General Population	FPG Population/ CC Worker*
India	964.7	13,000	7	101,193
Asia, South (other)	363.9			
Asia, Central	166.3	2,000	6	94,508
Africa, North/ME	108.5	8,000	21	14,186
Africa, West/Central	52.9	39,000	75	1,157
Asia, Southeast	49.5	20,000	31	2,439
Asia, Northeast	42.9	19,000	12	2,204
Africa, East/South	29	51,000	90	566
Europe, East/Eurasia	5.6	39,000	116	223
Australia and Pacific	0.2	15,000	365	13
America, Latin	0.09	91,000	161	1
Europe, Western	5.6	52,000	90	108
America, North	1.2	51,000	125	24
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,790</b>	<b>400,000</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>4,475</b>

\* 2015 total Cross-Cultural Worker figures from: Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, eds., *World Christian Database* (Leiden/ Boston: Brill, accessed March 2019).

These are full-time workers who identify with Jesus in some way, working for two years or more to bring God's blessing where they themselves are not citizens.

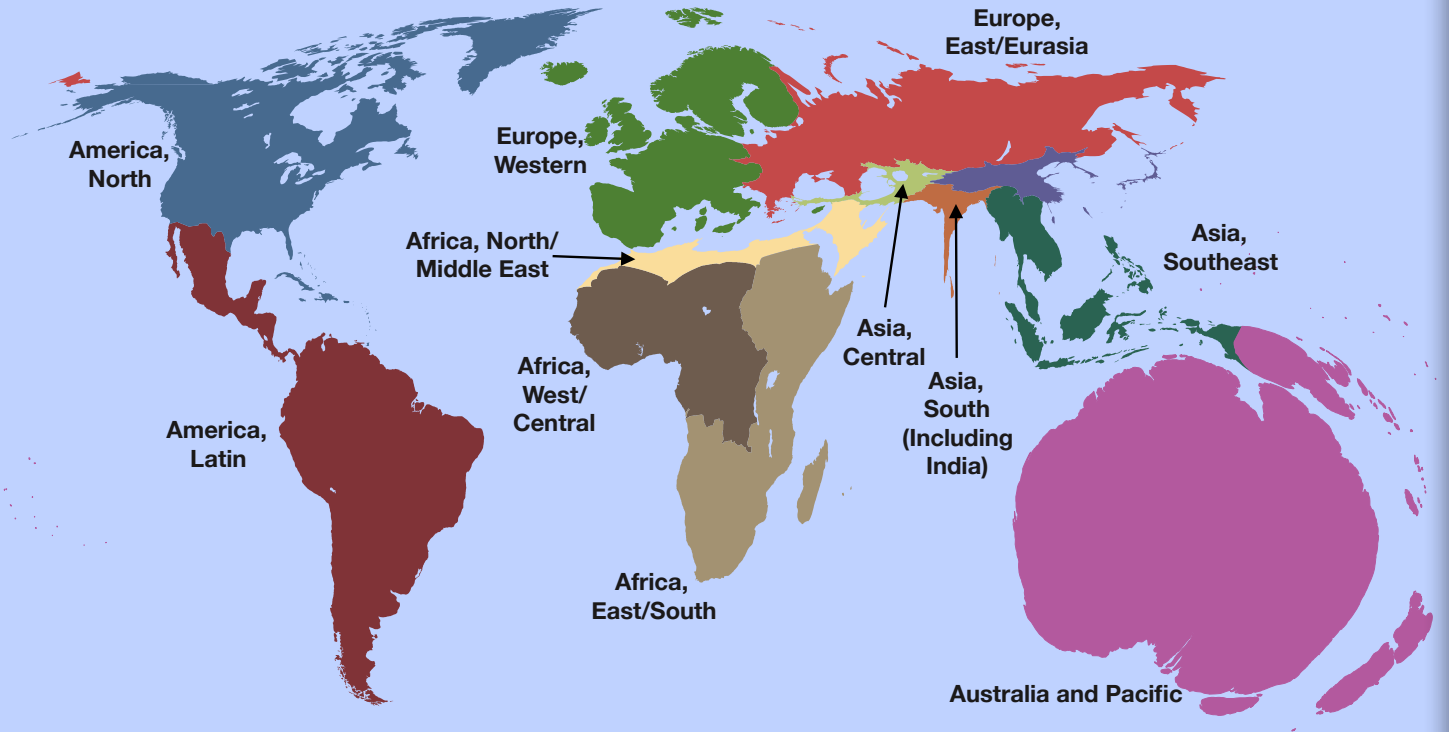
Only 1 in 100 of these missionaries is estimated to actually work among Frontier People Groups, and even fewer are pursuing Jesus movements to multiply God's blessing.

\* General and Frontier People Group population data from Joshua Project ([JoshuaProject.net/frontier](http://JoshuaProject.net/frontier)).



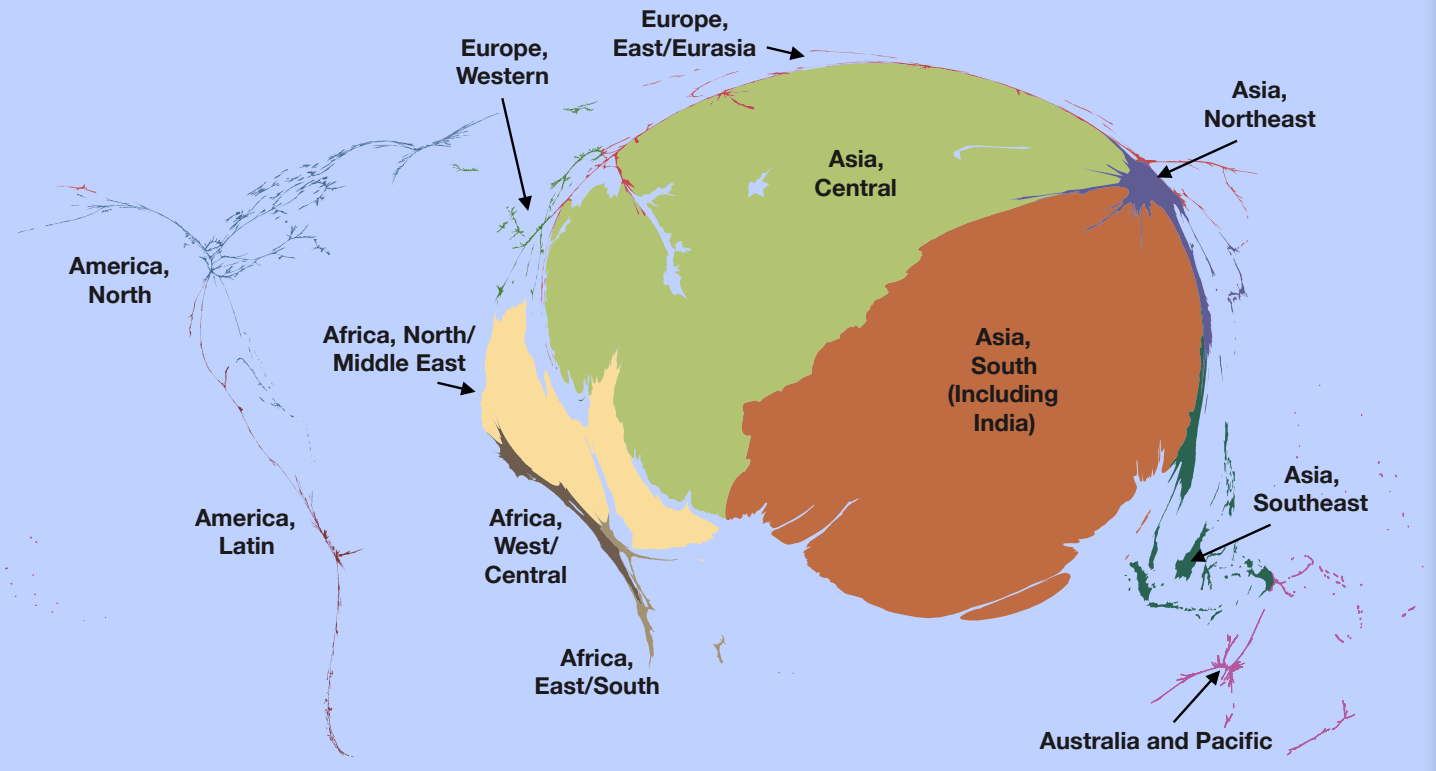
## Distribution of Cross-Cultural Workers\*

(Region size proportional to Workers / Million in the General Population)



## Relative Need for CC Workers\* among FPGs

(Region size proportional to FPG population / Cross-Cultural Worker\*)



# Why the Community/ Caste Focus is Needed in Support of Church Planting Movements

COMMENTS FROM A PASSIONATE INDIAN SERVANT

## The Key: How People Perceive Themselves

Let us start with how people perceive themselves. There is too much of classifying people by who we think they are, rather than who they perceive themselves to be. That is arrogance on our part, not a respect of people as people who are living as members of communities.

« We have to fit in with them, not squeeze them to fit us. »

Would we consider placing members of distinctively different people together, people who have a history of not getting on, in a church plant in the UK, US or Australia? Then why does so much of mission attempt that in other parts of the world? Lack of knowledge and expediency are poor substitutes for respecting people as people and recognizing the dignity and realities of community.

## Language not involved in determining community/caste

Most South Asian people do not define themselves primarily by language groupings, but rather by traditional community groupings. Using language to define a people while the people themselves do not use language for self-definition can lead to destroying something sacred about the peoples who lie outside the kingdom.

Language spoken is of course very important, but in South Asia the community a person is born into establishes his self-identity much more than the language(s) he may speak.

## People know their own community

In the 2001 census for the Municipality of Kathmandu, about 662,000 of 672,000 total people recorded their community/caste name. Individuals knew their caste or tribe, allowing it to be recorded. Typically, in an Indian city, 99% of those of Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe status are able to supply their community/caste/tribe name when asked.

## Past mass movements have been according to community / caste


Over 90% of Indian Christians are traceable to mass movements, which occur along community lines, not language lines. A number of these mass movements have been labeled incorrectly by language. The Telugu Movement was actually a movement within the Mala and Madiga communities, almost exclusively. The Bhojpuri Movement has now primarily affected the Chamar community and to a lesser extent the Balmiki community. The Punjabi Movement was of one community, the Chuhra, a low status community. Several others tried to respond (Megh, Sansoi, Sansi, and others) but were repelled by defiling contact with the Chuhra. A significant movement never happened in Maharashtra because the

Mahar and Matang communities were placed in common churches. We can go state by state in India, Pakistan, and Nepal and identify movements that began but didn't advance because more than one community was involved and these communities did not associate.

### Costly ministry lessons related to ignoring community/caste

If the language focus is used for church planting/discipleship, we are promoting something that for two centuries in India has been a failure or has reduced significantly the number of people responding, that is, churches based on common language, not common community. The writings of Donald McGavran, Bishop Pickett and others on this topic have largely been ignored.

« It will require a total re-education for pastors and national workers to again think in community terms. »

There were costly lessons learned in the period 1870–1920, and one hundred years ago many agencies were getting it right. But language-based thinking had again solidly permeated missions efforts by the 1930s, and continues today. Language lists were what well-meaning workers saw and worked from, and low caste workers naturally wished to de-emphasize a caste focus. It will require a total re-education for pastors and national workers to again think in community terms. 

## A Glossary of Terms Relating to People Groups of South Asia

**Community:** In south Asia, community largely means “caste,” but is a more innocent sounding term and preferable to many. A South Asian community is not a voluntary association, but an ethno-linguistic hereditary group with defined boundaries within which one must marry.

**People Group:** Synonymous with Community in South Asia and used interchangeably with that term.

**Caste, formal:** Historian Sumit Guha in *Beyond Caste* describes caste in this way: “...the bounded, status-ranked ethnic community or ‘caste’ is a social form that frequently appears in multiethnic societies. But in South Asia it became a highly complicated, politicized form of ethnic ranking shaped by the constant exercise of socio-economic power” (pp. 2-3). Caste is thus a reality that extends beyond Hindu peoples. Marriages are largely based on caste association and entrance to a caste is by birth. Caste is undergoing rapid change with globalization impacting Indian life, particularly in the cities.

**Scheduled Caste (aka Dalit or Untouchable):** Lists (schedules) of the most disadvantaged Indian society were developed in various provinces in 1935 (previously the term “depressed classes” had been used). What groups currently get onto the list is all about political power and intrigue. Christians by definition are not Dalits even when social realities show that they are.

**Scheduled Tribe:** Historically isolated ethno-linguistic groups who never integrated with broader Indian society. Special privileges are reserved for tribal people but they are often exploited. Many sections of tribes and some whole tribes have become Christian.

**Other Backward Classes (OBC):** A government of India designation first used in 1990 to identify backward castes (but not “most backward castes,” who are the Scheduled Castes) qualified for government privileges (reservation of seats in educational institutions and for government jobs). Due to power equations, numerous well-to-do groups are now officially counted as OBCs.

**Forward Caste:** Traditionally the high castes of Hinduism.

**Caste, informal:** Similar to the formal caste system associated with Hindus, but extending to religious minorities such as Muslims, Christians, Buddhists and others. Also a social stratification scheme, but not necessarily as well defined as that within the Hindu system of castes. A few hundred million individuals are in this informal caste system, depending on where boundaries are drawn.

# The Year of the Frontier

## [www.Go31.org/yof](http://www.Go31.org/yof)

The Year of the Frontier starts on May 1st, 2019, promoted by large prayer networks in conjunction with Joshua Project's "Unreached of the Day" ([www.JoshuaProject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday](http://www.JoshuaProject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday)) and Frontier Venture's *Global Prayer Digest*. Additional Frontier Peoples resources can be found at [www.joshuaproject.net/frontier](http://www.joshuaproject.net/frontier).


These two publications will provide daily prayer points for each of the 400 largest Frontier People Groups (with populations over 500,000). These groups contain 1.6 billion people—90% of the population of all Frontier People Groups.

This unprecedented collaboration will focus prayer on the fulfillment of God's promise to bless all peoples through Jesus movements healing and restoring broken families and communities.

Your prayers are vital to extending God's blessing in Jesus to all the remaining Frontier People Groups.

Draw close to God by embracing His passion to bless these Frontier People Groups.

Invite others to join you in:

- Praying through the *Pray for the 31 Prayer Guide* ([www.Go31.org](http://www.Go31.org))
- Promoting the International Day of Prayer for the Unreached ([www.AllianceForTheUnreached.org](http://www.AllianceForTheUnreached.org))
- Participating in the global Year of the Frontier Prayer Movement ([www.Go31.org/yof](http://www.Go31.org/yof))
- Partnering in prayer with field teams for Jesus movements to multiply God's blessing ([www.InheritTheNations.net](http://www.InheritTheNations.net))
- Preparing for the Global Outreach Day 2020 ([www.globaloutreachday.com/2020](http://www.globaloutreachday.com/2020)), which will coincide with the culmination of the Year of the Frontier 



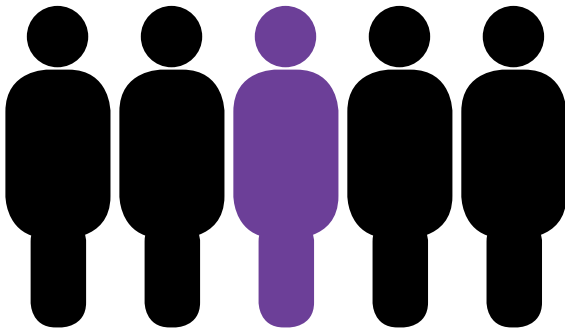
# The Great Injustice:

India has 1,000 times as many people in Frontier People Groups as the USA; but the USA receives four times as many cross-cultural workers as India.

- Only 1 in 10,000 of those living in India's FPGs identifies with Jesus in any way.
- 1 in 20,000 of those living in India's FPGs is estimated to follow Jesus.
- 1 in 5,000 of all cross-cultural laborers is estimated to work among India's FPGs.

For every cross-cultural worker among Frontier People Groups (FPGs) **WITHIN** India, there are 250,000 people in those FPGs who don't identify with Jesus.

For every cross-cultural worker among Frontier People Groups (FPGs) **OUTSIDE** India, there are just 10,000 people in those FPGs who don't identify with Jesus.



## 1 in 5

of all people on Earth live in India.

« Until Jesus' followers unite in obeying His commission, these masses have no hope of hearing about Jesus before they die. »



## 1/2

the population

of all Frontier People Groups live in India.



## Seven of Ten

people in India live in Frontier People Groups.

# A Still Thriving Middle-aged Movement:

## An Interview with Victor John by Dave Coles

**Dave:** *How long has the Bhojpuri movement been going on?*

**Victor:** The movement started in 1998. I had begun focusing on work among the Bhojpuri since 1992 and in 1994 we began the ministry in earnest. We held the first Bhojpuri consultation, began a systematic survey for all the Bhojpuri districts and made a decision to focus on obedience-based discipleship. We didn't start with a blueprint for how the ministry would unfold; everything has been evolving through the years. The real breakthrough with significant numbers happened when we released the first edition of the Bhojpuri New Testament in 1998. After that the movement began growing exponentially. It wasn't a huge movement at that time. Things were happening in various places, but we had no idea of the big picture of what the Lord was doing.

In 2000 an audit was done by the International Mission Board (IMB), and they pointed out that exponential growth was taking place. The tipping point had been in 1998, when things just shot up. We only had 800 pastors at that time, and all of their ministries had grown within the previous two or three years. The IMB's audit showed the rapid growth curve and it hasn't stopped since then. Additional audits have been done by other groups in subsequent years, showing the endurance and growth of the movement. I just met yesterday with 35 or 40 leaders who shared amazing stories. We were counting the generations of believers and churches and it's over 100 generations! Every generation of believers starts a new church. We don't count the number of believers (how many people got saved). We count the number of churches started.

**Dave:** *With all those generations of churches and leaders, how have you managed to maintain the DNA of multiplication?*

**Victor:** The DNA has been set, and in our culture, a lot depends on watching and imitating. What you see is what you do. You watch what a leader does, then it's easy to do the same thing. It's much easier than following written notes or bullet points in a lecture. They see someone do it, then they think, "Oh, I can do that." We try to make it so *simple* that even the least educated person will say, "I can do that; it's not that difficult." After all, obedience is caught rather than taught. We don't present something complicated that requires a lot of education, facilities or money. The idea from the very beginning has been a self-sustaining and self-propagating ministry. It's the responsibility of the Bhojpuri people to take the gospel to their own and to other people, and that's what they're doing.

« We were counting the generations of believers and churches and it's over 100 generations! »

**Dave:** *The Bhojpuri movement is one of the longest-lasting movements still continuing with CPM dynamics. This would seem to show it's not just a fad.*

**Victor:** Yes. The movement is still moving. In years past some people invested a lot of time and effort in things that turned out to be just a fad. Some have been reluctant to invest in catalyzing a CPM, afraid it would also turn out to be a fad. But God is so good! Multiplication continues, and we see there's nothing inevitable about a movement ending or turning into traditional churches.

BY **DAVE COLES**

Beyond website: <http://www.beyond.org>

**Dave Coles** is an encourager and resourcer of Church Planting Movements among unreached groups, serving with Beyond. He has served among Muslims in Southeast Asia for 24 years. He has over a dozen articles published (under a pseudonym) on topics related to contextualization, reaching Muslims and the nature of the Church.



**Dave:** *Back in the 1990s not many people were using the term “CPM.” When this ministry among the Bhojpuri began in the mid-90s, what were you envisioning? What words were you using to describe what you hoped God would do?*

**Victor:** At that time, “church growth” was very popular. It was heavily commercialized and there were loads of seminars on church growth. The megachurch model from South Korea was also popular, and megachurches in the US were a big thing. But I didn’t think that trying to build a big church would reach the Bhojpuri. I was thinking in terms of something like the book of Acts – small and rapidly reproducible house churches. Instead of having a 500-member church, I thought it would be better, even if the churches only had 10 people, to have 50 churches. It’s easier to reproduce and the cost is much lower. To run a church with 500 members is a huge project – with staffing, building, maintenance, management and administration. All of those things cost money.

Small house churches with no paid staff can easily reproduce. They are also less threatening to outsiders and less likely to invite negative reaction and persecution. I saw back in the 90s that we needed a model of church that could easily go underground if needed. And that’s exactly what’s happening now, in the present scenario of hostility.

This current persecution is not a strange surprise for us. We’re not sitting around saying, “Oh, no! What are we going to do, now that we’re experiencing severe persecution?” We are continuing to do everything like usual, just being a little more careful. A lot of organizations have had to shut down, let their staff go or change what they were doing. But we’re growing, and the newer movement to our east, influenced by the Bhojpuri, is also growing. We are preparing for much greater harvest to come.

**Dave:** *Speaking of persecution, what are some other challenges you’ve faced over the years?*

**Victor:** One challenge was organizations with more traditional models wanting to grab a piece of the action. The Bhojpuri movement had a very difficult year in 2011. A lot of organizations came, then distracted

and hired people. That created a lot of confusion and I got very discouraged. I thought, “Maybe this whole thing will die or disintegrate.” But the ministry continued and that challenge strengthened local leaders who remained as decision makers. They took more ownership of ministry within their area instead of working as evangelists under someone else. Whatever they knew they used. That’s when I started the saying, “If you know one thing, obey one thing; if you know two things, obey two things.”

« Small house churches with no paid staff can easily reproduce. They are also less threatening to outsiders and less likely to invite negative reaction and persecution. »

Another challenge was the low level of education among many of those being reached. Some people might wonder: “How can a person start a church and mature a church if they have very little knowledge?” But knowledge was not the key; it was obedience to Christ and willingness to really practice what little they knew. This was not people lining up to be hired for jobs; this was ordinary people obeying the Lord and seeing him bless their exercise of faith in everyday life. They know how to incarnate themselves and present Christ among a very hostile community.

A more recent challenge has arisen from the extent of the movement. The nation’s majority feel caught by surprise by what has been quietly multiplying in their midst. The Hindu militants thought that Christianity was only what they had seen for 200 years – a foreign import from the West, with visible structures and foreign patterns. Suddenly they’ve discovered that people are turning to Christ in ways that don’t turn them into Westerners. An article published last year quoted government minister Giriraj Singh blaming Christians for converting people “silently.” He said, “It is Christians who are doing maximum [sic] number of religious conversions in the country, that too silently.” I never thought I would live to hear that complaint.

**Dave:** *Sometimes people travel through an area where a movement has been reported and they don't see evidence of it, so they conclude there's not really a movement happening there. How would you respond to that?*

**Victor:** (laughs) You can walk in a jungle and never see any animals. That doesn't mean there are no animals in the jungle. Some people have a certain image in their minds of what a Church Planting Movement will look like. They think they'll see people crying in the streets, or shouting at the top of their voice that they're saved. They expect to see crosses on top of the houses, and no more temples or mosques or idols. They have this fantasy that when a movement happens the area will look very Christian. Maybe that happens in some places, but not in a context like ours. We don't have people streaming to church buildings on Sunday morning. Bhojpuri believers live, dress and eat like other Bhojpuri people. They gather to worship in relatively inconspicuous ways. We have God doing something wonderful *in the midst* of all the turmoil and idols. His kingdom is silently penetrating – like yeast – into areas where Christ has never before been worshiped.

One man visited our area, looked around and told me, "I don't see any movement going on."

I said, "Good!"

He asked, "Why do you say that?"


I answered, "Because the movement is safe from people like you who come to teach the believers 'how to be a Christian,' and end up destroying the movement." Sometimes I'm very blunt. But the fact is that too many Christians would like to "convert" the movement's believers so they become "better Christians" according to their own definition. Their idea is usually more head knowledge or more Western influence and less reproducible obedience.

« You can walk in a jungle and never see any animals. That doesn't mean there are no animals in the jungle. »

**Dave:** *In your book, you tell about the Bhojpuri movement cascading into other ethno-linguistic groups to begin gospel breakthroughs. At this point, how many other groups would you say have been impacted directly by the Bhojpuri movement?*

**Victor:** About eight different language groups across Northern India have been impacted and those language groups have different sub-groups within them. The work in at least one of those has already reached the point where it can be classified as its own Church Planting Movement. I just attended a conference of theirs and was very encouraged to see the Lord blessing that work. It has now become a fast-growing movement, not dependent on finances or a single leader.

« We have God doing something wonderful in the midst of all the turmoil and idols. »

The nature of the gospel is to multiply and spread. We praise God for the ways it continues to do that among the Bhojpuri and is now spreading among other groups as well. 



# The Bhojpuri Movement Transforming Social Dynamics

Excerpted from Victor John's forthcoming book *Bhojpuri Breakthroughs*  
(Monument, CO: WIGTake Resources, 2019)

The 1990s saw years of brutal warfare between high caste and low caste people in the state of Bihar. Both groups had guerilla-type armies and over 1,000 people were killed in the violence. Our group brought the good news into this context of enmity, revenge and wholesale human slaughter. Through prayer warfare and proclamation of the good news the caste warfare amazingly subsided.

In 1997, the same year as the bloodbath at Lakshmanpur Bathe,<sup>1</sup> we began work in Bihar, and the Church Planting Movement (CPM) started moving into that area. In less than two years, the good news reached many of the fighters themselves, who were broken and weary of the conflict and bloodshed.

In 1999, two area commanders of these warring groups accepted Christ and became completely transformed. Instead of leading raids and killing sprees, they began leading the way to plant churches. This transformation has continued to the present, as 19 former area commanders of militia groups have now accepted Christ and become church planters. So the Church Planting Movement impacted the caste war and helped bring peace instead of strife. But Bihar's caste wars only highlighted a much more widespread problem.... [The caste system] is a very dehumanizing system: incredibly degrading to human beings.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example "THE PATTERN OF ABUSE: RURAL VIOLENCE IN BIHAR AND THE STATE'S RESPONSE," and "Class (And Caste) War Brewing In Bihar, India's Poorest, Most Dangerous State." To mention just two especially noteworthy atrocities: in 1992, the MCC (low-caste fighters) brutally killed 35 members of the Brahmin caste at Bara village in Bihar. The MCC's armed group brought the 35 men of Bara to the bank of a nearby canal, tied their hands and slit their throats. Revenge came in 1997 when a militia of upper caste landlords, called Ranvir Sena, slaughtered 58 Dalits in Lakshmanpur Bathe village in a well-planned and co-ordinated attack. About 100 armed Ranvir Sena activists entered Lakshmanpur Bathe at around 11 pm. They broke into huts and shot people in their sleep. The village was virtually decimated in the attack; the youngest victim was less than a year old.

In the neighboring state of Haryana, for example, the caste system is still very strong in cities, towns, and villages. It dominates all of life; caste strongly influences each person's identity. People still get burned alive and tortured in caste-related incidents. Animals can drink from certain ponds, but Dalits and Shudras are not allowed to use that water. According to a report by Human Rights Watch, "Dalits and indigenous people (known as Scheduled Tribes or *adivasis*) continue to face discrimination, exclusion, and acts of communal violence. Laws and policies adopted by the Indian government provide a strong basis for protection, but are sometimes not faithfully implemented by local authorities."<sup>2</sup>

« We want to see God's kingdom advance, without focusing on caste. »

In light of such social dynamics, why would we want to perpetuate the caste system? We want to see God's kingdom advance, without focusing on caste. We see in Scripture that God's kingdom is equally open to all kinds of people. Yet when the culture has such an organized dehumanizing system, Christianity comes as a threat because it talks about equality under God and tries to give rights to people who have no rights. It creates disruption, because it suddenly brings someone who has always been under others' feet to a position of equality.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/englishwr2k8/docs/2008/01/31/india17605.htm>. Accessed 12/14/2016.

## Cultural tensions related to caste

In India's social context as a whole, caste still plays an important role. It underlies social tensions and feeds Hindu fundamentalism. The mindset of many people is now changing, and high caste people often don't demand special treatment. But when something happens that makes them feel threatened, caste consciousness immediately arises. As I talk with all kinds of people, I get the feeling that the caste system still remains in their mindset. This worldview persists no matter what position they hold, what education they have received, or what place they have in society.

Because of democracy, the high caste have lost much of their power as rulers. The vast majority of the population is from low castes: scheduled castes<sup>3</sup> and scheduled tribes. Democratic voting increases power for that majority. Also many Dalits and lower caste people have risen up and gained high positions in government and society. So high caste people feel their social power diminishing.

« In India's social context as a whole, caste still plays an important role. It underlies social tensions and feeds Hindu fundamentalism. »

Hindu nationalism has arisen in reaction to this changing social dynamic. Fundamentalists propagate Hindu nationalism, so that the Brahmin minority can hold onto power. This reaction includes attacking the most vulnerable, which is where religious persecution comes in. The real issue is not conversion but social reformation, which releases lower caste people from oppression. When low-caste people know their rights, they no longer suffer quietly at the hands of the high caste. So Hindu fundamentalist groups attack because they know Christians are social reformers. We educate people, and once people are educated they no longer function as slaves to the high caste. The social equation is changing, which terrifies those at the top. Most of the Hindu fundamentalist groups are run by high-caste people afraid of losing their power, and that fear inspires persecution. In some cases they have relatives in

<sup>3</sup> "The Scheduled Castes...and Scheduled Tribes...are various officially designated groups of historically disadvantaged indigenous people in India. The terms are recognized in the Constitution of India....In modern literature, the Scheduled Castes are sometimes referred to as...Dalits." Wikipedia, accessed 3/13/2017



the police, so they complain to the police and ask them to do something to stop the Christians. But the real issues behind such persecution are social control and power.

### The Bhojpuri movement faces the challenge of caste

The Bhojpuri movement has made a great difference in this caste-driven context. The population of the Bhojpuri area consists of 20 percent high caste people and 80 percent low caste or outcast Dalits and *adivasi*. The good news has tended to more quickly enter the low caste 80 percent of the population, so the church reflects that social reality. This means we have had to address real issues related to caste. The emerging Christian fellowships face poverty, illiteracy, and leadership challenges because low-caste people haven't been trained for leadership. They've been trained for generations to follow orders, not to take initiative. So we needed to develop a special kind of discipleship and leadership training to empower each person. That's one vital difference between this Church Planting Movement and a *mass* movement. In this movement each person is being disciplined and mentored.

Another challenge in our contexts is that traditional churches are still very caste-focused. People from traditional churches in Southern India come from caste-based churches. They have a very distinct division between the churches, with high-caste churches and low-caste churches that never interact with each other. They have no connection or fellowship with one another as part of their normal pattern of social interaction.

In the Bhojpuri movement, however, we don't talk about Brahmins and Dalits and all. We talk about lost people. The reality is that unless they hear the good news and receive it, they will remain lost whether they are Brahmin or Dalit.

### Focus on language rather than caste: touches all castes

Sometimes people say, "Why don't you focus on high-caste people?" But our approach among the Bhojpuri is different. If the high caste in our area are only two percent or 10 percent of the population, that same percentage is also reflected in the churches. By contrast with the work in the south of India, our percentages reflect the national population. God is at work in all the castes.

In addition, caste-focused work would be impractical in many cases. In some villages, there might be only one

family from a particular caste. You can't start a worshipping community with only one family, so you need a multi-caste fellowship. We focus on reaching persons based upon their language, geography, and economic status, rather than caste, because that helps the good news to take root throughout the region, and spread.

Caste divides groups but language unites people, so we have intentionally chosen not to focus on caste. We have instead focused on language, starting with Bhojpuri then spreading to many other language groups.

Top government officials mostly come from the high caste. Nowadays, though, because of the government's reservation system (a form of quota-based affirmative action for lower castes), some lower caste people are moving up in status, but they're often not very efficient. Some people think, "If he's from a low caste, he probably won't be able to do things properly." They continue to believe that caste reflects how people are designed rather than how they've been educated or trained.

« Caste divides groups but language unites people, so we have intentionally chosen not to focus on caste. »

When people move to the city, caste becomes less of an issue than class. Some of the first people who came to faith through our work in Delhi were construction workers, yet they were Brahmins (the top caste). People only look to their own caste when it comes to something like marriage. Otherwise people don't take much notice of it. In the cities, they may live next door to people of different castes without a problem.

Among the Bhojpuri, God is now moving among every caste, even with lower caste people reaching upper caste people. Believers from different castes may not socialize a lot with each other, but they have worship meetings together and pray together. We have one low caste woman who leads a worshipping community on the low caste side of the village, then goes to the high caste side of the village and leads another worshipping community there. Although she comes from a low caste and is female (which makes her an unusual leader in any village), God is using her effectively in both the high caste and low caste contexts. MF

# Key insights in enabling movements among the Hindu and Muslim peoples

Today, we live in a very exciting time when millions of people from the Hindu and Muslim peoples are coming to faith. Isaiah talked about a new thing in Isa. 43:18-19 when he said:

*“forget the former things: do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness (new pathways in the Scriptures) And rivers in the desert”*

The Holy Spirit (rivers of living water, John 7:37-39) is revealing new insights for reaching the non-Christian mainstreams in the spiritual deserts of the world.

From our experience, there are at least seven key insights that we have found helpful in reaching Hindu and Muslim peoples with the Good News of the Kingdom. They are:

## 1. Rediscovering the gospel

The gospel is not a religion but a relationship. A relationship with the living God. As the Lord Jesus Christ comes into our lives, we become the expression of the gospel. 2 Cor. 3:2-3 (The Message) tells us, *“your very lives are a letter that anyone can read by just looking at you. Christ himself wrote it, not with ink, but with God’s living Spirit.”*

As people journey in the Scriptures and continually observe our lives, they start to understand who this Jesus is and that He came to this earth to reveal the living God. God wants to bless us and change us and remove the mess in our lives. In due course the Holy Spirit helps the person to understand that God is inviting us into a wonderful relationship with Him that will cause us to become like Him and give us eternal life. This is good

news to a Hindu or a Muslim who has no awareness that this is even possible.

Most Hindus and Muslims respect a believer who lives like Christ but assume that they have to change their religion rather than understanding that the Good News is discovering how to have a personal relationship with the living God. The apostle Paul said to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 2:2, *“I decided to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”*

« The kingdom is primarily relational and not organizational as we examine the parables. »

## 2. Rediscovering the Kingdom

As we read the four gospels, we are amazed to learn that the kingdom is mentioned more than 100 times. It was His message (Matt. 4:23). It was His life purpose (Luke 4:43). It was His focus from the very start of his ministry (Matt. 4:17,23). It was the theme of the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3,10). It was the center of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:19-20). It was the first petition of the Lord’s Prayer (Matt. 6:10). It was His command to us to make it first priority in our lives (Matt. 6:33). In the N.T.Wright translation, Matt. 6:33 is put this way, *“Instead make your top priority God’s kingdom and his way of life, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

The kingdom is primarily relational and not organizational as we examine the parables. It is invisible,

BY JOHN RIDGWAY

blog: <http://mikebreen.wordpress.com/>

**Dr. John Ridgway** and his wife **Ruth** resided for 18 years in India where John was teaching and undertaking research Bangalore. During this time he led a team of 50 expats who were committed to reaching the Hindu mainstreams with the Good News. Subsequently, John and his family worked in Singapore for two years and in Malaysia for seven years whilst focusing on Buddhist and Muslim mainstreams and guiding frontier ministries in 18 countries in Asia. John’s focus over the last 45 years has been on the unreached religious mainstreams in Asia and today he continues in the Navigator context to coach apostolic leaders around the world.

not seen. It is spiritual, not physical and it is eternal, not time bound. It is a mystery.

Yet, it is the framework that Jesus spoke about. It embraces all the religions of the world including Hinduism and Islam. Anybody from any religion can become a citizen of the kingdom. If we use a Christian framework, we are limited to reaching nominal Christians and proselytes.

And when believers live out the kingdom values, they are very attractive to non-believers.

### 3. Reaffirming our First and Second Birth

Every believer has two births. The first birth is a physical birth that takes place at a certain time and place and is defined by our culture, our religion, the language we speak and our unique personality, physical features, skin color and family history. All this is from God. Acts 17:26 tells us, “*God determined the **times** (history) set for them and the **exact places** (geography) where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him.*”

But the tendency is for missionaries and others to denigrate the first birth and especially that of Hindus and Muslims.

Jesus always respected the person’s first birth and this is beautifully illustrated by the way He related to the Samaritans who were regarded distastefully by the Jews. He went to one of the Samaritan towns and stayed in that place for two days. However, the Samaritans in that place believed on Him and saw Him as not just a Jewish prophet but as the Savior of the world (John 4:42) in part because He lived and ate with them. No Jew would normally do this.

Paul respected the first birth of the Corinthians and encouraged them to remain in their context (1 Cor. 7:17-24), despite the fact that context involved pagan temples, pagan worship and sexually degrading practices.

Our second birth is from above and is spiritual. The first birth enables the mobility of the gospel. The second birth enables the purity of the gospel.

### 4. Recognizing that Relationships Define the Church

The family is central to the gospel. Gen. 12:1-3 is the first record of the gospel in the Bible according to Gal. 3:8 and it states that through Abraham “*all the families of the earth would be blessed.*”

The Greek word for *household* in the New Testament is *oikos* and this word occurs at least 114 times and in 1 Tim. 3:15 we read that the household of God is the church of the living God.

Rom. 16:5 tells us, “greet the church in their house” (ESV, KJV, NASB) referring to the relationships in that household. The NIV inserts the word “meets” into the text, implying a meeting, but that word is not in the Greek text.

Even the Greek word “ecclesia,” usually translated as “church,” never refers to a building or a meeting but always refers to the people of God in relationship to each other.

« Anybody from any religion can become a citizen of the kingdom. »

A great example of *oikos* is Cornelius’ household in Acts 10-11.

We see seven natural networks included in his household:

- His immediate family
- His relatives
- His close friends (Acts 10:24)
- His work colleagues: those who worked with him (soldiers)
- His work colleagues: those who worked for him (servants)
- His neighbors (“respected by all the Jewish people” Acts 10:22)
- Those in need (“always helping people in need” Acts 10:2)

Every person belongs to a natural *oikos* and as the gospel enters that *oikos*, it can be transformed into a spiritual *oikos* and in essence becomes church in that context.

The household is central to evangelism as one family touches another and in turn disciples that family. The Shema (the Hebrew word for “hear” that literally means “hey listen up”) of the Old Testament (Deut. 6:4-9) describes how the Jewish nation were to love their God with all their heart and soul and strength and disciple their families and hence their nation. The 12 Jewish apostles would have understood that as they heard the Great Commission from Jesus to make disciples of the nations, just as they had discipled their own families and hence their own nation.

## 5. Rejoicing in the Holy Spirit

For the new believer, it is important that they learn to experience His presence, His power and His perfecting working their lives.

Prov. 3:6 (The Message) tells us, “*Listen for God’s voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he’s the one who will keep you on track.*”

The new believers learn God’s ways especially through the Scriptures and His presence convicts them of sin and comforts them in difficult circumstances. In John 14:26 we are told by Jesus that “*the Holy Spirit will teach you all things.*”

And the new believers experience the power of the Holy Spirit in the area of prayer. Rom. 8:26 says, “*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know how to pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express*” and again in James 5:16, “*Tremendous power is made available through a good man’s earnest prayer.*”

New believers learn to pray for their families, relatives, work colleagues, friends and neighbors. They begin to see healings and demons driven out through the power of prayer.

Then the new believers start to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and respond to His promptings in areas of life that need to be changed and relationships that need to be sorted out and attitudes that need correction.

As the new believers spend more and more time in His presence, their lives dramatically change and they become a wonderful influence in their communities. This change was evident in the lives of the early disciples “*when they (Jewish leaders) saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were ignorant, untrained laymen, they were astonished and recognized that they had been with Jesus.*” (Acts 4:13)

Matt. 3:11 (The Message) tells us, “*...the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He’s going to clean house and make a clean sweep of your lives.*”

## 6. Realizing our Freedoms in the Gospel

The new believers experience freedom from the penalty of sin and also the power of sin as they rely on the Holy Spirit. They also experience freedom from systems, both religious and secular. Gal. 4:3 says, “*we were in slavery under the basic principles of this world*”. And in verse nine, “*weak and miserable principles.*”

Paul advised the Galatians who were Gentiles and were being pressured to fit into the Jewish system that “*it was for freedom that Christ has set us free.*” (Gal. 5:1)

Today many missionaries and Christians advise new believers from Muslim and Hindu backgrounds to convert to Christianity and as a result they are now under another system. This approach must be resisted.

« The household is central to evangelism as one family touches another and in turn disciples that family. »

But when these new believers realize that they are free of their own system, then they can live under that system as the system no longer controls them.

Paul was willing to fit into anybody’s system in order to reach those people with the Good News. 1 Cor. 9:19-23 explains this principle.

In fact, from a kingdom perspective, we view everything from a spiritual framework, not a physical framework, so this gives believers wisdom about being in the mosque or temple and the acts of worship that take place in these buildings. The Jews relied on “temple worship” (Rom. 9:4) but under the new covenant, our worship is spiritual (Rom. 12:1-2) and is a changed lifestyle.

## 7. Releasing the Gifts

When all the gifts are utilized, there is tremendous growth of the movements. This is especially true of the gifts of apostles, prophets and evangelists. The institutional church is primarily focused on the gift of teaching and also elevates the gift of pastor to a position of authority which often



stifles the growth. This practice explains why there is a proliferation of denominations.

Eph. 4:11-12 tells us that these equipping gifts are given to **equip all believers to do the work of ministry.**

You can go to [www.theforgottenways.org/what-is-apest.aspx](http://www.theforgottenways.org/what-is-apest.aspx) and for \$10 you will receive a comprehensive personal assessment of your gifting. You will be given details of your equipping gift profile that will help you recognize your role in an apostolic team.

« As the new believers spend more and more time in His presence, their lives dramatically change and they become a wonderful influence in their communities. »

### Your next steps

- Start where you are and begin praying through all your family and relatives. Also pray for your close friends, work colleagues and neighbors and ask God about what your next steps are with each person. If they show some interest in spiritual things, you could ask them if they would be interested to start a journey of figuring out who Jesus is. I have found that everyone has respect for Jesus, including Hindus and Muslims. They usually respond by asking, “what do you mean?” Then I pull out John’s gospels in an easy to read version like the Message. I read page one and let them read page two and then I ask, “What did you think?” Initially there may not be much response but I do not argue with the person or correct them or explain things. Then I ask, “would you like to meet again next week over coffee and we can look at the next two pages?” This assumes that we are already good friends. Usually people are OK with this and now we have started the journey which will continue through the influence of the Holy Spirit for some time.
- You can shift to a part of the city where there are many Muslims or Hindus living and join their community. You could join a learner’s class at the local mosque or Hindu temple and learn about their religion and build friendships with the other new members. You could volunteer to teach English for members of the

community. You could make yourself available to teach people to drive, to help them with income tax or social security etc. You can be hospitable and slowly build relationships.

- You could consider taking a job and moving to India or a Muslim country and work there and be a natural influence in that community. You could be a part of a team that goes together and be a resource to each other.
- BEGIN TO PRAY and ask God to guide you in this exciting adventure of bringing the Good News of the Kingdom to the lost nations of the world wherever you are.

### Resource books

*Miraculous Movements* by Jerry Trousdale, Nelson 2012

*A Wind in the house of Islam* by David Garrison, WIG 2014

*Understanding Insider Movements* edited by Harley Talman and John Jay Travis, William Carey Library, 2015

*The Kingdom Unleashed* by Jerry Trousdale and Glen Sunshine, DMM, 2018

*Your Kingdom Come* by John Ridgway, Tallgrass Media, 2018



# The Journey of One Hindu Man that Continued into Another Generation

This article is an excerpt from the book *Radical Together* by David Platt and used by permission of Multnomah Press.

In 1990, a young Hindu man from a Brahmin background travelled by bus for many hours from northern Karnataka to the city of Bangalore in South India. There he met a good Indian friend of mine who helped him in his request to look for a job. His own work in the weaving industry was in jeopardy and being made irrelevant due to the presence of a large multinational company moving into the area to compete with the local industries functioning with individuals who of course could not compete with the mass production of the big factories.

In the course of looking at all the options of finding work, my Indian friend, Shekhar, who is also from a Hindu background, began a discussion about Jesus and asked Suryanarayan about his opinion of what he knew about Jesus. They continued this discussion for about three weeks in between talking to different possible employers. As they dialogued about Jesus from what they had read in the gospels, Suryanarayan became more intrigued about this person Jesus.

« Although he had heard about the name of Jesus, He actually knew nothing about the person of Jesus and what He had done. »

Although he had heard about the name of Jesus, He actually knew nothing about the person of Jesus and what He had done. In his place, there were no known believers or Christian presence or churches as it was a strong Hindu community that would not tolerate any Christian presence in their area. But as the conversation

continued, Suryanarayan became more and more intrigued and amazed about this person named Jesus. The discussions continued late into the nights and there came a point where Suryanarayan wanted to yield his life to Jesus and follow Him for the rest of his life.

As it turned out, there were no options for work in Bangalore at that time and so Suryanarayan went back to his home town and continued his work. But now he was so excited about Jesus that he immediately shared with his wife and his two young children. He was able to read the Kannada bible to his wife and slowly she was persuaded by what she was reading in the gospels and most of all by the change in Suryanarayan's attitude towards her. Now he was treating her with respect and taking far more interest in their children. And they began to talk with their relatives who all lived nearby and many discussions ensued. Slowly, several families responded to the Good News. They all continued to go to the local temple— not for worshipping the Hindu gods— but to relate the amazing love of Jesus to their friends. The temple was not just a religious center but the place of importance in the community for all kinds of ceremonies. This included marriages, funerals, the naming of children, New Year celebrations and at least 12 other festivals that were important to the community.

Suryanarayan came back to Bangalore and asked Shekhar to come up to his own town in northern Karnataka and advise him on what to do with all these families who were responding to the Good News. Shekhar went many times over the next several years and listened to the issues that the group was facing. Then Shekhar would pray with them and encourage them to find their own solutions. Often, they would pray through the night when they could not see an obvious solution.

BY **RAVI SHANKER**

Ravi Shankar is from a high caste Hindu background in Northern Karnataka where there are no known believers in his community. He has his own business and repairs cars, motor bikes and trucks with a small team of mechanics working for him. Along with others, he has been instrumental in the spread of the Good News in his community and is now seeing a response with the next generation, in other communities and beyond.

Shekhar would talk with me and we prayed many times that the Holy Spirit would reveal His purposes to these new believers. They were often insisting that we give them a solution as they felt we knew the Scriptures better than they did. Our response was that they knew their circumstances far better than we did and so we had confidence that the Holy Spirit would show them the right pathways for their context.

These new believers were so excited about Jesus that they would spend several nights a week after work visiting relatives and friends and neighbors and explaining the Good News. They also loved to read the Scriptures and treasured the many insights that the Holy Spirit was teaching them. Everybody shared in these discussions which usually consisted of several families in one person's home.

The families spent much time in Deuteronomy 6:1-9 learning how they could disciple their families with a view for three generations.

Some of the relatives were illiterate despite being able to speak several languages. When they would see how others were gaining such amazing insights then they too would be very motivated to learn to read. The government programs usually took one year but we found that these new believers would often be reading within two to three months.

« ...he was so excited about Jesus that he immediately shared with his wife and his two young children. »


As many more families were responding to the Good News, they began to work out the best way to help everyone. They worked out from 1 Tim. 3:12 that the father was the natural leader of his oikos and was called a deacon. The father who had a concern for other families as well as his own was known as an elder ( 1 Tim. 3:1-7). They saw these roles not in terms of positions but as functions to be performed devoid of status or position or money. In fact such a person was truly a servant to others.

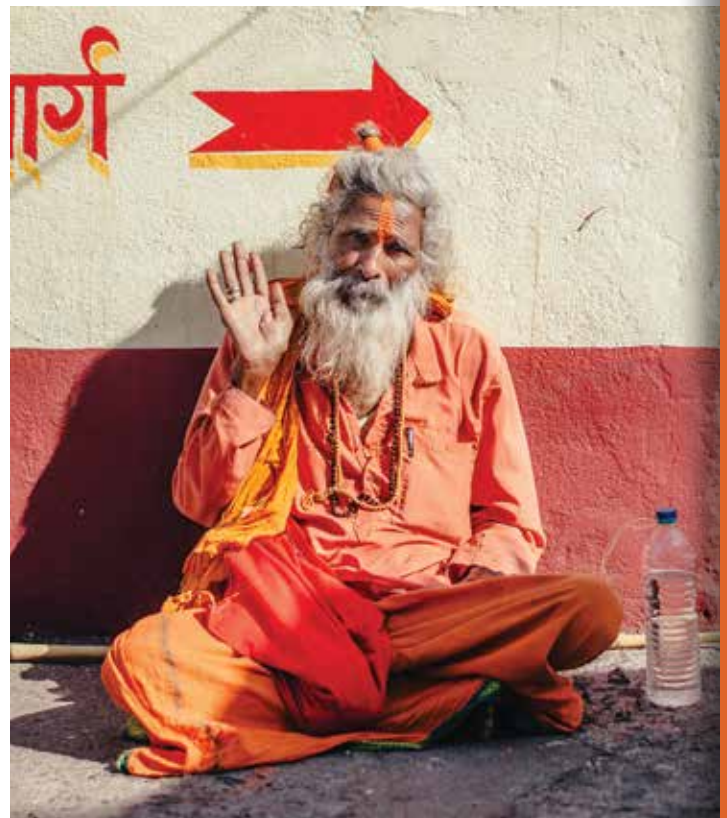
Many other issues were resolved over the next years because of a strong confidence in the Scriptures and much prayer, and an unwavering dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Over the next years the number of families kept growing. They did face pressure from several church planting groups who would stumble across so many believers and try to

baptize them or force them to deny their Hindu roots or tell them that they needed to build a building and have a qualified pastor. Such efforts were constantly resisted.

« Many other issues were resolved over the next years because of a strong confidence in the Scriptures and much prayer, and an unwavering dependence on the Holy Spirit. »

Four years ago, Suryanarayan died. By this time his son was married and had two small children and he assumed the leadership of this expanding movement. He has 25 elders that work together as a team. He is as committed as his father and has such maturity at 35 that he surprises everyone. He prays a lot and really serves his people. Even the older friends of Suryanarayan respect Vishnu very much. We are starting to see the second generation taking the good news to the next generation. The group numbers well over 2,000 families and continues to keep expanding today. 



# Advancing through Persecution in North India

From the time of the New Testament up to today, bold witnesses continue to see the gospel advance, even in the face of serious persecution.

Once when Jesus sent His disciples out on mission, he told them, *“I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves”* (Matt. 10:16, NLT). The rest of that chapter records a fascinating list of possible results from following Jesus’ pattern for mission. Some who follow His pattern will get hauled before the courts. Some will be betrayed by their own families. Some will be threatened. Others will receive a gracious welcome. And all are so important to God that the very hairs on their heads are numbered.

All these things are still happening today. The movement with which we’re connected has matured through the persecution believers are experiencing. A person may simply put their faith in Christ from listening to Bible stories, but the ensuing persecution that person faces causes their faith to mature. Here are two recent examples.

## The Fire Spreads

In one village in Northern India, 26 believers’ homes (huts) were burned this year. High caste people in the village had ordered these low caste believers to stop meeting together as followers of Jesus. But in spite of threats, they kept meeting. Then one night during the hot season while they were sleeping mostly outside of their huts, someone set a fire in one hut. It quickly spread from home to home until all 26 were consumed. The believers went to the police to file a report but the police would not do anything. The high caste Hindus who lived in the high caste part of that village then threatened them even more.

Many of those who lost their home left the village to stay with relatives elsewhere. Then, seven days after the fire, the 26 families got back together and decided: “We are not afraid. We will rebuild our homes!” This runs contrary

to the usual cultural pattern of low caste people simply acquiescing to the orders of high caste people. As these believers made plans to rebuild, house churches in other areas supported the families with their own funds. Even in their poverty, the house churches generously helped others in the movement.

« And all are so important to God that the very hairs on their heads are numbered. »

In addition to the help from believers, many other village people are also helping meet the needs of those who lost their homes. This event has exposed the reality of radical Hinduism. It has caused some people to ask more questions about Jesus, like “Why would they do that to you?” and “Why are you now a Christian and not a Hindu?”

When news of this tragedy gets out, Christians in other areas tell what happened. That leads to discussions about who Jesus is. Also, the families currently staying with their Hindu relatives are sharing with them about Jesus. So as a result of the fires, the gospel message is being shared more than before. The dispersion of these people from their burned houses has spread gospel messengers to 17 villages.

## A Beautiful Martyr

Ravit was 39 years old. He worked hard as a carpenter to provide for his wife, three daughters and young son. He also farmed their personal small plot of land. Three years ago, he attended one of our trainings where he heard that Jesus’ final command to His followers was to go make disciples. Soon Ravit was putting into practice what he had learned. He worked in the mornings, both in the fields and the shop, and then dedicated his afternoons to ministry.

Ravit never asked for money. When other house church leaders inquired to see if he needed “help,” he’d reply,

BY **ANDY WALKER\***

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The “Walker” family began cross-cultural work in 2001. In 2006, they joined Beyond ([www.beyond.org](http://www.beyond.org)) and in 2011 started applying CPM principles. The Walkers moved countries in 2016, and have been supporting the movements from a distance. \*Pseudonym

“No, I don’t need it. I have my own business and don’t need more money.” The movement leader describes Ravit as “very wise and bold.” He was also focused on reaching more places, new villages. Every one or two months he would go to a new, unreached place. He was not afraid to talk with people. He was energetic about the gospel and wanted to spread the Word. In the course of three years, he saw 378 house churches birthed and nine generations of leaders mentored. He was not jealous of others’ successes, but freely shared all that he learned in trainings so that others could also be fruitful.

A few months ago, a radical Hindu group became jealous of the impact Ravit was making in his area. A group of them attacked him one day, beating him mercilessly. He became ill from his injuries, but since he wasn’t fully incapacitated, he continued working. His mentor asked him if he wanted to report the attack to the police. Ravit said that his attackers were all local and had strong political ties, so reporting the incident to the police would only make things worse.

« He was not jealous of others’ successes, but freely shared all that he learned in trainings so that others could also be fruitful. »

Two months later, Ravit was still weak, but mobile. One day, the group returned and beat him again. His chest hurt, but there was work to do so he went to the fields. The pain grew worse and worse so he finally stumbled home to rest. Later that day, Ravit died. The next day, Ravit’s mentor and friend buried him in his own field. Ravit is the first known martyr from this disciple-making movement. The story of the believing community’s response can be seen in the video “The Gospel in Action.”

I asked the leader of the movement, “How many other leaders like Ravit are there?”

He answered, “There are about 20 others (men and women) like Ravit in his area alone. Each one has seen between 300-350 house churches birthed.”

He went on to estimate that 20-30% of the churches across the whole movement have experienced beatings or arrest for being followers of Jesus. The other 70% have experienced some form of persecution such as harassment, social pressure or bullying. Over the last few weeks, in his hometown alone:

- Three house church leaders were arrested while worshipping in their home.
- A family’s power lines were cut by one neighbor and their water-supply pipe was broken by a different neighbor. The family had no electricity or water for 17 days until a friend of a friend reconnected them.
- A man named Mohan was beaten in his own home one night by his neighbors. They were upset about the Bible studies he’d been hosting in his home. The police have yet to file an official report of the incident.

« In the course of three years, he saw 378 house churches birthed and nine generations of leaders mentored. »

In Paul’s first letter to the church in Corinth, he said, “*If one part [of Christ’s body] suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it*” (1 Cor. 12:26-27, NLT).

Please pray for the part of Christ’s body in this nation. Pray, as the first disciples prayed when they faced persecution:

“*O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—You spoke long ago...saying, ‘Why were the nations so angry? Why did they waste their time with futile plans? The kings of the earth prepared for battle; the rulers gathered together against the Lord...’*

*And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus”*

—(Acts 4:24b-26, 29-30, NLT). MF

# Enduring Persecution in India

## Some Ways God is Working through Persecution

*By the Leader of a Church Planting Movement in India*

In this season of persecution, I feel like God has given Satan permission: “Do what you want to those believers in India.” I know that in history the church has grown, not just in spite of persecution but *because* of persecution. In 1950, when the Communists took over China, there were about one million churches. Horrible persecution ensued, and believers throughout the world feared that very little might remain of the Christian faith in China. But in 1990, when the Bamboo Curtain lifted and news reached the outside world, we learned that in the midst of persecution the church had multiplied incredibly, yielding over 70 million churches!

In the context of our movement, even with persecution, over 300,000 people celebrated Christmas 2018 in their house churches and small gatherings. Almost all of that number have become followers of Jesus during the past six years. They have always faced some persecution, but 2018 definitely brought a huge increase from previous years.

God is building maturity into the main stewards of this movement (leaders at various levels) as a result of and *through* the persecution they face. Here are a few of the ways:

1. Believers are rising to meet the challenges. They are afraid; they are sometimes afraid to answer a knock on the door. But they don't allow their fear to lead them. They don't live intimidated lives. The fear doesn't stop them. They are standing firm.

For example, the amazing gospel multiplication happening through Kamal and his connections can be seen in the 12-minute video “Ordinary People; Extraordinary Gospel.” This group lives very simply at

the bottom of society. Some people came from outside the area and told them that since they follow Jesus, they could no longer live here. Kamal and his people, the lowest of the low, stood up to them. They said, “No, this is where we live and this is our home.” So they were rounded up and taken to the police station. They had to pay extortion to be released and go home again. Up to the present, police show up almost daily and “arrest” the men of this community, so they have to pay again and again to be released. A (Hindu) lawyer has gone with them to the police station to try to address this injustice. They are under great pressure, but they continue standing up to the challenge.

« I know that in history the church has grown, not just in spite of persecution but because of persecution. »

2. People in the movement are growing in patience. Area leaders wait patiently for the movement leaders to visit when they can, but they don't demand it. The movement has spread across four states (a large geographical area), and those involved have very little money. Visiting the various areas requires both time and money. The persecution keeps visits from happening as often, partly because finances are stretched even more thinly from responding to persecution. Also, if leaders from outside an area show up too often, it causes problems and more persecution. So we see illustrations of the biblical truth that “suffering produces perseverance” (Rom. 5:3).

3. The believers know who they are in Christ. They understand their identity in Him and they *own* it. They refuse to let traditional Christians dissuade them from who they are in Christ (as Paul instructed the Galatians when he asked, “Who has bewitched you?”) They refuse to be persuaded away from the identity He has given them, even when it results in persecution (whether from traditional Christians or from non-Christians).
  4. The movement leaders (52 area leaders plus further generations of leaders) are stepping up in their role as stewards of their “Timothys” and churches. This includes stewarding finances, discipleship and managing house churches. It also includes the process of growth in authority. This stewarding of decentralized leadership has become even more vital with the increase in persecution. The word “steward” is new for us. We no longer want to speak of movement leaders, but movement *stewards*. It is a biblical word, and explains well how the leaders feel— not only the top leaders, but all the main core group.
  5. Increased persecution has brought a response of increased generosity from the believers. They have only opened their pockets even more, rather than letting the persecution cause them to fear and become selfish in their fear. They are gaining a better understanding of how to make good decisions about the use of money based on what little they have available. Churches are generous with those in need. Funds come from the movement itself, from within the house churches. Generosity is flowing from church to church and up the chain to leaders and area leaders as people have need.
- These are a few of the ways God is maturing His church here in the midst of increased persecution in these days.

## Persecution and Women in North India

*By a Movement Leader in North India*

Persecution takes many forms; too many to illustrate in one article. These vignettes of persecuted women in North India illustrate both the human suffering and the power of God.

### In Haryana

In a nation regarded by many to be one of the most dangerous nations on earth for women, the Indian state of Haryana could be considered the epicenter of the misogyny and violence. About two and a half years ago, a believing woman in Haryana invited her neighbor, Reshma, to come over and participate in a Discovery Bible Study in her home. She knew that Reshma’s family had many problems. She wanted Reshma to hear a true story about the true God and to receive prayer. This friend felt sure that if the group could pray for Reshma, God would help her with her every need.

Reshma attended the Bible study and the story of creation amazed her. What wonderful news! There is a God above all gods. When He made the world, He made it beautiful and good. The world had not always been as it is now, full of violence, aggression, oppression of women, sadness and loss. This news watered the dry soil of Reshma’s heart. She attended three more Bible studies in her neighbor’s home.

Thrilled about the good news she was learning, she began to share the stories with relatives in the village. Her husband became furious when he heard about her activities. How dare she leave the house? How dare she promote Christian stories? He determined to put a stop to the nonsense and he took her to the roof of their home, held her over the edge and vowed he would throw her off if she didn’t stop telling people about this Jesus.

« Thrilled about the good news she was learning, she began to share the stories with relatives in the village. »

The next time Reshma met with the other disciples, she informed them through tears of her husband’s threat. They told her to stop reaching out. She replied, “What I am learning [about Jesus and His commands] encourages me to share this. I cannot stop!”

Soon, Reshma’s husband heard that she was still sharing about Jesus with their relatives and neighbors. Thankfully,

he didn't follow through on his threat about the roof but he did imprison her in a room in their home. Before locking the door, he declared, "No one will meet together. You are separate from our family and will not see your children." Reshma prayed.

Six weeks passed. One day, her husband was badly injured in a fall from the tractor out in their field. With her husband confined to his bed, he allowed Reshma out of the room in order to serve him. She kept praying. She cared for her husband for 22 days, bringing meals to his bed and feeding him. Over time, he began to treat her politely. Finally, his arrogance melted into humility. After he became able to get up and walk around the house again, Reshma dared to ask, "Are you still angry with me? If not, can I do Jesus' work?" He didn't reply. Reshma took his silence as permission. Thrilled, she began again to share about Jesus with others.

The first person Reshma visited was a relative named Madhu. Madhu had noticed a change in Reshma's husband. She said, "Your husband seems changed. Are you doing something with him?" Reshma told Madhu about all that had happened. Madhu was very impressed by God's ability to soften and change the heart of Reshma's husband. So much so that she gave her allegiance to God and joined Reshma as a coworker in the kingdom.

Three months passed. One day, Madhu shared a true story with a neighbor named Maravan and his whole family. They liked what they heard, so Madhu began a Discovery Study in their home. Madhu's three children were afraid of Maravan. Like most men in Haryana, he was aggressive and rough. He owned a small shop near his house, but his shop wasn't doing well. He finally told Madhu, "If you will pray for me and God brings financial change to my shop, I will believe this God is true."

Madhu prayed, God blessed the shop, and Maravan and his whole family gave God their allegiance. Soon, Madhu's children began to see a change in Maravan. He was a new man. Maravan began sharing with others about what was happening to him and his family. One neighbour, Krish, and his household, soon gave their allegiance to Jesus because of all that Maravan shared.

Then Krish shared with another man and his family who also gave their allegiance to Jesus. So within nine months, five generations of disciples were birthed in this area of Haryana, the most violent state in India, one of the most violent nations on earth. So far, 42 people have been baptized from among these five generations. The words from Luke (1:78b-79) ring in our ears: "*the Dayspring from on high has visited us; To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace*" (NKJV).

### In a different state of India

Six months ago, we visited a very poor family who lived in a hut. We encouraged the woman and a couple of her children to listen to God's Word and His stories—from Creation to Christ. We told them: "Listen over and over and over again. Then make sure you discuss the stories for the greatest benefit. We can't always visit you, and even the area leader cannot always visit you, but you always have God's Word."

« So within nine months, five generations of disciples were birthed in this area of Haryana, the most violent state in India. »


We returned six months later and met this family again. This time, the woman's husband and many extended family members also joined us. They seemed much happier this time than previously. I asked why they seemed happy. The wife and a few of the others immediately began crying. She said that every day during chai time she had listened to the stories. Her husband also listened, as did her son and his wife, who lived with them.

In the past, her husband drank too much and beat her. Her son also drank a lot and beat his wife. After hearing the story about Adam and Eve over and over again, the men came under conviction. They exclaimed: "This story says you were taken from my rib? That means we are same body! But I beat you and drink too much!" The husbands began to recognize the value of their wives and treated them differently.



In this village, the wives normally joined their husbands working in the fields. We learned that since we had first come and shared with them, the women were now sharing the stories with others as they worked. The daughter-in-law had also shared with her own mother in a different village. She was so happy to share the news, “My husband loves me!” She shared her testimony with her whole family.

Her brother and his wife lived with her parents. Her sister-in-law, who was also abused, heard her testimony and said, “I want those stories too!” That’s how it happened that on our second visit, the daughter-in-law brought her whole family to talk with us. As a result, two generations of families now follow Jesus and have been baptized.

I have been asked, “Why is the gospel advancing so rapidly in this region?” There are a few reasons, but one of the main ones is that the people here are *so* very poor (poorer even than the typical poor of India) that the women have to work as well as the men. Without the women working, they don’t have enough to eat. When women work out in the fields, they have freedom to share the Bible stories with other women. They are not trapped and isolated in their homes as are women in much of India. In this area, they are free to do what they naturally love to do: share the stories with their friends and pray for each other. The men don’t feel threatened because the women just share stories while they are out working. They not only pray for the sick and demonized, but they own the identity of living as a disciple and making other disciples. This leads to rapid spread of the gospel. 



# Is It Time to Declutter

Started by a Japanese woman, a recent viral movement is spreading rapidly. All over the world, people are growing more and more enthusiastic—to declutter.

The person behind this movement is Marie Kondo, otherwise known as Japan's declutter queen. Ms. Kondo, founder of KonMari, propagates a method of organizing and decluttering our lives and homes that is catching on. It even has a spiritual component. Her basic premise is that “anything that doesn't make you happy or isn't absolutely necessary should be touched, thanked, and sent on its way.”<sup>1</sup>

« All over the world, people are growing more and more enthusiastic—to declutter. »

More and more, I'm thinking the global mission community should take Kondo's advice about decluttering—both in a physical and a spiritual sense. Before I elaborate, allow me to first take you on a journey via *The Voice* version of the Bible, which lays out the following account like a script in a play:

The day after, John saw Him again as he was visiting with two of his disciples. As Jesus walked by, he announced again:

**John the Baptist:** Do you see Him? This man is the Lamb of God, God's sacrifice to cleanse our sins.

At that moment, the two disciples began to follow Jesus, who turned back to them, saying:

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/nov/27/top-tips-to-joyfully-declutter-your-home-from-marie-kondo>

**Jesus:** What is it that you want?

**Two Disciples:** We'd like to know where You are staying. Teacher, may we remain at Your side today?

**Jesus:** Come and see. Follow Me, and we will camp together.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when they met Jesus. They came and saw where He was staying, but they got more than they imagined. They remained with Him the rest of the day and followed Him for the rest of their lives. One of these new disciples, Andrew, rushed to find his brother Simon and tell him they had found the One who is promised, God's Anointed who will heal the world. As Andrew approached with Simon, Jesus looked into him.

**Jesus:** Your name is Simon, and your father is called John. But from this day forward you will be known as Peter, the rock.

The next day Jesus set out to go into Galilee; and when He came upon Philip, He invited him to join them.

**Jesus:** Follow Me.

Philip, like Andrew and Peter, came from a town called Bethsaida; and he decided to make the journey with Him. Philip found Nathanael, a friend, and burst in with excitement:

**Philip:** We have found the One. Moses wrote about Him in the Law, all the prophets spoke of the day when He would come, and now He is here—His name is Jesus, son of Joseph the carpenter; and He comes from Nazareth. (John 1:35–45)

BY JEAN JOHNSON

**Jean Johnson** serves as a missionary and coach as well as Director of Five Stones Global (formerly known as World Mission Associates). She has over 32 years of vocational cross-cultural ministry experience. This includes church planting among Cambodians in St. Paul/Minneapolis and 16 years of service in Cambodia. One of the key starting points of her missional journey was moving in with a first-generation Cambodian refugee family of eight in the inner city of Minneapolis. She presently promotes and teaches about creating a culture of dignity, sustainability and multiplication in Great Commission efforts. Please visit [fivestonesglobal.org](http://fivestonesglobal.org).

# the Great Commission?

« More and more, I'm thinking the global mission community should take Kondo's advice about decluttering—both in a physical and a spiritual sense. »

This is an absolutely beautiful description of what missions is all about. As we try to obey the Great Commission, someone starts the process like John the Baptist—telling others who Jesus is and what He has done on behalf of people. Along with the news comes an open invitation to join Him. Some who hear the invitation intend to come and taste and go on a few days' journey with Jesus. But before they know it, they get more than they imagined—and they end up following Him for the rest of their lives.

For those who experience Jesus in this way, their experience is so alive and refreshing that they go and invite others in their *oikos* to meet Jesus. Before long, a grassroots, viral movement of disciples for Jesus who make more disciples has begun. These profound and amazing outcomes line up with the heart of the Great Commission, and yet they are so simple and spontaneous.

Although the successful process of making radical disciples of Jesus, as described in John 1:35–45, was grassroots, light weight, and inexpensive, we tend to add all our stuff to the process of mission. We add elaborate organizations, substantial buildings, professional-style worship, seminary-style preaching, expensive poverty alleviation projects, and ambitious fundraising plans to the work of the Great Commission. In this way, we add a yoke to simplicity, spontaneity and reproducibility.

By and by, we take something that was mobile, light, and reproducible by everyone and make it doable and reproducible only for those who have the means and space to accumulate stuff.

JR Woodard and Dan White Jr. urge us to declutter our church approaches: “If our model can only be reproduced by paid clergy or the most dynamic speakers, it will stunt genuine movements. We often talk so intensely about our buildings, budgets and bands that we have crowded out the minimalism of the first-century church.”<sup>2</sup>

Due to the proliferation of Western Christianity, people around the world today can hardly conceive of church without buildings, budgets and bands. Yet none of these three elements are key to Jesus-led movements as described in the gospels and the book of Acts. Just as those who have means tend to fill their houses and spaces with unnecessary clutter, so the mission community has filled the world with unnecessary clutter that chokes out simplicity, spontaneity and reproducibility.

« Although the successful process of making radical disciples of Jesus, as described in John 1:35–45, was grassroots, light weight, and inexpensive, we tend to add all our stuff to the process of mission. »

Maybe it is time we use Marie Kondo's approach in our mission strategies: take anything that doesn't add joy to our lives in Christ or isn't absolutely necessary, touch it, thank it, and send it on its way.<sup>3</sup> MF

<sup>2</sup> JR Woodward and Dan White Jr., *The Church as Movement* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 36.

<sup>3</sup> Marie Kondo claims that her method was inspired by Shintoism. While I am not advocating the practice of Shintoism, I do believe that decluttering the Great Commission from our manmade junk is a biblical and spiritual act.

# 24:14 Goal



Movement engagements in every unreached people and place by 2025 (80 months)

## Mindshifts for Movements

BY **ELIZABETH LAWRENCE & STAN PARKS**

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**Elizabeth Lawrence** has over 25 years of cross-cultural ministry experience. This includes training, sending, and coaching CPM teams to unreached peoples, living among refugees from a UPG, and leading a BAM endeavor in a Muslim context. She is passionate about multiplying disciples. **Stan Parks**, Ph.D. is a trainer and coach for a wide variety of CPMs around the world. He currently co-leads a global 2414 Coalition to start church planting movement engagements in every unreached people group and place by 2025 (2414now.net). As part of the Ethne leadership team he is helping various Ephesus teams seeking to start cascading CPMs in large UPG clusters. He is the VP of Global Strategies with Beyond.org.

For the *Mission Frontiers* context, we will mainly examine paradigm differences for Westerners seeking to help catalyze a CPM. Those of us who want to be involved need to notice what shifts have to happen in our own mindsets to create an environment for movements. Mindshifts enable us to see things differently and creatively. These perspective changes lead to different behaviors and results. Here are a few ways the Lord's great work in CPMs calls us to adjust our thinking.

**From:** "This is possible; I can see a path to accomplishing my vision."

**To:** A God-sized vision, impossible apart from His intervention. Waiting on God for His guidance and power.

One of the main reasons so many CPMs seem to have started in modern times is that people accepted a God-sized vision of focusing on reaching entire people groups. When faced with the task of reaching an unreached group consisting of millions of people it becomes obvious that a worker cannot accomplish anything on their own. The truth that "apart from Me you can do nothing" applies to all our endeavors. However, if we have a smaller goal it's easier to work as if fruit depends on our efforts rather than on God's intervention.

**From:** Aiming to disciple individuals.

**To:** Aiming to disciple a nation.

In the Great Commission Jesus tells His disciples to "make disciples of *panta ta ethne*" (all *ethne* / every *ethnos*). The question is: "How do you disciple an entire *ethnos*?" The only way is through *multiplication*—of disciples who make disciples, churches that multiply churches and leaders who develop leaders.

**God** is doing great things through Church Planting Movements (CPMs) around the world in our day. CPM does not mean traditional church planting becoming very fruitful. CPM describes the God-given fruit of a distinctive ministry approach—unique CPM-oriented "DNA." The perspectives and patterns of a CPM differ in many ways from the patterns of church life and ministry that feel "normal" to many of us.

Note, we want to identify paradigms we have seen God change for many of us involved in CPMs. But before examining these, we want to clarify: we don't believe that CPM is the only way to do ministry or that anyone not doing CPM has a mistaken paradigm. We greatly honor all those who have gone before; we stand on their shoulders. We also honor others in the Body of Christ who serve faithfully and sacrificially in other types of ministries.

« The truth that "apart from Me you can do nothing" applies to all our endeavors. »

**From:** “It can’t happen here!”

**To:** Expecting a ripe harvest.

Over the last 25 years people have often said: “Movements can start in *those* countries, but they can’t start here!” Today people point to the many movements in North India but forget this region was the “graveyard of modern missions” for 200+ years. Some said, “Movements can’t happen in the Middle East because that’s the heartland of Islam!” Yet many movements now thrive in the Middle East and throughout the Muslim world. Others said, “It can’t happen in Europe and America and other places with traditional churches!” Yet we now have seen a variety of movements start in those places as well. God loves to overcome our doubts.

**From:** “What can I do?”

**To:** “What must be done to see God’s kingdom planted in this group of people (city, nation, language, tribe, etc.)?”

A training group was once discussing Acts 19:10—how approximately 15 million people in the Roman province of Asia heard the word of the Lord in two years. Someone said, “That would be impossible for Paul and the original 12 believers in Ephesus—they would have had to share with 20,000 people a day!” That is the point—there is no way they could accomplish that. A daily training in the hall of Tyrannus must have multiplied disciples who multiplied disciples who multiplied disciples throughout the region.

« God loves to overcome our doubts. »

**From:** “What can my group accomplish?”

**To:** “Who else can be a part of accomplishing this impossibly great task?”

This is similar to the mindshift above. Instead of focusing on the people and resources in our own church, organization, or denomination, we have realized we need to look at the entire body of Christ globally with all types of Great Commission organizations and churches. We also need to involve people with a variety of giftings and vocations to address the many efforts needed: prayer, mobilization, finances, business, translation, relief, development, arts, etc.

**From:** I pray.

**To:** We pray extraordinarily and mobilize others to pray.

We aim to reproduce everything. Obviously personal prayer is crucial, but when faced with the overwhelming task of reaching entire communities, cities and people groups—we need to mobilize the prayer of many others.

**From:** My ministry is measured by my fruitfulness.

**To:** Are we faithfully setting the stage for multiplication (which may or may not happen during our ministry)?

Growth is God’s responsibility. (1 Cor. 3:6-7) Sometimes attempting to catalyze the first multiplying churches can take quite a few years. Field workers are told, “Only God can produce fruitfulness. Your job is to be faithful and obedient while expecting God to work.” We do our best to follow patterns of disciple-making multiplication found in the New Testament, and we trust the Holy Spirit to bring the growth.

**From:** The outside missionary is a “Paul,” preaching on the front lines among the unreached.

**To:** The outsider is far more effective as a “Barnabas,” discovering, encouraging and empowering a nearer-culture “Paul.”

People sent out as missionaries have often been encouraged to view themselves as the front-line worker, modeled after the Apostle Paul. We now realize that the far outsider can instead have the greatest impact by finding and partnering with cultural insiders or near neighbors who become the “Pauls” for their communities.

Note first that Barnabas was also a leader who “did the work.” (Acts 11:22-26; 13:1-7) So movement catalysts need to first gain experience making disciples in their own culture and then work cross-culturally to find those “Pauls” from the focus culture whom they can encourage and empower.

Second, even these “Pauls” have to adjust their paradigms. The outside catalysts of a large movement in India studied Barnabas’ life to better understand their role. They then studied the passages with the initial “Pauls” of this movement. Those leaders in turn realized that contrary to their cultural patterns (that the initial leader is always preeminent), they in turn wanted to become like Barnabas and empower those they disciplined, to have an even greater impact.

**From:** Hoping a new believer or group of new believers will initiate a movement.

**To:** Asking: “What national believers who have been followers for many years might become the catalyst(s) for a CPM?”

This relates to the common idea that we as a culturally distant outsider will find and win a lost person(s) who will become the movement catalyst. While this can occasionally happen, the vast majority of movements are started by cultural insiders or near neighbors who have been believers for several or even many years. Their own mindset shifts and fresh understanding of CPM principles opens up new possibilities for kingdom expansion.

**From:** We are looking for partners in our ministry.

**To:** We are looking for brothers and sisters to serve God together.

Sometimes missionaries are taught to look for “national partners.” Without questioning anyone’s motives, some local believers find this phrasing doubtful. Some of the wrong (often subconscious) meanings could include:

- “Partnership” with an outsider means doing what they want done.
- In a partnership the person(s) with the most money controls the partnership.
- This is a “work” type transaction rather than a genuine personal relationship.
- The use of “national” may feel condescending (as a more polite word for “native”—why are Americans not also called “nationals?”).

In the dangerous and difficult work of starting movements among the lost, inside catalysts are looking for a deep family bond of mutual love. They don’t want *work* partners but rather movement *family* who will bear each other’s burdens and sacrifice in any way possible for their brothers and sisters.

**From:** Focusing on winning individuals.

**To:** Focusing on *groups*—to bring the gospel into existing families, groups and communities.

90% of salvations described in the book of Acts describe either large or small groups. Only 10% are individuals who experience salvation by themselves. We see Jesus often reaching households and we also see Jesus focusing on sending out His disciples to look for households. Note

examples such as Zacchaeus and his entire household experiencing salvation (Luke 19:9-10), and the Samaritan woman coming to faith along with a great many from her entire town. (John 4:39-42)

Reaching groups has many advantages over reaching and gathering individuals. For example:

- Instead of transferring “Christian culture” to a single new believer, local culture begins to be redeemed by the group.
- Persecution isn’t isolated and focused on the individual but is normalized across the group. They can support each other in persecution.
- Joy is shared as a family or community discovers Christ together.
- Unbelievers have a visible example of “here’s what it looks like for a group of people like me to follow Christ.”

**From:** Transferring my church or group’s doctrine, traditional practices, or culture.

**To:** Helping believers within a culture *discover for themselves* what the Bible says about vital issues, letting them hear God’s Spirit guide them in how to apply biblical truths in their cultural context.

We can too easily confuse our own preferences and traditions with scriptural mandates. In a cross-cultural situation we especially need to avoid giving our cultural baggage to the new believers. Instead, we trust that since Jesus said: “They will all be taught by God” (John 6:45), and the Holy Spirit will guide the believers “into all truth” (John 16:13), we can trust the process to God. This does *not* mean we don’t guide and coach new believers. It means that we help them see Scripture as their authority rather than us.

« We can too easily confuse our own preferences and traditions with scriptural mandates. »

**From:** Starbucks discipleship: “Let’s meet once each week.”

**To:** Lifestyle discipleship: My life is intertwined with these people.

One movement catalyst said that his movement trainer-coach offered to talk to him whenever he needed...so he ended up calling him in a different city three or four times

every day. We need this type of commitment to help those who are passionate and desperate to reach the lost.

**From:** Lecture—to transfer knowledge.

**To:** Discipleship—to follow Jesus and obey His Word.

Jesus said, “If you love me you will obey my commands” (John 15:14) and “If you obey Me you will remain in My love.” (John 15:10) Often our churches emphasize knowledge over obedience. The people with the most knowledge are considered the most qualified leaders.

Church Planting Movements emphasize teaching people to obey all that Jesus commanded. (Matt. 28:20) Knowledge is important but the primary foundation must be first loving and obeying God.

**From:** Sacred/secular divide; evangelism vs. social action.

**To:** Word and deed together. Meeting needs as a door-opener and as an expression and fruit of the gospel.

The sacred/secular divide is not part of a biblical worldview. Those in CPMs don't debate whether to meet physical needs or share the gospel. Because we love Jesus, of course we meet people's needs (as He did) and as we do that we also share His truth verbally (as He did). In these movements, we see the natural expression of meeting needs leading people to be open to the words or to ask questions that lead to the truth.

**From:** Special buildings for spiritual activities.

**To:** Small gatherings of believers in all kinds of places.

Church buildings and paid church leaders hinder the growth of a movement. Rapid spread of the gospel happens through the efforts of nonprofessionals. Even reaching the number of lost people in the USA becomes prohibitively expensive if we attempt to reach them only through church buildings and paid staff. How much more so in other parts of the world that have fewer financial resources and higher percentages of unreached people!

**From:** Don't evangelize until you've been trained.

**To:** Share what you've experienced or know. It's normal and natural to share about Jesus.

How often are new believers asked to sit and listen for the first several years after they come to faith? It often takes many years before they are considered qualified to lead in any way. We have observed that the best people to lead a family or community to saving faith are insiders in that

community. And the best time for them to do that is when they have newly come to faith, before they've created separation between themselves and that community.

Multiplication involves everyone and ministry happens everywhere. A new/inexperienced insider is more effective than a highly trained mature outsider.

« We have observed that the best people to lead a family or community to saving faith are insiders in that community. »

**From:** Win as many as possible.

**To:** Focus on the few (or one) to win many.

In Luke 10 Jesus said to find a household that will receive you. If a person of peace is there they will receive you. At that point, do not move around from household to household. We often see this pattern being applied in the New Testament. Whether it's Cornelius, Zacchaeus, Lydia or the Philippian jailer, this one person then becomes the key catalyst for their family and broader community. One large family of movements in harsh environments actually focuses on the tribal leader or the network leader rather than individual household leaders.

To make disciples of all nations, we don't just need more good ideas. We don't just need additional fruitful practices. We need a paradigm shift. The mindshifts presented here reflect various facets of that shift. To the extent we wrestle with and apply *any one of them* we will likely become more fruitful. But only as we buy the whole package – trade in traditional church DNA for CPM DNA – can we hope to be used by God in catalyzing rapidly reproducing generational movements that far exceed our own resources.

« To make disciples of all nations, we don't just need more good ideas. We don't just need additional fruitful practices. We need a paradigm shift. »



# Embracing an Audacious God-sized Dream

« When we go after something far beyond us, we are motivated to work differently. »

“You are aiming way too low,” I told a group of students in the DMM training. I’d just read through their goals for the coming months. “Those goals don’t require a move of God. Nor do they show an expectation of multiplication.” Taking a break, I decided we needed to do something physical to get this concept to move from head to heart.

Handing out pieces of paper, I asked each trainee to wad them up. Crunching and crackling filled the room, as each student formed five or six paper balls. Next, I took a piece of chart paper and drew a target of concentric circles. The students formed a line and took aim, throwing their paper balls at the target I’d placed on the back of a chair. The further away I pulled the target, the higher they had to throw to hit it. “If you want to see a movement, you have to aim high, you have to shoot for multiplication. If you aim only at addition growth, you might hit your target, but you will never see a movement.” Eyes shone with understanding. I sent them back to revise their goals. “Aim at something that requires disciples to multiply this time!” I urged.

## Big Hairy Audacious Goals

Jim Collins, in his best-selling business book *Built to Last*, popularized the idea of the BHAG (pronounced Bee-hag). He wrote about how successful, fast-growing companies embraced “Big Hairy Audacious Goals.”

Businesses like Boeing used nearly impossible goals to turn their companies around and become greatly successful. Their targets were clear, far beyond their current status, and required “a relentless sense of urgency” to be achieved.<sup>1</sup>

Dreaming for a Disciple Making Movement (DMM) is in many ways a BHAG. God knew how powerful this concept was, way before Jim Collins did. This kingdom principle was applied to business and worked. It’s a noteworthy truth. *When we go after something far beyond us, we are motivated to work differently.* We are also much more likely to rely on God, rather than ourselves to achieve it.

In reaching the unreached, we must stop looking at what we can accomplish and open our eyes to the “greater things” God desires to do. We have to dream bigger. There are simply too many remaining unreached peoples in the world, dying having never heard of Jesus’ love, for us to think only about what we can do, or to rely on past

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.jimcollins.com/concepts/bhag.html>

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experiences. God desires to do much more than we can imagine (Eph. 3:20).

Starting with a vision that requires true, organic multiplication is key to launching a Disciple Making Movement. Only a sincere, passionate commitment to a God-sized vision will compel you to make the kinds of changes needed. Are you dreaming big enough?

## 10-Fold Increase

A number of years ago, the Lord spoke to me from the Parable of the Minas (Luke 19). In that passage, the master speaks to his servants telling them to take their one mina and increase it. They were to put it to work until he returned.

As I meditated on that passage, the Lord stirred my heart with faith to believe Him for a 10-fold increase in the fruitfulness of the church planting teams I provided leadership for. I believed God was calling me to ask Him for 100,000 unreached people to come into the kingdom of God in the coming years. This was a dramatic increase that could only be accomplished by God. It would only happen if we saw radical changes and true multiplication of disciples. A 10-fold increase was a crazy, audacious goal (BHAG) that came straight from Scripture and was absolutely aligned with God's intentions. The dream rising in my heart was far beyond my own capacity or prior experience.

In the months and weeks that followed, I struggled with whether to embrace such a massive vision. What if we failed? What if I wasn't up for the task?

The sense of God's prompting was strong and continual. In response, I took a step of obedient faith and began to share the vision with others. The 10-fold increase (what we called Supernatural Increase), became our rally cry from that point onward. Whether we hit the target or not, we would aim high. We would work for something that required a miracle of multiplication. (See my devotional book, *Faith to Move Mountains*, for the full story).

The moment I embraced a vision far beyond myself, I became open to creative new ways of operating. I began to look seriously at new paradigms. The size of the vision cleared space in my heart for God to direct me toward key changes that would lead us into multiplicative growth.

## Dreaming for a Million

Chris Galanos, in his book *From Mega-Church to Multiplication*, writes about something similar. He had heard about Disciple Making Movements (DMMs) happening around the world through David Watson and others. Chris began to dream about what it would be like if God did something similar in America. In the previous ten years through his mega-church, they had seen more than six thousand people come to the Lord and be baptized. That was very good growth. He was challenged, though, when he heard about missionaries believing God to reach their entire people group with the gospel. A dream was birthed in his heart to see a million people in America come to Christ. As soon as he and his staff adopted that size of a vision, they knew they would have to make serious changes in the way they did things. The God-sized vision drove them toward a willingness to let go of old ways of operating. It caused them to courageously embrace the difficult changes needed for radical growth.

A bold vision prompts bold changes. It creates space for the Lord to do a new work.

« Are you dreaming big enough? »

## Trumpets, Jars and 300 Warriors

God is attracted to radical, extraordinary faith and obedience. He sometimes even sets the stage by making our situation unusually impossible. This compels us to use strategies we never would have tried before. Such was the case with Gideon in the Old Testament. Who would have tried to win a battle using the methods he did?

First, God reduced the size of his team.

“The Lord said to Gideon, “You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, ‘My own strength has saved me.’” (Judges 7:2 NIV)

Next, the Lord instructed him to use methods of battle so unusual they seemed quite absurd. He was to use trumpets and jars as his primary weapons of warfare.

God intended to get the glory for this victory. Gideon was required to trust God for something absolutely impossible.

He was asked to fight differently than he ever had before, with very non-traditional methods. As commander, he not only needed to step out in faith for something radically different and challenging. He had to lead others into doing that with him. Not a lot of people, but key chosen warriors who would fight with him in this very unusual way. Only then would God deliver.

We know the end of the story. Gideon and his three hundred men obeyed. God won the battle, and the Israelites were freed from Midian's control.

When our dream is too realistic and too possible in our own strength, we look to ourselves and our old patterns. We are not forced into radical faith and obedience. We are not pushed to "walk on water," believing for the miraculous. Nor do we easily let go of our old patterns of evangelism and discipleship and embrace change. It is easy to stay in the comfortable boat. Even when we know the Master is calling to us to come and walk with Him in new things (Matt. 14:28-29). We much prefer to stick with old, familiar methods of making disciples and doing church.

### The Need of the Lost Compels Us to Dream Big

Lest you misunderstand, having a Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG) is far more than a business principle applied to missions. That is not what motivates us toward embracing God-sized goals. No, it is the need of the unreached that absolutely requires this.

Seeing the number of 707 known movements on the front cover of this magazine is truly exciting. But it's still a very small beginning, compared to the thousands of Frontier Peoples that wait to hear good news. What if that 707 were to increase 10-fold? What if there were 7070 transformational kingdom movements a few years from now? We'd still have just begun.

While we celebrate progress, the number that truly matters is how many unreached people remain without a relevant gospel witness. It is that number that we must trumpet loudly. The 31 largest Frontier People Groups (FPGs) total almost a billion people.<sup>2</sup> Some of these groups are so populous they require twenty or thirty new movements to approach the 2% Christian benchmark.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://joshuaproject.net/frontier>

<sup>3</sup> Most definitions of an Unreached People Group include the 2% benchmark. To be classified as reached, there must be at least 2% of the population following Jesus.

« A bold vision prompts bold changes. It creates space for the Lord to do a new work. »


At this time in history, we must dream bigger than ever before. As we come around the corner and see the finish line of the Great Commission in sight, it isn't time to slow down. It's time to speed up. It's time to believe God for "even more."

I ask you again. Are you dreaming big enough?

If your vision isn't pushing you toward radical changes in how you live and operate, it is likely too small. If your dream seems possible, you may be aiming too low. Leaning on past experiences and victories and just trying to duplicate them? Then, it's not a God-sized dream.

Revisit your End Vision<sup>4</sup> with your team, church or organization. Make sure that vision is compelling you to make significant changes in how you operate. It should be causing you to innovate, experiment and try things you've never done before. If your dream seems too small, go back to the Father and listen once again. What does He desire to do in your city, region, area or people group?

« If your vision isn't pushing you toward radical changes in how you live and operate, it is likely too small. »

God longs to start many, many more Disciple Making Movements around the world. He is able to begin one through you. If you have already started a DMM, train, multiply and start more. Let's dream big. The need of the frontiers demands it. 

<sup>4</sup> If you have never crafted an End Vision statement, you can find instructions on how to do that on my website <http://www.dmmfrontiermissions.com/develop-dmm-end-vision/>.

In 2012, one of our national partners, Sanjay,\* gathered 15 men from various districts. Most were Christian background believers, while a few were Hindu background believers. We began meeting for one-and-a-half to two-day trainings, roughly once per month. As many of them began applying CPM principles, they quickly saw fruit. As of December 2018, 30,000 house churches have been planted and roughly 200,000 new believers baptized. We are consistently reaching fourth generation groups in many places. In a few locations we have reached the twelfth generation. This is not just one movement, but multiple movements stretched across at least four different geographical regions.

# A Church Planting Movement Advancing Through Barriers

## Key Factors in Progress

**1. Listening prayer.** We have changed and adjusted many times as we prayed and listened to the Lord. Prayer is our job. It isn't that we have a job and we have to add prayer to it. Praying *is* the job. Praying is what we can do. We don't feel like praying every day. Our prayers today may not feel very inspired but it's our job to pray. We don't go to an office at 8:00 am but we get up and we pray. Seeing prayer in that way has helped us to be more faithful in prayer.

BY **ANDY WALKER\***

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The "Walker" family began cross-cultural work in 2001. In 2006, they joined Beyond ([www.beyond.org](http://www.beyond.org)) and in 2011 started applying CPM principles. The Walkers moved countries in 2016, and have been supporting the movements from a distance. \*Pseudonym

« We are consistently reaching fourth generation groups in many places. In a few locations we have reached the twelfth generation. »

Listening is an important part of prayer. There have been so many changes along the way and so many questions: What's next? Shall we work with this person? We've hit a roadblock; what Scriptures shall we use for the next training? Is this a good use of our funding? Is it time to release this brother who's not applying or shall we give him one more chance? Should we continue training in this city or is this a dead end? We have so many questions, and we've learned to sit and wait for God's answer. Usually he gives the expat team and our national partners the same answers, but we don't know it until our next biweekly meeting.

**2. Miracles.** The movement growth is happening primarily through miracles and through relational networks. The movement began through the early leaders taking steps of faith in seeking out Persons of Peace (POP). As part of their seeking out POP, they saw miracles *all the time* – lots of healing and lots of demonic deliverance. This opens the doors for a Discovery Bible Study, and also the word of the miracle spreads through natural relationships which then opens the door to other households.

Now, for instance, a brother finds an opportunity to pray for a demonized person. That person is delivered and the word spreads to their family – perhaps family through marriage in another village. Those family members want that brother to come and pray for them. Then the original brother, plus the one delivered, go to the next village to pray for the family member, and another miracle happens. Another Discovery Bible Study starts and it spreads some more. This has resulted in the explosive growth we are seeing. Very simple people, uneducated and barely into the kingdom, pray for others and God does miracles by opening new doors.

**3. Evaluation.** We as expat catalysts are always evaluating. “How are we doing?” “Is what we're doing going to get us where we want to go?” We always ask, “If we do this, is it something they can do if we're not here? Can they replicate it?”

For example, after we had an initial outburst of 70 POP and a lot of people getting saved, Sanjay (the leader of the movement) thought, “Let's do baptism.” He wanted to have a giant baptismal service and invite all the house churches. A lot of people were excited to do a celebration and for many reasons that seemed like a good idea. But we couldn't say “yes” because that would then become the model for baptism, a model they could not replicate: too public, too expensive and too many top-level leaders.

« Listening is an important part of prayer. »

We said, “Let's keep praying.” In the end, we didn't do it. Baptisms stayed simple, stayed in their area, and the pattern can easily continue to reproduce. The question that always fuels our evaluation is, “Can they do it without us? Can they do it if we're gone tomorrow?”

**4. Caution about using funds.** The local Christian culture's approach is to get money from the West to help themselves in any way possible. We have hesitated to invest money in anything. Some of the workers are faithful and have lots of disciples, but can't pay for the phone bills to stay in touch with them, so we sometimes help with that once we see they are faithful. The problem with the phones is that if someone here lives 20 miles away, it might be a three-hour trip. They can't easily go and visit, so the phone becomes necessary. Yet, we've still been very cautious about using money.

Our partner Sanjay also agrees on caution with funds. He refused to pay his own brother for a long time. He told him, “You need to figure out how to pay for your own phone and gasoline.” No one would see nepotism at work there. It's not us trying to convince Sanjay about finances; he holds it as a personal value.

**5. Adapting our material.** We receive a large number of materials from sources within our organization, but we've adapted almost everything and we've been selective about what to use. We have a lot of friends in a sister agency who share materials, but as with all materials, if we try it and it doesn't quite fit, we adjust it. Over time we have our own material. It's not a formula at all.

**6. Centered in Scripture.** Every training has a strong scriptural basis. That's the center and the focus of the work. Our trainees need to know they can do this because they have the Word and the Holy Spirit, not because we provide them with good teaching. They learn to depend on the Word. We train them using many lists of Scriptures, making observations, asking questions and digging deeper. There is minimal preaching and almost no "teaching" of theology.

**7. Continual vision casting.** This helps all the levels of leadership know this work belongs to them, not to foreigners. We give everyone the expectation and tools so they can pass everything they receive down their discipleship chain.

## Key Barriers to Progress

**1. Fear in the leadership.** A continuous emotional struggle has been: "Are we doing enough? Are we doing too much?" Listening prayer has been key to overcoming this: getting rid of the fear and listening to the Lord direct us as a team.

**2. Traditional Christians.** This continues to be the biggest hurdle. Many workers in our area do ministry and answer to a supervisor simply for a salary. They interrupt baptisms and church meetings and cause trouble asking about theology they don't even understand. They also question the authority of the movement's leadership since this work is not institutionally based.

« Can they do it without us?  
Can they do it if we're gone  
tomorrow? »

This has brought confusion to the churches, and we've lost roughly 10% of the new churches to traditional ministries and missions groups as they give stipends to the local leaders. Praise the Lord these people came to faith, but in traditional ministries they are not empowered to

make other disciples and make other churches. They become barren.

## Disappointments/Challenges

1. Many wives believe in the Great Commission and want to go out and meet their neighbors, but their **supposedly Christian husbands forbid them to leave the home.** The husbands do not give their wives permission to obey the Great Commission. Some wives say, "You can beat me but I'm going to obey Jesus. We call ourselves Christians and this is what we should do." For the men to give women permission to obey is a big challenge.


2. **Feedback loop for evaluation and adjustments is slow and difficult.** National believers will not talk back or correct people they perceive to be in a position of authority above them. It has taken time to find out what does and does not work, how to make things simpler, etc.

3. Some people seem to have great potential but then it turns out they're **motivated only by money.** We are often surprised by who becomes effective. Some people seem to have great potential for effectiveness but then turn out to be ineffective. Sanjay has shielded us from a lot of that, which we wish he didn't do so much.

4. **Wife beating** is common in some places. It's just one of many issues we need to tackle in the new churches and pray more about.

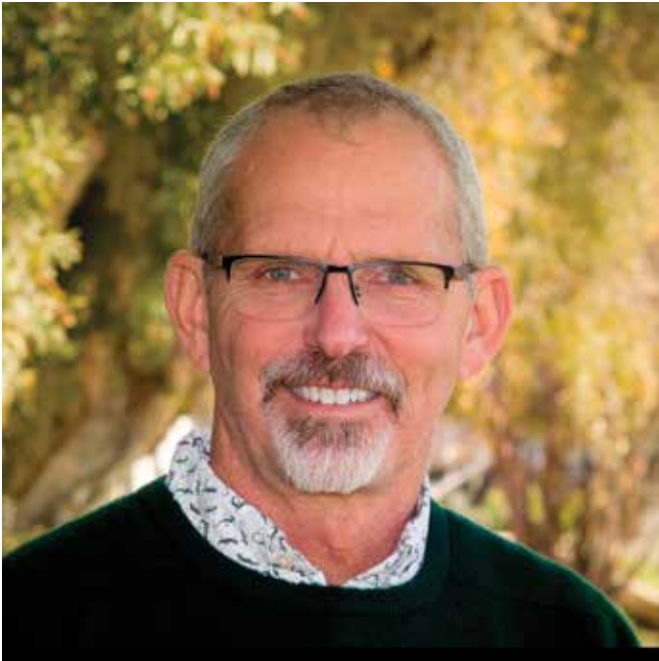
5. So many areas in this culture **need transformation.** Where do we start when 100% of our time and energy goes into simply feeding the movement? When and how is it best to tackle issues of integrity, social problems and deeper emotional and spiritual issues?

« Our trainees need to know they can do this because they have the Word and the Holy Spirit, not because we provide them with good teaching. »

These are some of the dynamics we have observed in this movement that the Lord continues to grow, even in the midst of many challenges. 

# Introducing Frontier Ventures' New General Director, Dr. Kevin Higgins

*Editor's Note: The first General Director of Frontier Ventures, formerly the U.S. Center for World Mission, was our founder, Dr. Ralph Winter. Winter appointed Dave Datema to be the new General Director shortly before Winter's passing in 2009. The Office of General Director, with three co-leaders, was created in 2012. With the appointment of Dr. Kevin Higgins, Frontier Ventures returns to having just one General Director.*



« There has been a recent sharpened focus within the broader Unreached Peoples effort. »

I have been a friend of Frontier Ventures, then US Center for World Mission, and WCIU since 1980 when the youth group I was leading helped send out mailings about what was happening here. When Susan and I went to Uganda in 1984 to work with Somalis our pre-field preparation was done at the Center and we stayed in Townsend Hall.

Over the years, as we worked in South Asia among Muslims, I visited Frontier Ventures from time to time, and by the late 90s was occasionally brought in to speak at morning meetings (two of the movements in South Asia were written up in the book *Wind in the House of Islam* by David Garrison). I have written for, and been blessed by, *IJFM* and also the various editions of the *Perspectives Reader*.

When WCIU began to develop an area of focus around translation, I was among those who helped give input and encouragement. I also recruited students; I received my PhD from Fuller in 2012 focusing on comparing the translation approaches of Christians and Muslims in Urdu. I have mentored several MA students as well.

While remaining engaged with the movements in South Asia, I also led another organization, Global Teams, over the past 18 years before coming here. But my connections to FV and WCIU have run long and deep.

Then, after several years of knowing a change was coming for us, we began the process that led to my move here physically in August 2017. At that time I took on the role of WCIU President and became a member of the "Office of the General Director" (OGD) for Frontier Ventures with Fran Patt and Chong Kim."

In the past few months, the OGD and both boards discerned and then unanimously affirmed the Lord's leading to ask me to serve as FV's General Director (while remaining WCIU President).

There is no space here to go into all that I think our future holds. But, given the focus of this edition of *Mission Frontiers*, let me mention one.

There has been a recent sharpened focus within the broader Unreached Peoples effort. That sharper focus has been around Frontier People Groups (FPGs): those with less than .1% believers of any sort and no known movement.

Of the 31 largest (over 10 million people), 24 are in South Asia and 18 in India alone. Of those 24, just a cursory survey showed me that FV and WCIU members have organic relationships with the “field” in eight, including five in India.

So, announcing all of this within an edition of *Mission Frontiers* focused on India seems fitting.


I have encouraged us within FV and WCIU to believe God for movements to Jesus within four of the 31 largest FPGs as one of our primary objectives *by July 2020*.

How is that possible? The answer connects to another frequent theme within *Mission Frontiers*: movements.

In physical and/or cultural proximity to many of the largest FPGs there are already movements to Jesus which are mature and thriving. In several cases, there are already leaders from those movements who have begun to look at the FPGs around them and are praying and planning for ways to reach them.

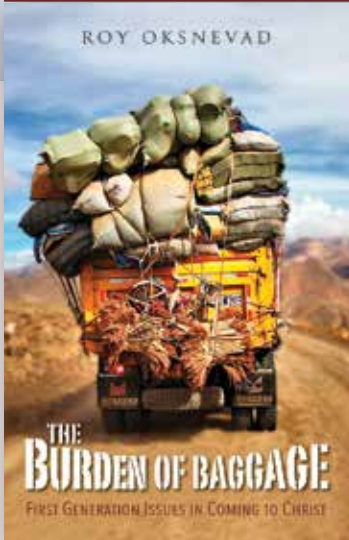
Over the next months, FV and WCIU will combine to catalyze collaboration (especially collaboration with local, indigenous movement leaders) focused on innovation of new approaches, mobilization at a more local level and training as needed to see breakthroughs happen.

This is a wonderful example of how God uses FV: identifying and overcoming barriers so that we might see kingdom breakthroughs.

There are a lot of challenges ahead of us and a lot is changing in FV and WCIU, but I also see a new era of collaboration, innovation, mobilization and training ahead of us as well. 

« This is a wonderful example of how God uses FV: identifying and overcoming barriers so that we might see kingdom breakthroughs. »

## NEWEST RELEASES



### The Burden of Baggage

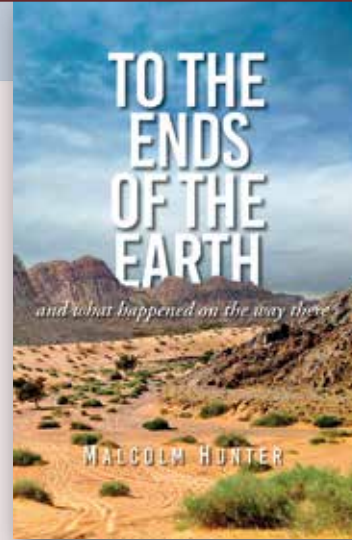
*First Generation Issues in Coming to Christ*

Roy Oksnevad (Author)

Every person coming to Christ has baggage, but a first-generation believer, especially one coming from little or no connection to Christianity, has an uncommon amount of cultural baggage that they bring with them. This book tackles common issues of cultural baggage with prime examples

from the Iranian church. *The Burden of Baggage* explores how the cultural upbringing is expressed in the personal, interpersonal, family, leadership, and spiritual expressions of church life—contributing to both the strengths and weaknesses of the new generation of believers. Church teaching must shift the emphasis away from the self as perceived by the community in terms of honor and shame by encouraging people to give up their honor through humility, and refocusing the attention on God and loving others. Readers will walk away knowing they are not alone in their struggles as they deal with gut-wrenching issues that often aren't able to be solved in one generation.

**\$14.99** | 208 Pages | Paperback and eBook



### To the Ends of the Earth

*and what happened on the way there*

Malcolm Hunter (Author)

If we follow Jesus, where will we end up? An expert on nomadic peoples, Malcolm Hunter shares stories from a lifetime of working in some of the world's most remote, colorful, and neglected communities. This book is full of astonishing true accounts of Jesus preparing the world's least-reached peoples to encounter Him. Visions, dreams, miracles, shocking customs, and even human blunders and tragedies—God used all these and more to open a way to share the good news. Honest, hopeful, and never far from laughter, Malcolm invites us to consider anew what we can expect when we follow Jesus—wherever He leads.

**\$11.99** | 144 Pages | Paperback and eBook



### Refugee Diaspora

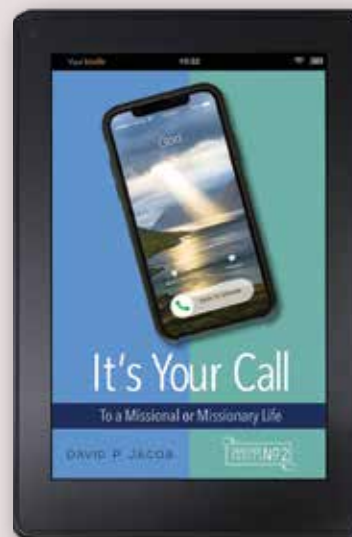
*Missions amid the Greatest Humanitarian Crisis of our Times*

Sam George and Miriam Adeney (Editors)

*Refugee Diaspora* is a contemporary account of the global refugee situation and how the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ is shining brightly in the darkest corners of the greatest crisis on our planet. These hope-filled pages of refugees encountering Jesus Christ presents

models of Christian ministry from the front lines of the refugee crisis and the real challenges of ministering to today's refugees. It includes biblical, theological, and practical reflections on mission in diverse diaspora contexts from leading scholars as well as practitioners in all major regions of the world.

**\$14.99** | 208 Pages | Paperback and eBook



### It's Your Call

*To a Missional or Missionary Life*

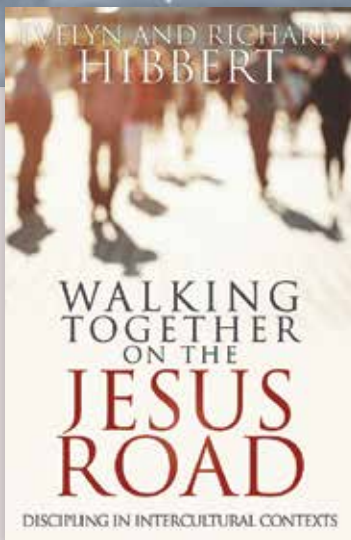
Karen L. H. Shaw (Author)

For most believers, several factors influence their missions call. Some are called to stay in their hometown and support missions at their local church, others are called to short-term mission trip, while others are called to spend a lifetime overseas as career missionaries. This SNAPSHOT book will highlight three things that can help you

discover the adventure God has for you in his mission: prayer and Bible study, missionary mentorship, and short-term mission trips.

**\$9.99** | eBook only | Snapshot Series #2





### Walking Together on the Jesus Road

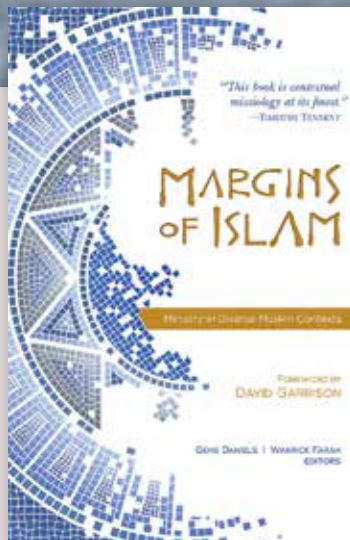
*Discipling in Intercultural Contexts*

Evelyn and Richard Hibbert (Authors)

Christians who serve Jesus among people from a different culture than their own often struggle to find a good way to disciple people. *Walking Together on the Jesus Road* addresses this need by guiding readers through three essential practices for making

disciples across cultures: listening to disciples to get to know them and their context, focusing on relationships with Christ, fellow disciples, and others, and enabling disciples to live out their faith in culturally relevant ways. These practices are the foundation for the long-term, intentional process of helping disciples from other cultures become more like Jesus. The book also engages with the practical challenges of enabling disciples to find and belong to a nurturing community of faith, and of contextualizing the way we teach the Bible.

**\$14.99** | 228 Pages | Paperback and eBook



### Margins of Islam

*Ministry in Diverse Muslim Contexts*

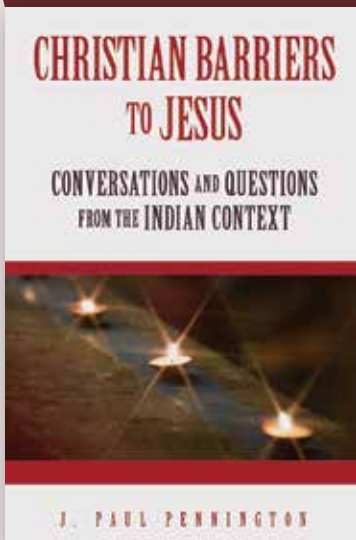
Gene Daniels and Warrick Farah (Editors)

*Margins of Islam* brings together a stellar collection of experienced missionary scholar-practitioners who explain their own approaches to a diversity of Muslims across the world. Each chapter grapples with a context that is significantly different from the way Islam is traditionally presented in

mission texts. These crucial differences may be theological, socio-political, ethnic, or a specific variation of Islam in a context—but they all shape the way we do mission. This book will help you discover Islam as a lived experience in various settings and equip you to engage Muslims in any context, including your own.

**\$15.99** | 240 Pages | Paperback and eBook

## Readers' Choice Award from CatalystService.org



### Christian Barriers to Jesus

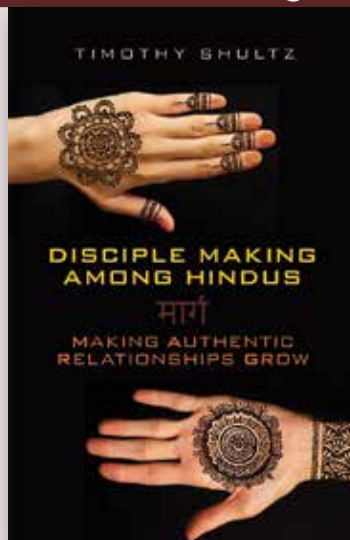
*Conversations and Questions from the Indian Context*

J. Paul Pennington (Author)

Hindus often have a high view of Jesus, but they struggle with traditions and customs around Christianity and church. *Christian Barriers to Jesus* uniquely challenges readers to examine nine barrier-producing Christian traditions.

This book suggests that we are not asking deep enough questions about what is essential for following Jesus and what is non-essential human invention. If we truly care about Jesus, we must honestly address where those non-essential traditions unnecessarily alienate millions of people from him.

**\$22.99** | 304 Pages | Paperback and eBook



### Disciple Making among Hindus

*Making Authentic Relationships Grow*

Timothy Shultz (Author)

Drawing on thirty years' experience among Hindus, Timothy Shultz writes this book as a testimony of the kingdom of God growing in a non-Christian environment. *Disciple Making among Hindus: Making Authentic Relationships Grow* describes how Hindu people experience and respond to Jesus Christ. What are the core

values and rhythms of their cultural world? What are the patterns of community and discipleship that help them draw closer to Jesus? Through moving personal stories, biblical reflection, and practical wisdom, Shultz introduces us to the centrality of family, the covenantal relationships that make up Hindu social life, and the yearning for authentic spiritual experience.

**\$14.99** | 154 Pages | Paperback and eBook

# A Problem with Multiplication

BY **GREG PARSONS**  
DIRECTOR OF  
GLOBAL CONNECTIONS  
FRONTIER VENTURES

At its core, the New Testament is clear that multiplication of faith is expected:

- In Matthew 13:8, in the Parable of the Sower, Jesus said, "...others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty." He explained in verse 23 that this seed landed on, "...the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty." (NASB)

That is serious multiplication!

- In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul wrote to his disciple Timothy, "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (NASB) That is five generations—if you start with Jesus!

As you get older, you think more about who will carry on your family and ministry. Because of that, I increasingly engage and invest my life in the next generation—both those in ministry and my children and grandchildren (I will show you pictures!). And, as I attend events around the globe, I continue to purposefully invest time with leaders.

It also makes you consider those who invested in your life. Recently, I was thinking about the men and women who have invested in and greatly influenced my life.<sup>1</sup> If I go back to

my formative years there were many, but one key person was a teaching pastor named **Bill Lawrence**. I met Bill when I was just entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade. He had recently started a church that our family began attending just after it moved to a rented facility. Bill's faithful, deep teaching and love for God and His Word captured my heart, changed my life and gave me direction.

Many other men and women helped shape my walk with Christ—I can think of many who are still in full-time ministry—not to mention hundreds of others who are involved in ministry as faithful moms, dads and singles serving wherever the Lord has led them.

But, let me back up to those who influenced Bill. I don't know who he would list, but he came to start that church because another church 30 miles away had a vision for church planting. The first pastor of that "mother" church was **Ray Stedman**. He started there in 1950, just after serving with **Harry A. Ironside**, famous Bible teacher and commentator. Stedman also worked with **J Vernon McGee** of the *Thru the Bible* radio program.<sup>2</sup>

One of the things Stedman did early in his 40 years of ministry was to start a training program for younger men going into ministry.<sup>3</sup> Bill Lawrence was one of the interns, but the first two were **Chuck Swindoll** (pastor and very popular radio Bible teacher) and **Luis Palau**<sup>4</sup> (a crusade

evangelist from Argentina—it is estimated that as of 2007, he had spoken to 25 million people in 70 nations in English and Spanish).

Pretty impressive little internship program! Of course, there are all kinds of people impacted by all those involved that I don't know—thousands upon thousands by now.

*But there is a problem with multiplication.*

Faithful multiplication, mainly in one culture, excludes the Unreached People Groups (UPG) of the world. Yes, we are thankful for those who have believed among the Unreached. A growing number have movements as we have reported in *MF*. But the inherent problem within UPGs is that until believers go cross-culturally to serve, that multiplication process usually doesn't get started.<sup>5</sup> No national believer is there yet, and often, no nearby culture has a solid church either. That is why we have always talked about the need for initial penetration into an unreached group. That is the *unique missionary task* of crossing a culture and (usually) language divide. That is what Jesus followers must seek. It is what we pray for. We want to see Gospel/Jesus centered movements multiply within those UPGs without a witness in their culture. So, we pray and work to that end.

And these are the stories I'm helping to tell in podcasts now. The first podcast was posted on February 11, 2019 at: [www.frontierventures.org/blog](http://www.frontierventures.org/blog). We'd love to hear your story: who influenced you and what are you doing about it? 

<sup>5</sup> There are some amazing exceptions, where new believers are crossing cultures early in their faith journey.

them as you are able. I've highlighted the names that will help you see some of the generational influence.

<sup>2</sup> You can learn more about Stedman at [www.raystedman.org](http://www.raystedman.org).

<sup>3</sup> It was later called Scribes School.

<sup>4</sup> Pray for him, he has cancer and seems to be doing well, last I heard.

<sup>1</sup> I am sorry if some of our international readers do not know these people. I encourage you to learn more about



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