

MISSION™ FRONTIERS

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“INSIDER” MOVEMENTS



Unreached



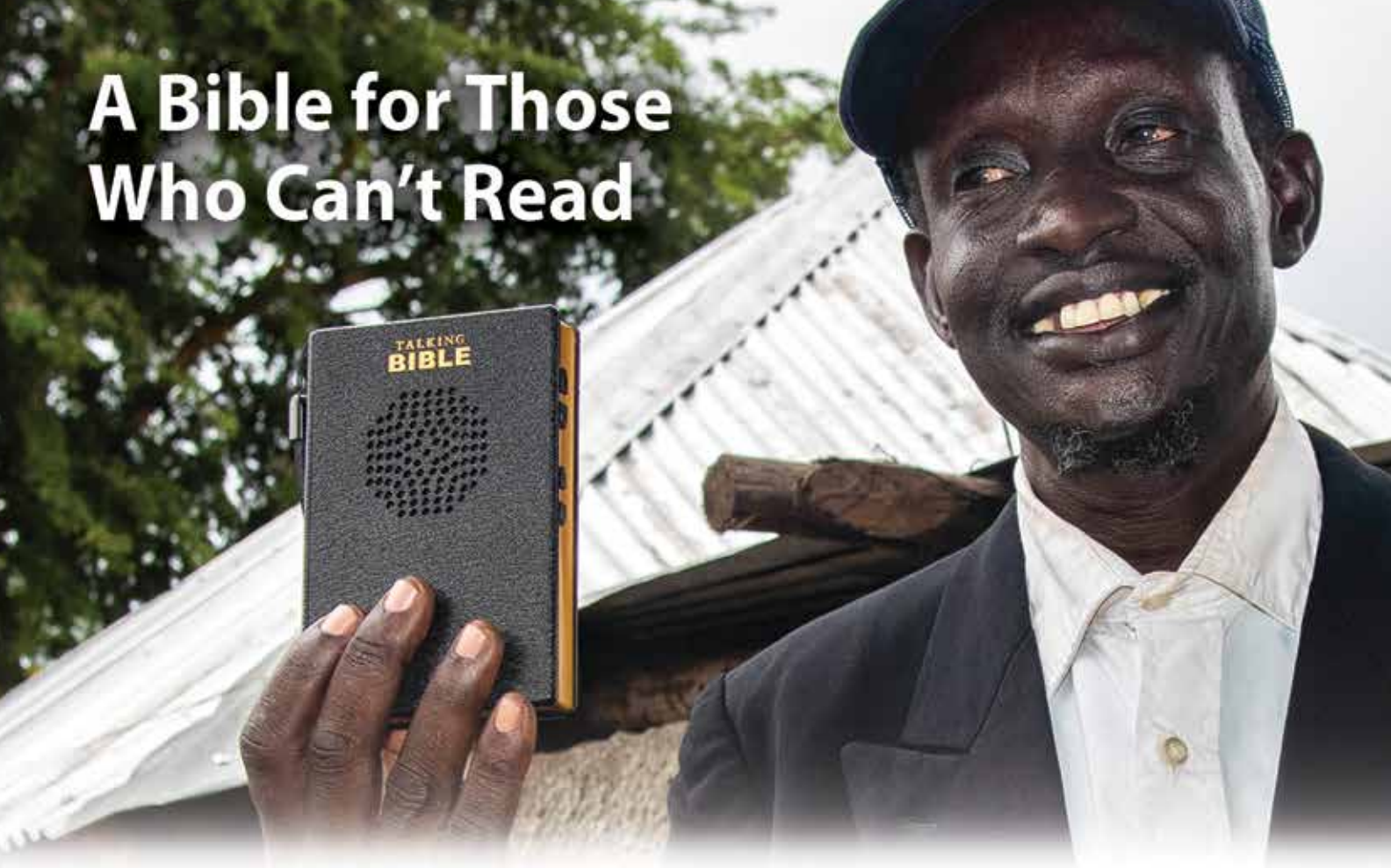
Of The Day PAGE 51
Formerly known as the Global Prayer Digest



1371

**KNOWN
KINGDOM
MOVEMENTS**

A Bible for Those Who Can't Read



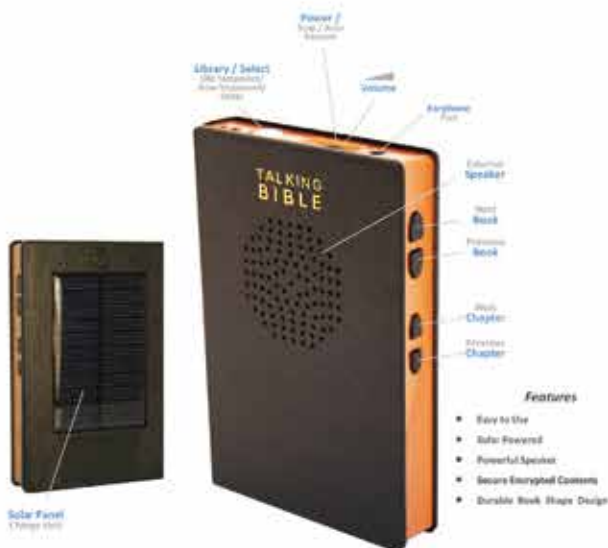
Equip • Empower • Engage
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Millions of South Sudanese people have fled their country because of violence and fighting. Bishop David Manyok is one of these refugees who ended up in the Nyumanzi Refugee Camp in Uganda. Bishop Manyok continues his ministry in the camp and had the opportunity to distribute 50 Talking Bibles into his community.

Few people in the camp can read but they love to listen to the Talking Bible and God's Word is bringing real change for them. Though tribal disagreements continue, "The people who listen to the Word of the Lord cannot kill each other. The blood of Jesus changes people's hearts!" says Bishop Manyok.

Jesus' teachings in the Bible are healing divisions and bringing comfort and hope to many refugees. God is working in their hearts so they can hear His message and respond to His call.



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Formerly known as the Global Prayer Digest

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Editorial Office: rick.wood@frontierventures.org
Advertising: advertising@missionfrontiers.org
Website: www.missionfrontiers.org
Address: 1605 E. Elizabeth St. • Pasadena, CA 91104

Rick Wood, Editor
Taya Johnson, Production Coordinator
Mike Riestler, Graphic Design
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What's in Your Box?

BY RICK WOOD

EDITOR OF MF

rick.wood@frontierventures.org

ARE WE ALL HERETICS at Frontier Ventures for talking about Insider Movements in this issue of *Mission Frontiers*? Some people have said that to me in years past. What is it about Insider Movements that is so controversial and makes so many people in the church and mission world uncomfortable? Is it simply the fear of syncretism or is something else going on?

You Can't Judge a Box By Its Label

I think some of the problem comes down to the fact that as human beings we like clear categories and definitive boxes with bold labels to put things and people into. We do not like being forced to deal with the gray areas where people don't fit easily into neat categories or boxes.

The reality is that regardless of the label we put on the box, we are always going to have variations of what is in the box. Most people would assume that people in the box labeled "Christian" are followers of Jesus vs. something else like Muslim or Buddhist and they would generally be correct. But within every Christian box there will be an amalgam of faithful followers of Jesus and merely cultural adherents. It is a mixed box. In fact, Barna Research has reported that only around 19% of self-described "born again believers" hold to basic sound doctrine such as the deity of Christ and His atoning work on the cross. In every church, no matter how good, there will be a mixture of faithful followers of Jesus and unbelievers. The parable of the wheat and tares illustrates this reality.

Applying this to Insider Movements, we can see the difficulties that can arise in trusting the label on the box. The box says "Muslim" which, like many boxes labeled "Christian," includes both faithful and cultural adherents. With Insider Movements the Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist boxes will also include those who are biblically faithful and obedient followers of Jesus and yet they continue to associate, to varying degrees, with others from their birth religion, even though they are very different in terms of their core beliefs. The box labeled "Muslim" like other boxes with Christian labels becomes very much of a mixed box. We really can't assume that everyone in the box truly represents fidelity to the label on the box.

Many in the Christian sphere want anyone who comes from a Muslim or other religious background to jump

immediately into the box labeled "Christian," even though this would lead to tremendous upheaval in the family and community, making it much more difficult for the gospel to spread among this people group. Often times when someone does jump into the Christian box from a Muslim or other religious background, those already in that box never truly accept this person as a full member of that box. Is that person a spy? How can we truly trust them considering where they came from? The truth is that a person in the box labeled "Muslim" has the potential to be a more faithful and obedient follower of Jesus than someone in the "Christian" box because each box is a mixture of beliefs, regardless of the label on the box. This is hard for many to get their heads around because we like to believe the labels on the box. This illustrates the complexity of the missionary task. No matter what box we are born into, Jesus calls us to follow Him and that means that all faithful followers of Jesus must critique and reject anything in that box that is not biblical. To fail to do so means we are not faithfully following Jesus.


What is Our Mission?

All of this raises the question, "What is the missionary task of the Church anyway?" Is it to go around the world and make converts who look and act like the believers in our local churches? Or is it to make obedient disciples of Jesus where the gospel becomes indigenous (normal and natural, not foreign) to every tribe and tongue? If the latter is the mission of the Church, then the believers in Jesus and the churches they form are going to look very different from our local churches and from every other church within every other people group. Are we okay with that? Because if believers in the West who support missions want our missionaries to establish believers and churches that look like our local church, then we are going to have three problems. 1) The gospel will not become indigenous to the people we are trying to reach. The gospel will appear to be a foreign import and rejected. 2) We will only reach a very limited group of people who don't mind being an outcast from their family and community. 3) We will never see a movement of people coming to Jesus from that people group. Some degree of contextualization of the gospel is essential for a movement to take place—even in non-Insider Movements.



In the early days of the modern protestant missionary movement, mission workers thought it was a good idea to bring their culture along with the gospel. The mission worker's church back home became the model for these new believers to imitate. They would teach them to sing the same hymns from the hymnal the missionary brought from back home. They might build a church building that looked just like something from their home culture. The men and women would start dressing like Europeans or Americans—the men in suits and ties, the women in long dresses. We can see this happening to this day in various parts of the world. Is that our mission? Is this what Jesus has called us to do—to go around the world and make every tribe and tongue look and act like us? I don't think so. Whether we are talking about Kingdom Movements or Insider Movements, it is all about the people we are attempting to reach being in control of the process of making disciples and planting churches, not the outsiders. In fact our role is to rid the gospel of as much of our cultural baggage as possible so the gospel can look like really great news to every people and nation. That is a mission worth giving our full effort to.

Support the Work of Mission Frontiers

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



THE 24:14 MOVEMENT DATA DASHBOARD As of March 2021

The Problem: Losing Ground

One of three people have no access to the gospel message.

1985: 3.2 billion lost souls

2019: 5.5 billion lost souls

Evangelism of unreached peoples is not keeping pace with the population growth rate.

The Solution: Movements

Church Planting Movements (CPMs) grow rapidly and often exceed the population growth rate.

In the last 20+ years the number of movements has increased dramatically, spreading to every continent.

The Seven Stages of the CPM Continuum

Stage 1:

Moving purposefully (G1)

Teams on site trying to consistently establish NEW 1st Generation believers and churches

Stage 2: Focused (G2)

Some 2nd generation churches (G1 believers started them)

Stage 3: Breakthrough (G3)

Consistent G2 and some G3 churches

Stage 4: Emerging CPM (G4)

Consistent G3 and some G4 churches

Stage 5: ESTABLISHED CPM

Consistent 4th+ generation churches; multiple streams

Stage 6: Sustained CPM

Visionary, indigenous leadership leading the movement with little/ no need for outsiders. Stood the test of time.

Stage 7: Multiplying CPMs:

Catalyzing new CPMs in other unreached peoples and places.

What God is Doing Through His Body

4,533 reports of active CPM engagements

1,371 Stage 5 CPMs

4+ Generations

79.29 million believers

in all CPM engagements

4.19 million churches

in all known CPM engagements

57,920 believers

per Stage 5+ CPM, average

17 average believers

per church per CPM

24:14 Vision

The Good News of Jesus Christ for every person and a Church for every people

Mission: Kingdom Movements in all unreached peoples and in every place

Initial Goal: Kingdom Movement engagements in all unreached peoples and every place by December 31, 2025

24:14 Values

1. Fully reaching the unreached peoples and places of the earth
2. Reaching them through Church Planting Movement strategies
3. Engaging them through movement strategies with **urgency sacrifice** by 2025
4. Collaborating with others in the 24:14 community so we can make progress together

Join the 24:14 Community

<https://www.2414now.net/get-involved/>

Questions? Contact: data@2414now.net or visit our FAQs at

<https://www.2414now.net/about-us/>

To Report: CPM engagement or progress contact Justin D. Long at Justin@justinlong.org

To view the entire Movement Data Dashboard go to:

<https://www.2414now.net>



“Insider” M

movements

EVERYONE IS

WELCOME

“Insider” Movements

KEVIN HIGGINS

Kevin Higgins is General Director of Frontier Ventures (FV) and the President of William Carey International University (WCIU). He has a PhD from Fuller in Intercultural Studies with a focus on Translation Studies. He is married to Susan and is the grateful father of Rachel, Sarah, and Emma.

We are knowingly taking up what continues to be a divisive and controversial topic: insider movements.

Dear Reader,

Blessings and welcome to this edition of *Mission Frontiers* (*MF*). In the following set of articles, we are knowingly taking up what continues to be a divisive and controversial topic: insider movements.

I say “we”, but as you will see from the articles, I am the author of the six different pieces we include here. That may need some explanation.

Before I get to that, notice several other articles as well. There are some significant pieces about movements and being a catalyst for movements. While not directly connected to the questions of “insider” movements, the issues discussed there are very relevant.

First, I have been involved with what eventually came to be known as insider movements since the early 1990s. I started writing about them in the late 1990s, and then more regularly after 2000. So, I am an insider to the insider conversation, you might say.

Second, having one author has made it easier to present a number of angles on the topic in an integrative way. I make no claim that I represent all insider movements, or their advocates, or even everyone in Frontier Ventures, but we do offer this edition as an important contribution to an important topic.

Third, I have been involved in the Bridging the Divide (BtD) conversations and meetings since they began just about 10 years ago. I am very grateful for what I have learned in that process from so many colleagues, both fellow advocates and sincere critics. A number of these brief articles will illuminate ways my thinking has changed over the years (this whole enterprise is worth a look, and BtD has a public website at <http://btdnetwork.org/>).

Fourth, I am the General Director of Frontier Ventures (FV), the organization that publishes *MF*, and as such I wanted to take this opportunity to articulate things from that seat and for our readers who also follow the progress of our organization. *MF* is not only a vehicle of Frontier Ventures’ ideas, of course. But since it is one of our channels historically, it seemed fitting to shape this edition around giving an FV voice to these important themes.

Finally, FV has recently completed a process of discernment about how to reshape and re-express our vision and mission for the next phase of our calling. And it seems a good place here to connect that process to these articles about insider movements.

Our vision and mission:

VISION: The fullness of God’s blessing for all peoples and the reconciliation of all things in Christ

MISSION: To nurture new ways for least reached peoples to experience the fullness of life in Jesus

For those who have followed us over the years, this should sound new but yet deeply familiar! And what I have seen in insider movements is a growing number of people experiencing God’s blessing, and experiencing reconciliation, because they are experiencing more and more of the fullness of life in Jesus!

So, six articles from me. And in this column I want to outline the six and show how they fit together:

1. Insider Movements: Should We Still Be Talking About Them? Yes and No

Here I take up the earliest definitions and my latest thinking about what insider movements really are in their essence. Rather than tying them to specific religious expressions, I propose a deeper core: who makes decisions, how, and why?

Rather than tying them to specific religious expressions, I propose a deeper core: who makes decisions, how, and why?

2. Insider Movements: How Do You Know if You Have One?

I will address topics here that do not only affect how we understand insider movements. The whole question of measuring movements is a vital one, and one we espouse in *MF*. Look again at the front cover for an example: you will find the latest count of movements among the unreached. How “measurements” are applied in the case of insider movements may be a uniquely challenging question, but it is not totally separate from concerns about any movement.

3. Insider Movements: The Role of Being an Alongsider

Just as new vocabulary emerged to try to explain what was happening in certain contexts, and thus the term “insider” was coined, so too, there is increasing research and conversation about how to talk about the role of the missionary, or worker. The natural option, in the case of insider movements would have seemed to be outsider.

But that conveys neither the aspirations of workers nor the reality of how they work.

More and more the term “alongsider” is used and this is my brief attempt to describe that. Again, this is not unique to insider movements. The role of workers in mission in general is important to reconsider.

4. Insider Movements: How Do They Keep “Right”?

In this article I take up the concern people feel about how to assure that insider movements do not deviate into syncretism and false teaching. Yet again: a concern that is true for any movement, and indeed for us in the west (and us individually by the way). What I will share here in fact should help us all, I would hope. I have used the model presented there in church settings in the USA to solve questions as well.

5. Insider Movements: Where Does This End Up?

Typically, conversations about insider movements focus, rightly, on the past history, development, and present dynamics of a given movement. However, it is important to ask about their future trajectories. And here I describe, not prescribe, three main “futures” as those have been described to me by various insider movement leaders.

And here I describe, not prescribe, three main “futures” as those have been described to me by various insider movement leaders.

6. Insider Movements: Common Concerns

No discussion of insider movements is fully complete without attempting to address some of the more common questions and concerns. My contribution is not comprehensive, but I hope it helps clarify and explain some concerns.

Conclusion, and Next

As I close, a few comments about the approach here, and about the future.

First, given the wide distribution of *MF*, I have tried to remove references that would make an observation specific to a particular region, country, people group or religious heritage. As such, the “feel” may be generic and not specific or incarnate. But be assured I am writing about and from experience with actual people, actual movements and real issues.

Second, the future. I feel keenly that three of the biggest looming missiological, theological and biblical questions for the mission movement to address as we move into a next era of mission, are all issues which have been clarified and surfaced in the process of addressing the insider movement controversies. I am not suggesting no one asked these before or saw them before, of course, but the insider movement debate and reality has caused some of us to begin to ask about these three issues in new ways, and to ask new questions about them. While there is not space to address them deeply here, the articles in this edition of *MF* will cause some readers to wonder about them. The three are:

What is church?

What in its essence is community in Jesus, and what is the interplay between this communal reality and the communal reality of one’s birth religion?

What is religion?

What is the relationship of religion, culture, humanity? How do religious identity and living in Christ impact each other?

What is a missionary?

What are we learning and discovering about the qualities and character needed in people called to serve cross-culturally in mission, no matter where they come from, or where or to whom they go?

I believe these things are imbedded, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly, throughout this edition of *MF*. But they will be looming larger and larger in the mission movement, and in Frontier Ventures as we seek to follow Jesus into the coming next years.

May what we do and who we are result in the fullness of His blessing for all the families and peoples of the earth.

I believe these things are imbedded, sometimes explicitly sometimes implicitly, throughout this edition of *MF*. But they will be looming larger and larger in the mission movement, and in Frontier Ventures as we seek to follow Jesus into the coming next years. 

“Insider” Movements:

Should We Still Be Talking About Them? Yes and No

I am fond of saying that we are in the midst of a “movement movement.” It seems everyone in the world of missions is talking about movements. Books and articles abound, and conferences, training, and reports of movements proliferate. Thankfully this is because there are movements to talk about!

This is an unprecedented time of movement growth and multiplication. This is in part why *Mission Frontiers* has been including reports of movements and discussions of movements as a central theme every time we publish, no matter what the stated topic of a given edition.

There Are Movements, and Then There are Movements

The concept is not new, in some ways. The observation and study of large numbers of people turning to Jesus led to the descriptions of “people movements” by forerunners such as Waskom Pickett and Donald McGavran. More recently we tend to speak about, and hear more and more about Church Planting Movements, or CPMs, and Disciple Making Movements, or DMMs.¹

The celebrations of movements does not mean there have been no questions, and CPMs and DMMs have garnered their share of critique. But of all the types of movements being discussed today, “insider movements”, or IMs, have certainly attracted the most attention in terms of critique.

CPMs, DMMs, and IMs all share a lot in common, including: the conviction that all believers in Jesus will be drawn into deep level change and transformation; the importance of a believing community in shaping the life of believers; the centrality and singularity of Jesus as the way of salvation; the central place of the Scriptures in shaping life-faith-doctrine-moral values-practices.

CPMs, DMMs, and IMs all share a lot in common, including: the conviction that all believers in Jesus will be drawn into deep level change and transformation.

The main difference between IMs and other movements has to do with how believers in a movement understand their new identity in Jesus relative to the religious community of their birth, and more specifically, how they navigate the religious elements of their socio-religious heritages (events, practices, etc.).

¹ Though writing before the advent of widely known “DMM” models, Becky Lewis’ discussion of the ways people movements and CPM differ is very helpful, as is her description of IM. *Insider Movements: Honoring God-Given Identity and Community*, International Journal of Frontier Missiology, 26:1, Spring 2009, p. 16ff.

In every movement, including insider movements, believers say yes to some aspects, and no to others. Advocates and leaders of insider movements have tended to a posture that has allowed more “yeses” than non-insider advocates and leaders.

In every movement, including insider movements, believers say yes to some aspects, and no to others.

My Thinking: 2004

In 2004 I outlined this definition of insider movements. Note that this was still very early in the emergence of the whole idea:

***Insider Movement:** A growing number of families, individuals, clans and/or friendship-webs becoming faithful disciples of Jesus within the culture of their people group, including their religious culture. This faithful discipleship will express itself in culturally appropriate communities of believers who will also continue to live within as much of their culture, including the religious life of the culture, as is biblically faithful. The Holy Spirit, through the Word and through His people will also begin to transform His people and their culture, religious life and worldview.²*

Five years later, Becky Lewis wrote a similar definition:

Insider movements can be defined as movements to obedient faith in Christ that remain integrated with or inside their natural community. In any insider movement there are two distinct elements:

- 1. The gospel takes root within pre-existing communities or social networks, which become the main expression of “church” in that context. Believers are not gathered from diverse social networks to create a “church.” New parallel social structures are not invented or introduced.*
- 2. Believers retain their identity as members of their socio-religious community while living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Bible.³*

² *The Key to Insider Movements: The “Devoted’s” of Acts*, International Journal of Frontier Missiology, 21:4, Winter 2004, p. 155ff.

³ In IJFM, 26:1, Spring 2009, p. 16ff.

Insider movements can be defined as movements to obedient faith in Christ that remain integrated with or inside their natural community.

The ongoing link to one’s birth religion that both of the above definitions refer to has been the primary source of friction and questioning about IMs. The question often boils down to something like, “how do IMs avoid heresy?”

In another article in this edition, I will take up the question of how IMs, indeed how any movement, is shaped and influenced by ongoing engagement with Scripture and how the Spirit and Word can serve as a sort of spiritual and theological GPS.

For now, I want to turn to a different lens through which I have begun to understand IMs.

My Thinking Now: 2021

My own thinking has continued to evolve. And while I still stand by the definitions that I, and later, Becky Lewis, have published, and still affirm what God is doing in IMs, I have come to rethink what it is that is distinctly *the core*.

What are the essential elements that make this or that movement “IM” versus some other type of “M”? Is it really the religious element?

I began to think about movements such as the rapid explosion of believers in Iran, believers who in general want nothing to do with Shia roots and religion. The realization came to me that this movement is still “inside” a socio-religious background.

In this case for many, not all, believers who are coming to faith in Jesus seem to be doing so after having already embraced a shift in world view relative to Islam, in many cases *prior* to coming to Jesus. If “insider” were to be defined and limited to only specific and narrow categories of religious practices (for example), then we would miss the essential “inside-ness” of a growing and exciting move of God. No one suggests that the believers in Iran should go back to Shia Islam but they weren’t “in” that when they came to faith in the first place. It was in many cases already behind them.



What are the essential elements that makes this or that movement “IM” versus some other type of “M”? Is it really the religious element?

This includes the post-Shia-Iranian-socio-religious-reality they were part of before meeting Jesus. They are in many ways still “in” that, even as their faith, heart, relationships and worldview all continue to be shaped in Scripture and community. That is, they are part of an insider movement.

I am now convinced that the deepest markers of whether a movement is an “insider” movement or not are not the questions about the socio-religious decisions themselves. Such decisions are *results* of something deeper, results of decisions “insiders” may make, and so the crucial questions are ones such as:

Who makes decisions in the movement?

How do they make them?

Why do they make them?

So: Still Talk About Insider Movements? Yes

So, it is important to keep talking and probing “IM”. In line with that, here is what I am thinking about those three questions.

Who?

I am not ignoring the vital role of what we might more and more refer to as “alongsiders” (see the article about that in this edition of *MF*). But at the end of the day,

what matters, what I believe makes a movement an insider movement, is that the movement itself, its leaders and fellowships, make the decisions.

How?

In a later article in this edition I describe my conviction that the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to shape and teach the people of God. It is a simple, but not simplistic, way to speak. Healthy movements make decisions through engagement with Scripture that is ongoing, communal, corrective, and closely interacting with the questions and challenges of the context *the movement* is in, as opposed to the priorities and preferences of an outsider/alongsider.

Why?

There are and will be many ways to answer why a decision is made, including motives such as wanting to get “truth” right. But also important will be questions about how this or that decision may allow for the good news to continue to flow most freely, without compromising its essence. The controversy in Acts 15 for example, was about how to decide what was right, including what was right Scripturally, and how to keep from placing unnecessary burdens on the emerging Gentile movement. The Scriptural wrestling, for example, was between what the Law of Moses said (cited by those saying the Gentile

believers needed to be circumcised), and what James found in several of the prophets. And we see the concern about burdens in the letter that James and others drafted for communicating their decision.

This focus on who and how and why is a different way of speaking of “insider movements.” It is a development that still needs more discussion. I am not claiming all advocates will agree with me. And all of that suggests that, yes, we need to keep talking about insider movements.

I am now convinced that the deepest markers of whether a movement is an “insider” movement or not are not the questions about the socio-religious decisions themselves.

So: Still Talk About Insider Movements? No

And yet, it may also be time to stop. I will give just two reasons for this, for now.

The first reason is that the term has never felt right, frankly. The *term*, not the concept itself, smacks of secrecy, isolation and even something less than honest or above board (for more about misunderstandings of the concept see the article in this edition about common concerns).

The second and more important reason is related to new thinking arising from non-western advocates and leaders and missiologists.

In 2017 a number of Asian and western men and women gathered to consider the topic of movements, and specifically to try to imagine new language for movements—language more rooted in biblical concepts.


Specifically, we were concerned to find new words for “Church Planting Movement” and “missionary” and “missiology.” Using the insights from the call of Abraham in Genesis 12, and references to blessing in Ephesians as well as other papers and conversations, we experimented with things like, “family blessing movements,” and probably much less likely to stick, terms like “blessionary,” and “blessiology.”

But we agreed that we need new language.

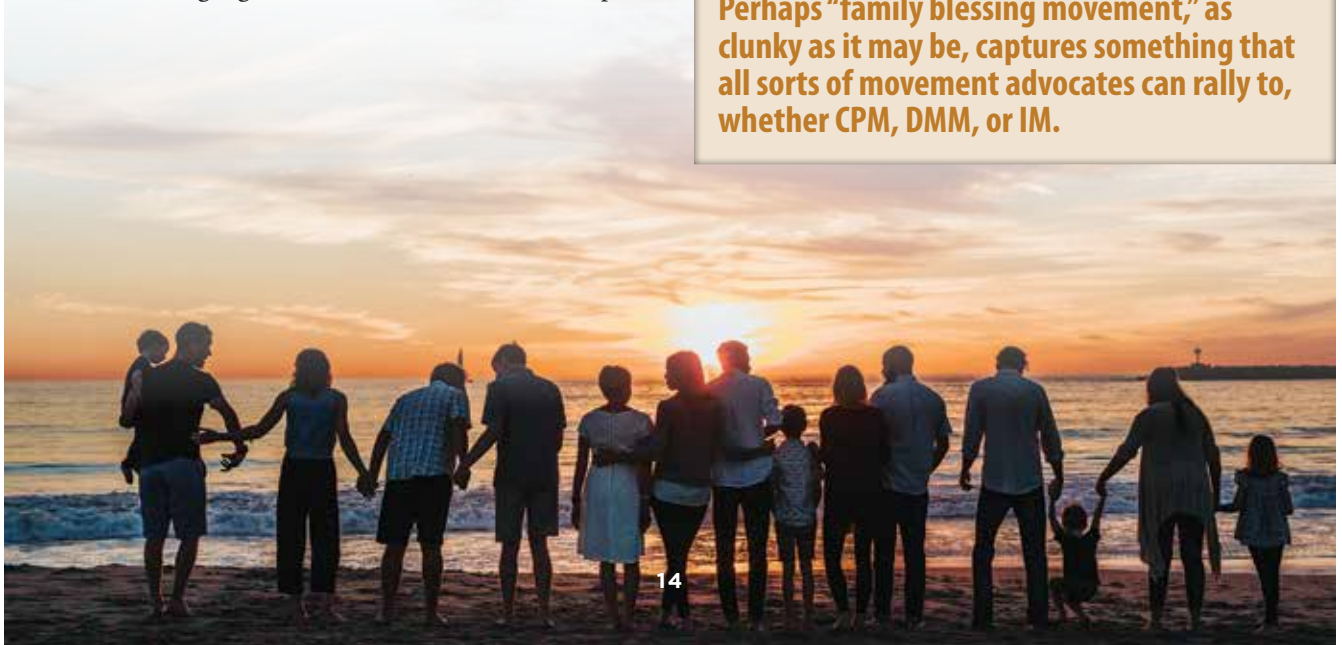
FBMs? Family Blessing Movements?

Earlier in this paper I cited Becky Lewis’ definition of IMs and her mention of remaining within pre-existing social structures. This assumes or includes the idea that “church-planting” is essentially planting churches within those existing structures, as opposed to the creation of new social structures we then call “churches.”

The social structure that more and more movement advocates promote, IM and CPM, and DMM alike, is the household. The *oikos*, or extended household of the New Testament has universal expression in one form or another in every culture and society. More or less nuclear? Yes, but present. Extended to aunts and uncles or not? Good question, but the concept is still present—and so on.

And given that the promise to Abraham involved the families of the earth, and the promise of God’s blessing for them, perhaps “family blessing movement,” as clunky as it may be, captures something that all sorts of movement advocates can rally to, whether CPM, DMM, or IM. 

Perhaps “family blessing movement,” as clunky as it may be, captures something that all sorts of movement advocates can rally to, whether CPM, DMM, or IM.



“Insider” Movements: How Do You Know if You Have One?¹

KEVIN HIGGINS

Kevin Higgins is General Director of Frontier Ventures (FV) and the President of William Carey International University (WCIU). He has a PhD from Fuller in Intercultural Studies with a focus on Translation Studies. He is married to Susan and is the grateful father of Rachel, Sarah, and Emma.

¹ Adapted from, *Measuring Insider Movements? Shifting to a Qualitative Standard* *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, 35:1, Spring 2018, pp. 21ff. In *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* King Arthur approaches a French castle to explain his quest for the Grail and is told “we’ve already got one.” It’s a humorous scene, and of course, they *don’t* have the Grail. But then, how would they know if they did?

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Gimli is riding with others towards Helms Deep and is expounding about his culture, including the bearded nature of the women of his culture which he admits has led to the idea that they have no women. He begins to comment on the ridiculous nature of such a view just as he unceremoniously falls from his horse.

Some reactions to news about insider movements resemble the comments above: when I speak of insider movements and say we “have one,” I get asked “how do you know?” And since IMs don’t look like what people expect, there is a suspicion that they don’t really exist.

I am primarily interested in this relative to insider movements, but of course similar questions apply to any sort of movement, and so I will write with a more general approach as well.

The answer to any question depends greatly on the meaning and assumptions behind the question: what is a movement anyway?

The answer to any question depends greatly on the meaning and assumptions behind the question: what is a movement anyway? And since IMs don’t look like what people expect, there is a suspicion that they don’t really exist.



What Makes a Movement a Movement?

Depending on who you ask, a movement may be measured by how many believers, or how many fellowships/churches you have, or more likely, some combination. Time factors may be included: X number of new fellowships in Y amount of time, etc. More and more reports of movements, such as what we report in *MF*, also look at things like how many “streams” of key leadership and churches have multiplied other leaders and churches down their respective chains, and how many iterations of multiplication that has produced.

In some insider movements, while less frequently reported or captured in databases, similar data is tracked, discussed and also corrected. I remember one meeting with insider movement leaders who were discussing the status of fellowships in various regions of their country. Several of them mentioned numbers and added anecdotes. At one point a brother, who had already shared, interrupted to say he had misinformed everyone. As he thought about it more, he realized he needed to reduce what he had reported because he remembered that several fellowships had ended for various reasons.

While there is a place for such quantitative data, is this the sort of thing that is *most* important to track? I have been more and more convinced that we need to pay more careful attention to qualitative elements.

Years ago we started using certain criteria and teaching others to use them by modifying the “Three Self” criteria developed by both Henry Venn (Anglican) and Rufus Anderson (Presbyterian). Another fourth “self” was

suggested over time in various circles, and so we began to speak of “Four Self” Movements, which included being:

- Self-Propagating
- Self-Governing
- Self-Supporting
- Self-Theologizing

We developed definitions and a tool for assessing progress in movements among the unreached. But over time, a number of things made my insider leader friends and me increasingly uneasy about these standards.

First, all of the first three selves were developed in response to the felt need for handing over already functioning mission churches to local leadership. They were primarily used, in other words, to address developments in a relatively established mission situation, instead of a context looking to foster newer movements.

Second, as such, there is a sense in which these selves were in fact not part of the original vision or purpose of the churches they were now trying to encourage to be independent. The selves were never really meant to be criteria to measure a movement but were employed to assist in a hand over. Origins matter.

Third, the emphasis on “self” created more of a focus on just that, the dimension of self. Thus, it was easy to miss the dynamics of propagating, governing, supporting and theologizing. The ultimate aim of that thinking was to get younger mission churches to do these things themselves.

Fourth, and closely related to this, we became convinced that the use of and continued repeating of the word “self” in our day was a not-so-subtle message that smelled of Western individualism. This seemed directly counter to the picture of koinonia and partnership so deeply rooted in the New Testament movement(s), which served to connect churches in ways that were interdependent.

Finally, that fourth self, “self-theologizing,” created huge misunderstandings, not only among those outside of our organization but also among those within our agency. This was so much the case that often we were unable to overcome the resulting static, doubt and confusion merely by the constant redefining of what we meant by “self” and “theologizing.” We concluded that different terminology would be important.

Our Own Training Caught Up

In addition to these considerations, we as trainers were being affected by our own delivery of our programs. That may sound strange, but allow me to explain.

One component of our training is a series of five studies focused on Luke and Acts. In a short period of time we go through those two books in their entirety five times, each time asking questions related to healthy movements. The aim is to help those we train to identify the dynamics that help movements grow and spread and mature and remain healthy.

As a result of these repeated readings, those of us in leadership found that these texts, the very ones we were using to train others, kept speaking to *us*. And by us, please read me to be saying, me!

The dynamics which we had discovered inductively in Luke and Acts were actually quite different from the four selves we had been telling our trainees to use in applying the training. There was a growing sense of disconnect and discomfort internally.

For all of these reasons, we felt a change was needed and decided to try to rethink, simplify and re-express. We asked several people from different cultures within our organization to suggest changes.

As a result, we came to speak of “Four Signs of Healthy Movements.” They were simple, and we attached biblical references that seemed to sum them up.

Our summary was that healthy movements exhibit some of the things the “four selves” were trying to get at: more multiplication, more leaders, more generosity and more engagement in Scripture. But they will also demonstrate

more miraculous evidence of the Spirit, more character, more reconciled relationships, different attitudes toward women and children, hearts for others to know Jesus, hearts to know Jesus ourselves and on and on.

So, how do we know?

Basically, we talk about these things. We talk about them personally, in our own lives, not just in the movement as an “other” thing. We discuss whether a team is seeing these dynamics, and if so, how developed are they. It is oral, conversational, communal.

Are there quantitative-numerical details that could surface in the answers to these qualitative descriptors? Certainly.

But in our view, if the dynamics are healthy, then there is a movement, regardless of the size or numerical measurements.

As a result, we came to speak of “Four Signs of Healthy Movements.” They were simple, and we attached biblical references that seemed to sum them up.

Conclusion

So, how do we know if we have one? The answer to that, implicit in the previous text, is essentially, “only through close enough relationship to see and experience it.”

There are several factors that make it hard to demonstrate that such movements are real. Security issues are probably one of the most common. But this element of relational trust is another (they are connected, but not identical). Add to that factor the additional element of focusing on qualitative measurements, and I can fully appreciate referring back to Gimli, that the idea arises that there aren’t any.

The church in its local, Catholic and movement expressions is the Body of Christ. It is a living thing. This suggests an analogy to my mind. The fact of human DNA is what determines that “this” is a person, a human being, one who will grow, develop, and become mature. In the same way, I am suggesting that if the right DNA is in place, then we have a movement. I am further suggesting that the most crucial and determinative DNA is qualitative. The primary job description, then, for pioneer church-planters is to disciple and coach from day one with the aim of fostering this DNA.

Healthy, growing movements flow from the right DNA.



“Insider” Movements: The Role of Being an Alongsider

At the outset, allow me to reflect on several biblical streams in the genesis of my own understanding of how important “being,” and especially our “being in Him,” truly is.

The movements we refer to as IMs required new vocabulary, and the nature of the movements under discussion led to the use of the word “insider.” Along the way, the question began to emerge as to how to refer to those “outsiders” who served in the early pioneering and ongoing growth of such movements.

A term that seems to be gaining traction is “alongsider.” In fact, Frontier Ventures is beginning to weave this term into much of what we do, how we talk and who we seek to be.

But what does it mean, or what do we mean by it?

I begin with the premise that what we are is more fundamentally important than what we do. This is true of leaders, of the mission movement, and it is actually deeply connected to our missiology.

At the outset, allow me to reflect on several biblical streams in the genesis of my own understanding of how important “being,” and especially our “being in Him,” truly is.

First, of course, are Jesus’ own statements about this, for example in John 14 through 17. “I in you, and you in me, and we in them, and them in us” might serve as a summary.

Turning to Paul, let me use just one statement, his opening in Colossians 1:2, in which he writes to “the in-Christ-holy-and-faithful-brothers/sisters-in-Colossae.” The hyphens are my attempt to capture the sense of the united nature of the double identity: in Christ, and in Colossae.

Paul is context specific, yes, but also spiritually grounded. There is no way to be in Christ other than in a context, and no way to live authentically in a context other than in Christ.

In this paper, I will look at a few scenes from “the field” to try to describe personal experiences of “being” and trying

to “be” alongside in several contexts, then address the implications of this for what I call missional leadership, rooted in “being,” and helpfully described as leading “alongside.”

“Being, Alongside”

Scene 1

My wife and I had arrived in Rwanda earlier in the day to take part with our organization’s African leadership team in a series of meetings, planning for the future of the sending bases there and spending time in Scripture and prayer. The center where we planned to gather was a bit more than 200 kilometers from the airport by vehicle.

After some rest, we and the team piled into a van and began the journey. The van was slow. Very slow. I consoled myself thinking that our driver was being careful in the city. We would pick up speed once we got out to the highway.

But we got slower. And slower. I am not sure, but we may have been passed by a bicycle. Or two.

Evening descended. The sun disappeared. The moon arose. And we crawled on.

Sometime after one in the morning we stopped near a very small town. We were still not quite half-way. I was grateful for the stop, for several reasons involving physical comfort that I will not expound upon. However, it gradually became clear that there were other reasons for the stop. The condition of the vehicle was being debated.

My very practical mind set to work. “I have some cash. We can rent another vehicle. We could get everyone there sooner. We need to be rested for the days ahead.”

I wanted to say those words to our Africa Director, but waited as he was speaking to our Rwanda Coordinator. My internal struggle was almost tangible.

I had cultivated a motto within our leadership, “when I am in Africa I am under the leadership of that Director, and we in turn are under the leadership of whichever country coordinator we happen to be visiting.”

It is a great motto. Now it was being tested. I struggled. I wanted a bed. I wanted a solution. I wanted to fix a problem.

“When I am in Africa I am under the leadership of that Director.” It is a great motto. Now it was being tested. I struggled. I wanted a bed. I wanted a solution. I wanted to fix a problem.

My Africa Director approached me. I was hopeful he was going to ask for my opinion, but kept myself quiet. I listened, but I admit that I also waited for a chance to offer my solution. He seemed reluctant to really talk about the situation in other than vague terms. I decided on an indirect approach, mentioning that if someone suggested the idea of a different vehicle, but if there was worry about the cost, that I could help, but also reassured him I trusted his decision.

There was a reluctant pause. “Yes, thank you, but let’s see how our brother (the country coordinator) thinks to handle the matter.”

I did have a faint realization that he was following my motto, and wondered if I liked it so much in reality!

Over the next hour it became clear that the plan was going to be to pile back in the same vehicle and start crawling again. The Africa Director sat next to me and leaned over to explain.

“This driver is married to a relative of our coordinator. This is his vehicle. He feels very embarrassed already and if we arranged something else, he would lose face completely within his own family, and our coordinator might also. I think also, we should not leave the driver here alone, it is a strange place. We are all in this together.”

The decision was made based on core values: honor, sticking together and caring about people more than efficiency. I was grateful I had not blundered into the role of a pragmatic fixer. I was grateful we all were “alongside” each other.



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Scene 2

A friend in South Asia, who had been raised all his life in the religion of his people and had for a time been involved with a militant expression of that religion, once asked me, “Do you want to know what caused me to come to faith?” Of course, I was eager to know which of the wise and powerful insights I had shared with him had led him to faith. I paid attention.

“I saw people like you and a few others and I watched how you were as married people and as parents, and I thought, ‘We need this in my people.’”

While I was disappointed that it was not my profound wisdom, I suppose I will always be grateful this brother saw good things in us. And what he saw had to do with our “being”—not our doing.

Scene 3

We have developed a ministry in one religious context who attend shrines in one particular country. This involves visits to the shrines ourselves, lots of prayer, praying for people and also interceding at these places.

On one visit a dear brother, who had been in the Lord for some years, went with us and almost immediately upon entering the shrine was clearly taken under the power of a very strong spiritual evil. We prayed, we took him outside and prayed more. He was completely oblivious to us and continued to pound his head against the floor and ground. It appeared our prayers and commands for the evil one to leave were of no avail.

Eventually he calmed down but it was clear our work was not done. We drove him home and over the six or seven hour journey I was seeking the Lord for how to handle this.

We arrived home and several of us gathered around him for more prayer, in the middle of which I sensed God’s whisper, “He needs to confess.”

I had no problem suggesting this but I was aware enough of the cultural dynamics to know how difficult this would be. “Lord, how do we do this?” I asked.

I can’t say exactly how I knew but I just knew that the best thing to do would be for all of us to confess, starting with me. I opened to the fruits of the Spirit and the deeds of the flesh in Galatians and one by one through both lists I confessed whatever I could see in my own life. One by one we went around the circle, with the last one to confess being the brother we were praying for.

He joined us, confessed to whatever came to him, and almost immediately he was free (and has remained so).

The point of this is not the deliverance, as wonderful as that was. The point is that “being,” “being with,” “being together” and “being alongside” *in confession* was crucial to this brother receiving God’s work in his life.

Each of the scenes is tied to deep challenges in self-awareness, spiritual dependence, hearing and discerning God’s voice and “being with” or alongside others. This is all crucial to cross-cultural contexts of course, but equally so in our leadership, whether of teams or organizations.

As leaders, we need to be cultivating the same GPS systems in our own lives and leadership that we hope our various organizations and those we lead are producing and encouraging within those we send and within those who are disciplined.

The point is that “being,” “being with,” “being together” and “being alongside” *in confession* was crucial to this brother receiving God’s work in his life.

Becoming Those Who Can Be Alongside

Near the beginning of this essay I referred to Paul’s opening in Colossians 1:2, in which he writes to “the in-Christ-holy-and-faithful-brothers/sisters-in-Colossae.” This is the united nature of our double identity: in Christ, and in Context. And so I have two convictions:

Conviction 1: we have a tremendous opportunity to plumb the **missiological** depths of life in Christ.


Conviction 2: we have a tremendous opportunity to plumb the **spiritual** depths of life in Christ.

I suppose a third conviction might be that the two convictions I just cited are not really two, but deeply linked, one and the same. Regardless, plumbing these depths will position us aright no matter what we may encounter in our voyage forward.

Becoming people who can live alongside in keeping with what I have laid out here requires that we, in our being, become different ourselves. First. Foremost. And that will “catch,” and form people.

Paul is context specific and so must we be. Christ always lives His life in and through real people in real contexts. To be in Him and in our place and time are not two different things. There is no other way to be in Christ.

And if that is true, then “being” and “being alongside” is everything.

Becoming people who can live alongside in keeping with what I have laid out here requires that we, in our being, become different ourselves. 

“Insider” Movements: How Do They Keep “Right”?

He was wearing store bought camouflage pants and a white shirt when we left his guest room to join me for a visit to a Scripture study that was primarily involving what most would call “seekers,” members of the majority religion in our area wanting to read the Bible and learn.

This man was exploring a longer-term call to work in this part of the world, and was visiting us as part of his process. He came from Central America, and between his English and less of my Spanish, we did well.

After the study he had lots of questions. His asked about this group, of course, and about the nature of the movement which was, then, still pretty new. There were a number of more fully formed fellowships, with leaders.

At one point he asked, “so who makes sure they don’t get it wrong when they are reading Scripture?” I am afraid I was not at my best and my first reply was simply, “well, who makes sure *you* don’t?”

Later I gave him a more complete answer. However, while I answered with an emotional tone of frustration, in fact my reply contains some important truths.



Perhaps most important, my reply implies that the same God my friend relies on can also be relied on to guide new movements.

Perhaps most important, my reply implies that the same God my friend relies on can also be relied on to guide new movements. No matter what safeguards or processes we may think are good and wise and even needed to assure theological quality control, in the end there is someone else who is not only responsible, but has promised to lead us into truth!

I have over the years become more and more convinced of the reliability of the fact that the Spirit of God will use the Word of God to guide and teach the people of God.

However, having said that, like most things it is not either/or, nor is the fact that something being simple gives us a reason to be simplistic.

I can't be simplistic about the process: I don't just point to a Bible and say good luck!

I can't be simplistic about the aim: the question about making sure a movement doesn't go wrong implies that we know (and agree) about the exact things to include in the camps of right or wrong. I am not suggesting that moral and doctrinal issues are relative or purely subjective. But we do need a certain level of humility as Christians, and it is good to recall that not all Christians agree on everything, not even on some very important things.¹

The question about how movements grow and develop and stay healthy is complex, but it *is* vital. When people ask me about how a movement can avoid taking wrong turns, I take the question seriously. And I take it seriously with leaders of movements.

This brief article is intended to show how I have approached this.

How Does It Work in the Bible?

In Acts 15 we find leaders wrestling with a profound question. Gentiles had come to faith, and the Spirit had come upon them (before baptism), and they had not been required to be circumcised, nor were they told this would be needed later. Keep in mind this was not a cultural question: circumcision was a command from God. It was

¹ Examples: Protestant versus Catholic versions of the canon, free-will and sovereignty, the place of the Spirit and spiritual gifts today, and more.

a religious question. It was a theological question. It was a biblical question.

How did they "get it right?"

They got information from the context: what the Spirit was doing, reports from the field, if you will.

They probed Scripture: some pointed to what Moses had said (which would have meant circumcision); James later turned to citations of the prophets.

They discussed (for a long time, and evidently pretty vigorously!).

Then they decided (as a group of leaders, James said it seemed good to *us*...).

And then? Then, as we know Paul, took the letter of James and went to declare the decision to the Gentile believers. In the letter was the decision about circumcision and also, among other things, a prohibition about eating meat offered to idols. This was all met with joy.

He kept going, and got to lots of new places, including the city of Corinth. And Corinth became a messy church to say the least! It is likely that Paul wrote three letters, not just the two we have (which may include parts of the third one).

But my main point: when Paul writes 1 Corinthians 8 he addresses the food offered to idols question. He does not cite the Acts 15 event or decision, and does not mention the letter, which supposedly had already decided this issue. And in addition, he does not teach that food offered to idols is wrong (in itself). He does suggest it depends, it is contextual, and the deciding factor is not the meat, but who I eat it with and whether what I do will harm their conscience.

The issue isn't spiritual purity, but primarily relational unity and love.

But that is not what the Council (including Paul) agreed to in Acts.

It is good to recall that not all Christians agree on everything, not even on some very, very important things.

What is happening?

The texts and how things unfold, suggest that Paul was continuing to seek the Lord's mind and will, and continuing to adjust based on new evidence or new situations.

In other words, in addition to the four steps above:

They got information from the context.

They probed Scripture.

They discussed.

Then they decided.

There seems to be a fifth, at least for Paul:

He re-evaluated in the light of new information or situations.

How does that help in a movement?

Here is a case.

The issue of polygamy first hit one of the movements I have been most closely involved with in the early 2000s. One of the believer's parents arranged a second marriage for him and he was unsure what to do.

Some of the leaders asked my opinion and I suggested we see what the Scriptures had to say. We looked at Old Testament examples of men with more than one wife, and we looked at Genesis 2, Ephesians and 1 Timothy 3. The decision made by the leaders then was that it is okay if a believer has more than one wife, but not if he is a leader. Then we agreed we would keep studying and learning.

Sometime later there was a big earthquake in which many people died. Our leaders were able to share the gospel and do relief work and many people became believers.

One of the believer's parents arranged a second marriage for him and he was unsure what to do.

However, there were also many widows so the question of marrying more than one wife came up again. We again looked at many of the same Scriptures. But this time we also saw the Old Testament statement that if a man fails to marry his brother's widow he should be cursed!

It was suggested that it is okay but not for leaders. But then one brother said that perhaps leaders should be setting the example of marrying their brothers' widows. So for some time this was the idea, but only in that area of the movement.

In 2007 or 2008 we were holding a leader training event. About twenty-five men from different parts of the country were there and we were studying leadership in 1 Timothy. It was not our plan to address polygamy in that meeting, but 1 Timothy 3 brought it to the forefront again.

In the group was an older man, a man who had been a respected religious leader before coming to Jesus (the equivalent in his religious heritage of being a bishop). He was sitting quietly as the others very emotionally argued their different points of view about marriage and polygamy. Finally he simply cleared his throat and everyone became quiet.

He said, "God has a plan A, one man, one wife. We see it in Genesis, in Jesus' teaching, and in Ephesians and in Timothy. This is Plan A. This needs to be what we teach in our movement. This is what our next generation will follow. I know that some of you are in difficult situations. Maybe you already have more than one wife. Or maybe your other leaders do. Or maybe your parents and relatives will pressure you. God is merciful. This is a difficult time of change. But God's Plan A is one man and one wife. That is what we will teach and that is what we will try for."



This process took almost eight years but it has finally stuck. Our leaders are strong on this one.

This illustrates the importance of the five steps, working carefully through a decision and making time to re-evaluate. This process allows new movements to develop their knowledge and application of Scripture. It gives them a process, a habit and experience in using the Bible instead of always depending on an outside expert.

I deeply believe that the Spirit of God will use the Word of God to teach the people of God.

But....

I get mixed reactions when I share this case, and understandably so. For some it is an encouragement that God and the Scriptures and God's people are together able to steer things in good directions, even if it may take time.

But I also get asked: "Kevin, why didn't you intervene sooner? Look how long it took. How much difficulty could have been avoided?"


It's a fair set of questions.

Let's face it: outsiders exhibit lots of influence whether in insider or other movements and whether we want to or not. But that influence can be helpful, or unhelpful, and can result in growing health of a movement or its leaders, or not.

Had I exerted more influence, it is possible that the final decision about Plan A would have surfaced sooner. It is also possible, I would say probable, that having done so, more leaders would have proceeded to do what they thought best in spite of that but would have done so secretly. The process we followed allowed for an environment in which leaders could share openly, search Scripture without a pre-decision about what they ought to find, and thus allowed for a movement in which the Scriptures could, did and do, shape things.

But, finally, was this the right approach? Yes, it is my conviction that this is healthy. But what if I was wrong to wait?

What gives me renewed assurance as I ask this is that even if my approach was wrong in part or in whole, my confidence grows that even so, if I work at keeping people grounded in the conviction that they can expect to receive guidance from the Lord as they search the Scriptures together in the face of tough issues, God will bring them to where they need to be.

The Spirit of God will indeed, and does indeed, use the Word of God to guide, teach and shape the people of God. 

"Insider" Movements: Where Does This End Up?

It has become more and more common in my experience for people who have questions and concerns to arrive at a point where they can see a space for insider movements, and for individuals or small groups of believers to remain "inside" as a stage of their journey, with the assumption that at some point a break will need to be made and should be encouraged.

And so, in this article I want to raise the question about the long-term future, vision, and hopes for insider movements.

I have my own thoughts on this, but ultimately what matters will be the answers that leaders of various movements give,

and what their fellow leaders see and understand and discern. Within the circles I am aware of and the leaders I relate to there are really three ways different leaders see the future of the movements they are part of.

Critical Mass, and then Separate as Christians

There are some I know who hope their movements can stay within their religious communities, accepted as such, until the movements are large enough to step out, or more likely, be persecuted out. At that point they would be able to stand and perhaps be too big for large scale persecution.

I want to raise the question about the long-term future, vision, and hopes for insider movements.

Let me hasten to say that none of the movements I know of are able to fully avoid persecution at present, or ever. As vocal witnesses for Jesus, our brothers and sisters face rejection, abuse, and some have been martyred.

However, the hope of such leaders I would see in this category is that their movement's numbers would become big enough eventually to survive as a more overtly Christian movement. They imagine this outside of their religious heritages, but not tied to current denominations explicitly. More on that later!

I know of one such movement personally. It began as very much an "insider" movement in the older sense, meaning that believers maintained religious forms, rethought how the holy books and traditions of their people could be understood or re-understood in the light of Jesus, etc. But at some stage along the line, *as they continued in Scripture and in conversation with alongside friends*,¹ they determined that God's preferred plan for them was going to include getting to a point of critical mass in terms of size, and then separating from their birth community's religion in more fundamental ways.

Yeast in the Dough

This is the viewpoint of leaders of movements who sincerely believe that their version of adhering to the religion they were born in, now shaped by Jesus and the Bible, is in fact the truth; the true way not only to be a disciple of Jesus but the true way to adhere to their religion.

This conviction has emerged as these leaders have *continued in Scripture and in conversation with alongside friends*.

This is the version of "insiderness" that has most typically been the focus of the controversies and debates among Christians and mission workers. It has been the most hotly disputed. But as I am trying to point out, it is not the only position taken by leaders of insider movements.

Wheat and Tares

In some ways this category is a bit of a hybrid between the first two. The leaders I am thinking of want very much to stay inside. But they are aware that the likelihood of ever getting to the size and influence needed to change their religion itself from the inside is slim to impossible.

They are realistic that it is very likely that eventually sometime soon that they will be targeted by the majority and persecuted more overtly and consistently than at present.

They know that, although *they* can articulate their understanding of what they see as the true version of the birth religion, in a way that matches their faith in Jesus and the Scriptures, the reality is that others will not, and will eventually see them as heretical at best, apostate more likely, and seek to persecute them into extinction.

Thus, this group has expressed their hope that their movements can become large enough to have critical mass to survive beyond their ability to remain accepted by the majority community.

Thus, this group has expressed their hope that their movements can become large enough to have critical mass to survive beyond their ability to remain accepted by the majority community.

¹ See the article related to "alongside" and its meaning in this edition of *MF*

In that element they share the hope or expectation of the first example I gave.

But, their expectation is to be persecuted out as an unacceptable version of what it means to be an adherent of whatever their birth religion may have been, which is what they would still claim to be (an adherent, though one who follows Jesus and the Bible).

In that element they share the aspirations of the “Yeast in the Dough” example.

As with the other two, this conviction has emerged as these leaders again have *continued in Scripture and in conversation with alongsider friends*.

Implications?

First, it has probably become obvious from the previous that there is a common thread for how the future is being determined in these movements. Or a thread with two strands, the first of which is: continuing in Scripture.

Elsewhere in this edition I talk about the importance of continued Scriptural input and digging, and I refer the reader there. Suffice it to say here that when I say that Scripture will help leaders make these decisions, I am not suggesting a simplistic view of pointing to the Bible and leaving people on their own or proof-texting, etc.

Second, in the second strand in the thread I just mentioned there is the question of the role of alongsider friends in determining future directions. One of the criticisms leveled at advocates of insider movements is that we are really the ones shaping them, that without our input and influence they would be very different.

My response would be: undoubtedly true. And I would add, this is true of the role and influence of outsiders in any sort of movement. The question then should be, what sort of influence is best or right?

I will answer that here by making a simple observation. The three types of future I describe above have in common that insider leaders are turning to Scripture. They also have in common that they have had input from the same alongsider: myself.

As such, the point I want to make is that alongsiders can serve and help movement leaders without necessarily putting the stamp of the alongsider’s preferences on a movement. That does happen of course. But it is also possible for the role of the alongsider to be that of helping leaders use Scripture in healthy ways to come to their own decisions and visions.

Third, I want to highlight something just stated about these decisions. It has been said but is important to repeat: they are all made by the leaders themselves. They go in different directions but the leaders are making these decisions (elsewhere in *MFI* talk about this factor as one of the three defining marks of “insider movements”).

I repeat that here in part to prepare for the fourth comment.

And that fourth comment is that the same leaders who arrived at such different conclusions are not only connected by the same alongsider, but they are in fellowship with each other. They meet, they share, they talk, they study Scripture together, they pray, they know that they differ, and they sometimes question each others’ wisdom. But they are committed to each other.

In Romans 14 and 15 Paul writes to encourage the Romans to respect the sincere differences held by brothers and sisters among them. These were not merely issues of preferences or culture.


Something We Can Learn?

And *that* last point suggests to me that perhaps we can learn some things from insider movements. Yes there are questions. Yes there are concerns. But, at least in the instances I have shared here, we can at a minimum learn and be encouraged to pursue a deeper sort of unity than mere agreement.

In Romans 14 and 15 Paul writes to encourage the Romans to respect the sincere differences held by brothers and sisters among them. These were not merely issues of preferences or culture. They were divided over what their consciences dictated to them about religious issues of food and specific days of observance. These were religious matters. And Paul’s advice on these was to pursue a more difficult and challenging type of unity than uniformity and agreement.

Paul believed they could rise to the maturity needed to be able to remain in unity while disagreeing profoundly.

His foundational principle was that the kingdom’s essence was in “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Rom. 14:17)

May we all be marked by such maturity, and may these three foundations be strong among us! 

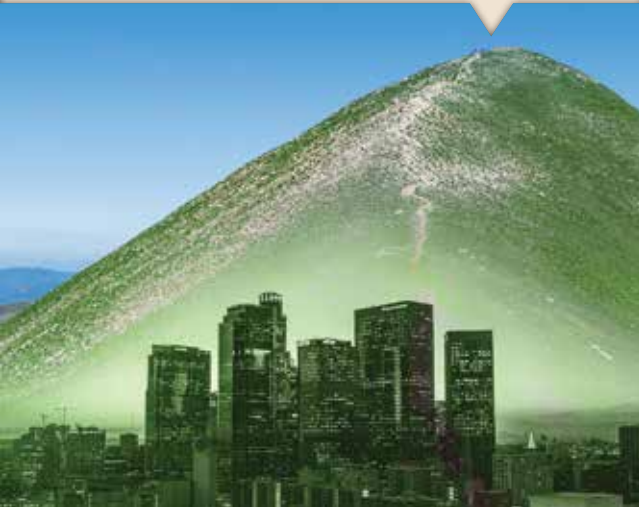
“Insider” Movements: Common Concerns

Rather than making my own list of frequently asked questions or concerns, I want to allow those to emerge from someone actually asking them.

In the spring of 2019 I reviewed the article *City Under a Hill: 5 Problems with Insider Movements* by Travis Myers (Professor, Bethlehem College & Seminary). The article is available here: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-city-under-a-hill>.

In the case of insider movements, the expectation is that disciples of Jesus make other disciples of Jesus. They share their faith and they bear witness.

They do not hide the gospel.



I will primarily use the outline of the five points he raises, however I begin from one of his major subtitles near the beginning of his paper, *When the Gospel Hides*.

By highlighting this comment and framing it as a major section of his paper he tips his hand to an assumption he is making about insider movements: they are secretive and hiding the gospel. This is of course hinted at in his title as well (city *under* a hill).

While I welcome questions about insider movements and feel the discussions are a healthy process, I find responding to this idea that insider brothers and sisters are hiding their faith is just covering old territory in the long discussions about IM. The claim that insider movements are secretive or silent or don't share their faith is a claim as old as the discussion itself (back to at least 2004). This has been frequently rebutted, and the number of followers of Jesus, insiders, who face persecution and death because of their faith is also witness to the erroneous nature of this straw man argument.

Does every “insider” believer stand boldly? Certainly not. Does every Christian living in countries hostile to their faith do so? Does every Christian in the USA? Of course not.

The real question then is what do godly leaders in such contexts teach and encourage their people to do? In the case of insider movements, the expectation is that disciples of Jesus make other disciples of Jesus. They share their faith and they bear witness.

They do not hide the gospel.

Now to Myers' five points. I use his terms, and each of the five is followed by a direct quotation from Myers' article.

Hermeneutics

“IM is predicated on the misguided idea that faith in Jesus as Lord of one's life can “complete” and be the apex of any religious tradition or religious identity.”

First, IM is not predicated on this point. Not every IM proponent even holds this position, and in fact, if fulfillment thinking is not true it would not change anything. IM practice or approaches or principles are not dependent on this theme. IM is predicated on many other biblical principles and passages. The literature is full on this point.

Second, IM proponents have not made the case that Jesus fulfills other religions, certainly not in the way that He fulfills the Old Testament.

The contention I *would* make is that Jesus does fulfill a number of dimensions of *anyone's* cultural and religious background, or hopes and aspirations, when a person comes to faith.

The contention I *would* make is that Jesus does fulfill a number of dimensions of *anyone's* cultural and religious background, or hopes and aspirations, when a person comes to faith.

At the same time, it is frequently the case that in Jesus people can and do see a number of beautiful aspects of their heritage, including their religious heritage, which now seem to find a new fullness and beauty in Jesus.

But the argument which assumes IM bases itself in fulfillment thinking is a generalization and inaccurate.

Integrity and Identity

“Core Islamic doctrine explicitly denies biblical doctrines that are central, and essential, to Christian faith.”

Myers is concerned here especially with Muslim contexts. I will try to respond more generically. It is true that official teaching of major non-Christian religious traditions run counter to, or in tension with, or deny outright biblical doctrines that are essential. No argument on this point has ever been put forward by any insider advocate or insider movement leader with whom I have worked.

There are some insider believers who follow Jesus (not all, but a number whom I know) who *do* argue that on the basis of the foundational texts of their own religious heritage, and in deeper study of the Bible, a number of core teachings in their religious traditions as typically taught are incorrect. They seek to reform those understandings, including whatever their birth religion may teach about Jesus, the Bible, salvation and more.

This is not at all the same thing as suggesting that their birth religion does not teach incorrect things. But at least some insider leaders argue, from the inside, that those teachings are wrong, and that they need to be corrected.

Discipleship

“The IM approach stunts Christian discipleship and spiritual growth.”

I am guessing, perhaps wrongly, that Myers has not met

insiders personally or directly. His conclusions certainly seem to indicate this. Perhaps an underlying question here really is, “what are IM movements doing about these issues?” Or perhaps, “how do they disciple believers?”



The movements I have known and been involved with are all rooted in ongoing inductive study of whole books of the Bible in community.

The movements I have known and been involved with are all rooted in ongoing inductive study of whole books of the Bible in community. Also, I increasingly see leaders focused on reflection on the doctrinal history and themes Christ's people have wrestled with historically, as these leaders in turn wrestle with issues in their contexts.

This does not mean that every answer Christ's people have arrived at in other epochs and contexts is simply swallowed whole into such movements. I would argue we don't do so in the west either, and would add that I don't think we should do so.

Ecclesiology

“One's identification with Christ should entail identification with all of Christ's people in the world today and throughout time. That is more fundamental, ultimate, and significant than ethnic, cultural, linguistic, family, or local identity.”

I can sympathize with the intentions and heart of this concern. However, several things need to be said.

First, what is meant by identification with “all Christ’s people in the world today and throughout time? How is this even possible? How many Christians identify in this way? We have Christian denominations who do not see others as Christian, will not have communion together, do not recognize one another’s ordinations and more. We don’t even share (fully) common creeds, confessions or canon of Scripture as Christians. So, to ask insider believers to hold to a standard that the Christian church has not attained seems hypocritical. I am not suggesting Myers is hypocritical as a person, but that this standard is.

Second, even when we do pursue unity and identification as Christians with others, this happens very much on a small, personal and local scale: through relationships. And this *also* happens between insider believers and those who we would call Christians. I have seen it and facilitated it. There is no sense among the leaders of IMs which I know that Christians are not also brothers and sisters in Christ. They welcome thinking of all believers in Jesus as members of the Body.

Soils and Strategy

“Though admittedly difficult in many contexts, religious identity and ethno-cultural identity can and should indeed be differentiated. The former must be given up for Jesus and the church. We should reject the conflation of social and religious identity.”

I want to point out where I agree and disagree with Myers here.

First, where I disagree. I understand Myers’ point here but it is, from many points of view, simplistic and impossible to separate religion and culture. We think we can, in the west. And maybe in a western context this may be partly the case, with our assumptions about secular and religious life, physical and spiritual dichotomies and assumptions that religions are easily distinguished and identified.

But in most contexts, this simply is not as easy as Myers suggests. In many religious contexts something as normal to daily life as brushing one’s teeth and using the toilet are guided by religious teaching. In such cases, what would be culture or religion? Should one brush one’s teeth differently just to show one is not keeping one’s religion? If one continues to brush teeth as they have since childhood, is that keeping their religion or their culture? These are purposely “easy” sorts of examples, in order to show that the issue actually *isn’t* easy.

In the simple examples above most readers will likely be thinking, “well brushing teeth doesn’t matter so even if it is guided by religion, no problem.” This already suggests we are comfortable making distinctions about what is ok and not ok to keep, even from one’s religious heritage.

Where do I agree with Myers?

The fact is that obedient discipleship will require changes. It will require replies of yes and no to all sorts of things, cultural, religious, emotional, personal, relational, attitudinal, philosophical, etc.


Thus, for me, the point is not whether one can keep culture but must jettison religion, or even whether that is a distinction we can make. The point is how do needed changes happen, how are they identified, who makes such decisions, how do they decide and for what reasons and motivations?

This is why we have taken great care in the movements I have been involved with to cultivate processes for handling such questions (for example, the questions of should we continue to do this or stop doing that). We have never given a blanket “yes, just keep doing everything.” Neither have we given a blanket “no,” on the other hand.

What we have done is asked, “What does Scripture say on this issue? How do we obey? What does being faithful mean? How do we decide which aspect of our heritage is ‘okay’ and ‘not okay?’”

What we have done is asked, “What does Scripture say on this issue? How do we obey? What does being faithful mean?”

Conclusion

I have no expectation of being able to persuade every critic of the viability of the biblical faithfulness of IM as movements. And my aim here is not in fact to persuade. But I do hope to explain and, where possible, correct misperceptions and assumptions which result in misrepresentations. I do not for a moment suggest Myers intends to misrepresent anything about IM—but at the end of the day that is the result of the five points. 

24:14 Goal



Movement engagements in every unreached people and place by 2025 (58 months)

The Next Evolution Of Movement Catalyst Phased Equipping

BY **CHRIS MCBRIDE**

website: www.experiencelifenow.com

Chris McBride has been a trainer, church-planter and coach for the Antioch Movement of Churches for 23 years, of which 14 years were spent facilitating Disciple Making Movements in the Muslim Middle East. He currently resides in Texas and serves as a member of the 24:14 Facilitation Team. chris@2414now.net

Raising Up New Movement Catalysts for the Harvest

Kingdom Movement models have turned the world of missions among the unreached upside down. Segment by segment, people by people, place by place, movement engagement is realigning expectations back to book-of-Acts proportions. New missionary candidates now wrestle with higher longings for fruitfulness. They are looking for those who can train and mentor them into living out those expectations. The catalyst's profile is no longer Western, seminary trained and laboring with low expectations. With over 1,300 global book-of-Acts movements starting over the past 25 years and adding nearly 70 million people to God's family globally, grand expectations for the future don't seem so far-fetched.

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The Concept

Two articles defined a conversation around missionary training: "Training Movement Catalysts," by Stan Parks (*Mission Frontiers*, March-April 2016) and "Four Stages to No Place Left In Our Generation," by Steve Smith (*Mission Frontiers*, Sept-Oct 2016). Steve and Stan awakened us to a training model based on mentoring

rather than classroom training. This phased training approach envisioned a mobilized army of catalyst candidates, readying themselves for the harvest field by training under experienced movement catalysts. Those experienced catalysts would model the methods, assist in practice, watch and give feedback and launch candidates to the next frontier of lostness.

For the past two years, members of the 24:14 community have been tracking with those who have been experimenting with these models. We initially entitled the concept "CPM Training Hubs." While the concept of phased learning has been gaining momentum, many in our community have eschewed the word "hub" because of its overuse, emphasis on location rather than process and confusion with operational endeavors.

As we started examining God's work globally, we recognized that His work could be better captured in *principle* than in *structure*. As a result, we have started describing this process as "phased equipping" for CPM catalysts. We refer to the training environments using these principles as **Phased Equipping Communities** (PEC). This name seems best to use going forward. We summarize the essential principles as follows.

New movement catalysts need preparation to go to the gaps in unreached peoples and places.

Catalysts are best prepared by a process of training, modeling, personal experience, and coaching with CPM tools rather than simple training in classroom settings with little practice. Practical experience with input and

feedback from a coach offers the fastest way to reach effectiveness.

Learning CPM in one's home environment before moving cross-culturally greatly speeds learning and prepares candidates for greater effectiveness. The most effective catalysts have already served as leaders in a mature movement.

A Vision for PEC Training

Step 1—Promote phased learning regionally in partnership with existing movements, churches and organizations.

Step 2—Describe and document existing phased learning environments to form a network.

Step 3—Resource materials and coaching for those wanting to start phased learning environments.

We see a number of different structures emerge that are true to these principles. They usually follow the phases we have described previously and expand on here:

Phase 1—New movement catalysts are trained in multiplicative movement approaches in their home cultural context. This disciple-making training enables the catalyst to learn evangelism, discipleship, church formation and multiplication through hands-on experience.

The unwavering goal is engaging the remaining unreached peoples and places with a movement effort.

Phase 2—In this second phase of training, movement catalysts relocate to a field location in which they adapt to a cross cultural environment and contextualize use of CPM tools in an unreached area. These Phase 2 assignments can take place in a variety of contexts—from catalysts laboring to start a movement to mature movement environments. In any case, the Phase 2 experience is facilitated by leaders with real movement experience.

Successful Phase 2 environments both help candidates discern gifting and fit, and help them catch a vision for unreached peoples and place gaps. The unwavering goal is engaging the remaining unreached peoples and places with a movement effort. At the same time, this Phase 2 process also helps each participant find his or her best place of effectiveness toward that goal.

Catalysts have different training needs, depending on where they originate and where they plan to serve. The needs may include support raising, pastoral care, resiliency, language and culture training, and other topics. Those sponsoring Phased Equipping Communities set up programs to meet these training needs and include these modules in either Phase 1 or Phase 2 learning environments, depending on the organization and the needs of the candidates.

Phase 3—Phase 3 involves new catalysts engaging a new UPG environment. Moving from a Phase 2 environment to a new UPG is often challenging because of the comfort, support, training and development the Phase 2 offers. The emphasis in Phase 3 moves from the community based learning environment of Phase 2 to a remote coaching environment.

Phase 4—This phase involves a maturing movement raising up and sending their own catalytic workers to other UPGs. We see the importance of this phase in the fact that **around 80% of global movements are being started by existing movements**. Thus assisting these movements in new worker catalyzation is incredibly strategic in reaching the remaining unreached peoples and places.

We see the importance of this phase in the fact that around 80% of global movements are being started by existing movements.

A Descriptive Matrix

Because of the diversity of these Phased Equipping Communities, describing them generically can be a challenge. The focus of the training process differs with different environmental factors and factors unique to various candidates' needs for culture and language training. Some communities combine multiple sending organizations and their care networks, while others only work within one organizational context.

Given the number of models being used and the varying situations, how can we describe and evaluate these Phased Equipping Communities? The 24:14 Coalition currently uses a matrix (see below) for leaders to self-describe their Phased Equipping Communities. Others in mobilization networks can then use the matrix score to help identify good places for their candidates to receive training.

The matrix variables include language acquisition, cultural adaptation, CPM methodology training, shepherding (pastoral care), spiritual formation, and next phase transition. We have designed the matrix to give an overall picture of a location's focal points, irrespective of the community's environmental requirements.

Leaders of Phased Equipping Communities can also use the matrix to self-evaluate their programs and seek to improve their process. As we have brought together PEC facilitators, we have often noted "best practices" emerging and leaders learning from one another. At the same time, we found that the principles were not always universally applicable because of the situation in different environments.

Phased Equipping Communities: What We Hope to See

A variety of different models embody these training principles; we plan to examine these in another article. This article mainly aims to explore what training movement catalysts can and should do to promote a phased equipping approach. We offer an invitation to look not at "what we can do," but "what needs to be done" to finish the 24:14 vision of reaching every unreached people and every global place. We see three steps needed: *a way to promote the growth of phased equipping, a mobilization network, and equipping for those who want to launch these learning environments.*


We see three steps needed: a way to promote the growth of phased equipping, a mobilization network, and equipping for those who want to launch these learning environments.

A strategy for equipping and sending new laborers region by region could use a variety of phased equipping models. It could help mobilization networks equip and prepare outsiders to be effective. It could also work with existing churches and networks to train them in movement methods to engage new areas. And it could assist existing movements in sending their catalysts cross culturally. We want to promote a variety of phased equipping models championed by our community through global meetings, our website, training materials, blog posts and podcasts.

A second goal is to catalog the existence of Phased Equipping Communities globally and provide a way to describe and evaluate them through the matrix. Mobilizers could connect with the 24:14 Coalition to see where PECs exist. They could use general information about the various PEC locations to develop relationships with existing communities that could aid in training their catalysts. Movement leaders can connect with PECs to help them train and launch their own movement catalysts to cross-cultural fields. We anticipate this will assist new movement catalysts in engaging new harvest fields.

24:14 has gathered a number of resources for use by teams and churches who want to start a PEC. With simple curricula using different methodologies, these resources offer multiple options for use in different environments. Teams and churches wanting to use these resources can ask to be connected with another PEC farther along in their journey, creating a web of assistance for those wanting to learn from others.

Final Thoughts

We don't aim to promote a single model of CPM equipping. Rather promotion of the *principles* could allow for many effective movement catalysts to go to unreached peoples and places globally. With the 24:14 vision calling for saturation of global districts and UPGs with movement engagements, we need many new laborers for the harvest in the years ahead. Only God can start movements, yet our role includes helping catalysts find ways to quickly become effective practitioners. Phased Equipping Communities offer a pathway to this learning and an important role in the Body of Christ's completion of the Great Commission. 

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Phase One Descriptive Matrix

Visit https://2414.formstack.com/forms/pe_matrix to let 24:14 know about your equipping community.

	Spiritual Formation Focus	Adaptation	CPM Methodology Training	Leadership Experience	Shepherding / Pastoral Care	Phase 2 Sending
3	A strong relationship exists between PEC leadership and participants to help them grow and develop in spiritual practices of humility, abiding, prayer, and fasting.	Provides direct training and development of candidates to help them effectively reach out to those different than them. May be focused on ethnic, socio-economic, or other differences.	Actively trains a CPM methodology with adequate time for practice of each skill and feedback from an active CPM catalyst. Before finishing, participants should have started a group that is actively trying to start another group.	PEC Leadership has experience in leading a CPM and can provide personal mentoring on most aspects of a CPM to trainees.	The PEC has a strong pastoral care plan in place for all trainees and takes care of most of the needs of the participants. Policies may be well documented. May have a strong pastoral person dedicated to participants.	The PEC is highly focused on launching participants in teams to Phase 2 environments. A large percentage of participants will move to serve cross-culturally.
2	Strong teaching on spiritual practices of humility, abiding, prayer, and fasting is a part of the program. Participants can expect some personal investment and feedback in these practices.	An informal system exists to train and develop candidates to help them effectively reach out to those different than them. May be focused on ethnic, socio-economic, or other differences.	Actively trains a CPM methodology with adequate time for practice of each skill and feedback from an active CPM catalyst. Requires participants to sow the gospel message and work to make disciples before finishing the program.	At minimum, PEC leadership has experience in CPM methods and has started multiplying churches, and can help trainees take the initial steps of learning movement DNA in the PEC.	PEC has a strong pastoral plan in place to take care of needs of the participants as they arise. There may be in-city access to pastoral care in addition to what participants' sending agency / movement provide.	While the PEC is focused on sending participants in teams to Phase 2 environments, only a small percentage of participants move to serve cross-culturally. Others continue disciple making in their home context.
1	Program has only a light focus on spiritual practices of humility, abiding, prayer, and fasting. Or little personal investment can be expected from PEC leadership on these practices.	No specific program design for direct training and development of candidates to help them effectively reach out to those different than them. Such training is a by-product of the program and leaders are available for questions.	Trains a CPM methodology with some practice and implementation, but without much involvement or feedback from experienced practitioners. Participants may be active sharing their faith or trying to make disciples, but with little feedback or accountability.	Expert trainers and coaches speak into and help this PEC, but no one on staff has experience multiplying disciples and churches generationally.	PEC has an active partnership with a sending agency or movement to take care of some needs of participants. A signed agreement (MOU) may be in place to help with this.	The PEC desires to send participants to unreached areas, but as yet has not found much success in doing so.
0	The PEC does not yet focus on spiritual practices of humility, abiding, prayer, and fasting. No personal investment can be expected from leadership on these practices.	Adaptation is not needed or the program does not provide for this learning opportunity.	Either does not teach any CPM methodology, does not provide practice or does not provide mentoring.	PEC leadership has little to no movement experience and the PEC does not have access to experienced trainers or coaches to help.	PEC relies on a sending agency or movement to handle most pastoral issues but will help with crises that arise.	The PEC does not yet focus on sending people to unreached areas or has not yet been fruitful in doing so.

Phase Two Descriptive Matrix

Visit https://2414.formstack.com/forms/pe_matrix to let 24:14 know about your equipping community.

	Language Acquisition	Cultural / Worldview Adaptation	CPM Methodology Training	Leadership Experience	Shepherding / Pastoral Care	Phase 3 Sending	Spiritual Formation Focus
3	Has a strong language acquisition process in place (external program, GPA, etc.) to train the language and prepare movement catalysts to become fluent in the target language.	Actively trains for extensive cultural adaptation for the worker including but not exclusively ministry adaptations.	Actively trains a CPM methodology with adequate time for practice of each skill with feedback from an experienced CPM catalyst. Before finishing, participants should have started a group that is actively trying to start another group.	PEC Leadership has experience in leading a CPM and can provide personal mentoring on most aspects of a CPM to trainees.	The PEC has a strong pastoral care plan in place for all trainees and takes care of most of the needs of the participants. Policies may be well documented. May have a strong pastoral person dedicated to participants.	The PEC is highly focused on sending participants in teams to unreached areas. A large percentage of participants go to UPGs and have shown strong historic fruit in multiplying movements.	A strong relationship exists between PEC leadership and participants to help them grow and develop in spiritual practices of humility, abiding, prayer, and fasting.
2	Has a plan in place to guide participants in developing their own program and implementing it with coaching, either in the Phase 2 context or in the future target UPG environment. The goal is to help the church planter become fluent in the language through accountability and coaching.	An informal system exists to help train workers in cultural adaptation issues. May focus exclusively on ministry adaptations.	Actively trains a CPM methodology with time for practice of each skill and mentoring feedback from an experienced CPM catalyst. Requires participants to sow the gospel message and make disciples before finishing the program.	At minimum, PEC leadership has experience in CPM methods and has started multiplying churches, and can help trainees take the initial steps of learning movement in the hub environment.	PEC has a strong pastoral plan in place to take care of needs of the participants as they arise. There may be in-city access to pastoral care in addition to what participants' sending agency or movement provides.	While this PEC is focused on launching participants in teams to unreached areas, only a small percentage of participants go to UPGs and show fruit in multiplying movements.	Strong teaching on spiritual practices of humility, abiding, prayer, and fasting is a part of the program. Participants can expect some personal investment and feedback in these practices.
1	Coaching is available to help participants develop a plan for language acquisition. The responsibility for determining goals and evaluation is on the church planter.	No specific program design for training cultural adaptation. It is a by-product of the learning process and leaders are available for questions.	Trains a CPM methodology with some practice and implementation, but without much practice or feedback. Participants may be active in sharing their faith or trying to make disciples, but with little feedback or accountability.	Expert trainers and coaches speak into and help this PEC, but no one on staff has experience multiplying disciples and churches generationally.	PEC has an active partnership with sending agency / movement to take care of some needs of participants. A signed agreement (MOU) may be in place to help with this.	The PEC desires to launch participants in teams to unreached areas, but as yet has not found much success in doing so. Participants may be getting stuck in the Phase 2 environment.	Program has only a light focus on spiritual practices of humility, abiding, prayer, and fasting. Or little personal investment can be expected from PEC leadership on these practices.
0	Language acquisition is not necessary or program does not address language in any strong way.	Cultural adaptation is not needed or program does not address it directly.	Either does not teach a CPM methodology, does not provide much practice, or does not provide feedback from experienced catalysts.	PEC leadership has little or no movement experience and the PEC does not have access to experienced trainers or coaches to help.	PEC relies on a sending agency or movement to handle most pastoral issues but will help with crises that arise.	The PEC does not yet send people to unreached areas or has not yet been fruitful doing so.	The program does not yet focus on spiritual practices of humility, abiding, prayer, and fasting. No personal investment can be expected from leadership.

Becoming the Kind of Person God Can Use to Launch Movements—Part 2

BY **C. ANDERSON**

website: Dmmsfrontiermissions.com

C. Anderson is an experienced field practitioner and leader. The past 27 years, she served in Asia with YWAM Frontier Missions. Anderson trains and coaches both international and indigenous church planters toward the launching of Disciple Making Movements. She blogs weekly about DMM related issues at Dmmsfrontiermissions.com. Other articles on member care, language learning, visa stress, etc. are available at missionarylife.org. Her 30-day devotional for church planters, *Faith to Move Mountains*, can be purchased on amazon.com.

The Apostle Paul exhorted the Galatian church to walk in freedom. The young church had been infiltrated by Judaizers who wanted everyone to be circumcised. In Galatians 5:4, Paul writes, “You who are trying to be justified by the law have been *alienated from Christ*; you have fallen away from grace.”

As humans, we like to be doers. Church-planters and Disciple Making Movement practitioners want to do things right. We are always learning, searching, reading and talking to people about what is the most effective strategy or fruitful practice we can use to bring the maximum number of people into the kingdom as quickly as possible.

There is nothing wrong with this. In many ways, it is good. The millions of unreached peoples will never become faithful Jesus followers without hard work, realignment to New Testament methods and the embracing strategies for multiplication. We must do, and do a lot.

In the midst of this, it's easy though to lose sight of other things just as vital, like the importance of being the kind of people who reflect Christ to a hurting world. We sometimes focus so much on doing that we fall away from grace and are “alienated from Christ.” No longer do we resemble Him—His goodness, His kindness, His compassion, or fervor for His Father's will. It is possible to do everything right as far as a strategy but fall short in our personal transformation. God rarely entrusts His greater fruit to those who ignore the importance of being as well as doing. It is our Christlikeness that attracts unbelievers to consider our message. Our character, as we imitate Christ, is the foundation a movement is built on.

In Part 1, (see *Mission Frontiers* Jan–Feb 2021) I wrote about six characteristics of the kind of person God can use greatly. If you missed this first part, please take the time to read it.

As you read these, take time to ponder. Discuss the questions with your team or spouse. Journal about them. Allow the Holy Spirit to stir within you a fresh longing to grow in these areas.

The first six characteristics:

- 1) They have an ever-growing relationship with God and an extraordinary prayer life.
- 2) They are bold and faithful in witness.
- 3) They are willing to face persecution from enemies.
- 4) They are willing to be misunderstood by friends.
- 5) They innovate, evaluate and change.
- 6) They are willing to stop doing unfruitful activities and focus on a few high impact things.

This list is not exhaustive. Here in Part 2, we will consider six additional characteristics of those God entrusts with His great work of releasing movements. As you read these, take time to ponder. Discuss the questions with your team or spouse. Journal about them. Allow the Holy Spirit to stir within you a fresh longing to grow in these areas.

7 They are filled with God's Spirit and Word.

Because these leaders have extraordinary prayer lives (see #1, Part 1), they drink deeply of God each day and throughout the day. Abiding in Him has become a way of life. Regular meditation on Scripture is a habit that brings a fullness of the Word deep within. This naturally overflows from their hearts as well as their lips as they disciple, train and share the good news.

In tune with the Spirit of God and full of His presence, they follow God's leading in both big and small decisions. Heightened sensitivity to what He is doing is apparent. They have their "spiritual antennas" up and are sensing, listening and aware of God's work around them. Responding to His nudges, they obey and flow with God. The power of God's Spirit works through them. Signs, wonders, and miracles are the natural result of a life lived in deep dependence upon the Holy Spirit.



8 They persevere through times of suffering, loss and spiritual deserts.

Perseverance in hardship is a common characteristic of movement leaders. This can be observed in the life of Jesus, Paul and the apostles, as well as the early church fathers. An imbalanced theology says if we love and follow God our lives will be easy. This false teaching has crept into the church in many parts of the world.

Jesus was tempted in the wilderness for 40 days. His close friend and cousin, John the Baptist, was murdered unjustly. The Lord suffered and died.

In the midst of this, it's easy though to lose sight of other things just as vital, like the importance of being the kind of people who reflect Christ to a hurting world.

Paul was beaten, stoned and imprisoned. Peter was crucified upside-down. Hardship is part of the pathway toward the release of greater kingdom fruit.

The movement leaders God uses greatly will experience suffering. Spouses or children may fall sick or even die. Grief is not a stranger to these leaders. Many experience seasons of spiritual dryness, or what might be called a *Dark Night of the Soul*. In all these challenges, they refuse to quit on God or His calling for their lives. The vision the Father has placed within them compels them to continue. They share the gospel with one more person, even when no one seems to listen. They choose to once again trust and develop leaders under them, even when betrayed by those they mentored in the past. These leaders continue, despite deep personal pain.

In Matthew 14, John the Baptist was beheaded. Verse 13 says that when Jesus heard this He withdrew, but the crowds followed him. He had compassion on them and healed their sick, then fed the five thousand. Despite a great personal loss, He continued in the ministry God had given Him, loving and serving the multitudes.

9 They have a strong faith in the God of the impossible

Movement leaders must have unshakable confidence in God's power to do what they cannot. They have a lowly opinion of themselves, but an incredibly strong belief that God can and will come through to fulfill His promise.

These leaders have tested and seen Him be the one who works miracles.

Like David, they started by taking on smaller challenges and bears. This gives them faith to believe God can slay giants. They are willing to ask God for great things because they experientially know their God to be a God of great power and might.

Their trust is in God and His Word, not in what they see or in past experiences. As a result, they regularly take risks of faith to boldly ask God for the miraculous.

10 They are continually releasing power and responsibility to others.

These leaders are not hungry to be on stage in front of adoring crowds. Instead, they embrace the joy of developing others. As a result, God places key Timothy's in their lives to encourage and train.

They believe in "rough diamonds" and are willing to work with people, shaping their ministry philosophy, modeling, praying and investing in them until they become the kind of people God uses greatly. Their relationships with those they coach or mentor go deep, far beyond a weekly meeting. Sharing life, they stand by them, fight for them. They are more than happy to stand in the background while those they've trained take the front.

This willingness to stay in the shadow and develop others is key to seeing a movement grow. These leaders don't care about becoming a big name or personality. Instead, they want only to see every disciple grow and develop in their gifts and strengths to be all God intends them to be as disciple-makers and leaders in their realm of influence. This means sacrificing personal fame and gain to invest in others and see them succeed.

11 They are kingdom, not organizationally minded.

Similarly, they are not consumed with building their denomination, organization or team into a successful entity. They generously share what God has taught them with others. Even with those outside their network. This mindset causes them to collaborate and partner with other DMM practitioners often.

Wanting to see your denomination or organization become known and be respected is a powerful human tendency. We all want to be attached to something that experiences success.

The kind of movement leaders and catalysts God uses have died to this fleshly desire and continue to die daily. They champion and value the fruitfulness of others, above their group. Philippians 2:3 says "consider others as more important than ourselves." These leaders practice this in their lives and ministry plans. Because of this kingdom mindset, God adds to them freely.

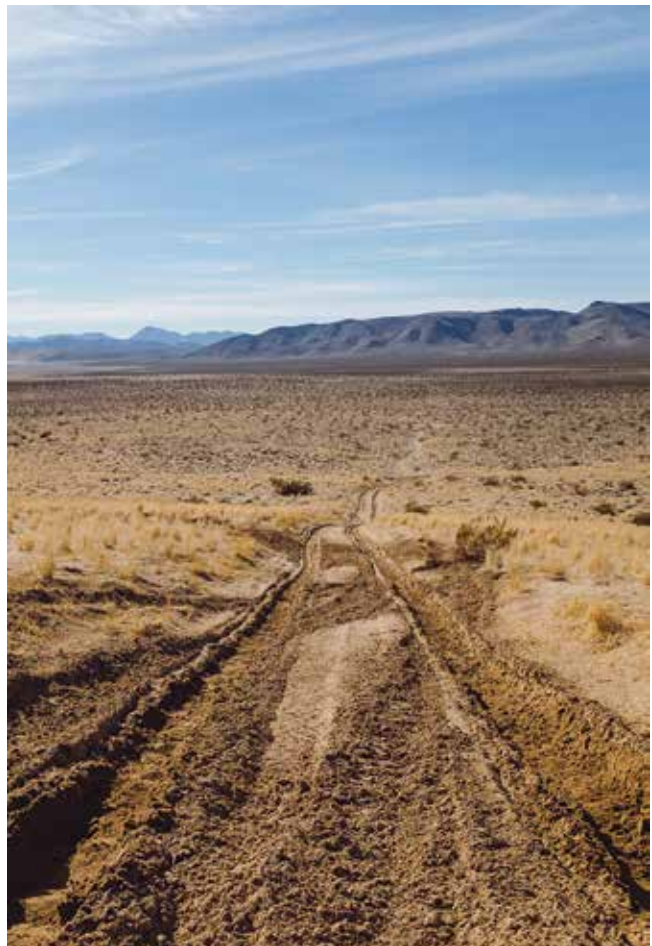
12 They walk in an ever-growing humility.

Like Paul, movement leaders God uses must be aware of their weaknesses. They count their accomplishments as immaterial. (2 Cor. 11:30) Glory goes to God when things go right, yet they take responsibility for their own mistakes.

Humility is the final characteristic in my list because it is one of the most important. It is also one that takes time to develop. Humility doesn't grow in us quickly. It's rarely found in the young who have not yet walked through great pain, failure or hardship.

Pride and insecurity are common to all. Two sides of the same coin and if you are a living, breathing human, you will battle these. When we fail, we wonder if we are worthy to be used by God. We swing toward insecurity. In times of success, we tend to think we are better than others, and pride rears its ugly head.

Humility is shaped within through the times when we are hurled to our knees by life. We desperately cry out to God for help and wisdom. At the end of ourselves, we know that unless God intervenes we are in deep trouble. His life is being formed within us.




Giants, Mountains, and Immovable Obstacles

Our faith in God's mighty power and our love for the lost leads us to ask Him for great fruit. As we pursue our God-sized dreams for many more movements we will encounter giants, mountains and seemingly immovable obstacles. These challenges grow us in humility, and many of the other characteristics I've mentioned in this two-part series.

Don't despise the giants. Don't despair when climbing a great mountain, far bigger than yourself. The immovable obstacles are training you. They are shaping your character into the kind of person God can use to bring about His incredible kingdom purposes.

Success Will Tempt You, But God Will Help You

Great fruitfulness will tempt you to take glory for yourself. You suddenly face the opportunity to build your name or kingdom. You can raise money, make a name for yourself, have material blessings or build a grand building. Beware. The choices you make at the height of fruitfulness will determine whether the movement grows far beyond you, or stops in its tracks.

God has plans for your future and mine far beyond what we can imagine. His work on earth is not yet complete. Millions wait to hear. Will we become the kind of people He can use greatly? 

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The Motus Dei Network: Fostering Communal Intelligence on Movements

BY **WARRICK FARAH**

Warrick Farah serves with One Collective as a missiologist and theological educator in the Middle East. He is editor of the forthcoming book titled *Motus Dei: The Movement of God and the Discipleship of Nations* (2021).

Longtime readers of *Mission Frontiers* are most likely familiar with movements. Movements are indeed an exciting work of God and no mere passing fad in missions. They have occurred in the past and will continue in the future. However, familiarity can sometimes be unhelpful if we have faulty assumptions or if we take too much for granted. One solution to this potential problem is to frame our quest for knowledge about movements through thoughtful and deliberate questioning.

Movements are indeed an exciting work of God and no mere passing fad in missions. They have occurred in the past and will continue in the future.

The Strategic Advantages of Research

Asking rigorous questions about movements is not to doubt their existence or to criticize the work of God. Neither should it be seen as criticism of movement catalysts, nor a threat to organizations that promote movements. Good research questions are designed to test our presuppositions and force us to wrestle with the nature and limits of our existing knowledge. While fundamental to research in general, this helps us discover what is going on *behind* what is going on.

In studying movements as researchers, we might ask, “What is fostering the irruption of movements in the world today?” How can the stewardship of this knowledge edify the Church and bless God’s work in redeeming all nations back to Himself? However, we do not seek the right answers as much as we seek *the right questions* and commit to follow the evidence where it leads.

This research quest holds many pitfalls we need to avoid. On one hand, we might become overly pragmatic, believing that movements can simply be managed more efficiently with the right knowledge. On the other hand, we might propagate sterile research for the sake of more research that has little to do with the actual lives of people and leaders catalyzing movements.

The solution is not so much balance as it is integration. Movements research can and should be both practically tangible and also theoretically robust. Through prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit and with the Bible open, asking the right research questions about movements can facilitate this integration. But further to the point, we propose that this approach reframes missiological discourse around a new concept: the *motus Dei*.

The Genesis of *Motus Dei*

Motus Dei is Latin and means “movement of God.” As a theological term, it intentionally mimics the concept of *missio Dei* which means the *sending/mission of God*. While not without conceptual problems,¹ the *missio Dei* conversation has contributed much to our understanding of mission through the past several decades. God in His nature is *missio*, sent into the world. Created in His image, we are also sent into the world to join God in *His mission*.

However, we do not seek the right answers as much as we seek *the right questions* and commit to follow the evidence where it leads.

¹ Michael W. Stroope, *Transcending Mission: The Eclipse of a Modern Tradition* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017). An abbreviated version is *Transcending the Modern Mission Tradition* (Oxford, UK: Regnum, 2020).

Motus Dei invokes a similar albeit different concept. If the nature of our faith is participating in the *movement of God* to redeem the nations back to Himself, this suggests we need to further investigate the essence of movements and theologies that promote them. We need also to examine those traditions and theologies the church has developed that might impede *motus Dei* in a specific context.

We have reframed this conversation on movements around *motus Dei* because we desire, first and foremost, to be rooted and grounded in the life-giving character of God. We aim not simply for acceleration of fruitful ministry and multiplication of disciples, but ultimately for Jesus to receive worship from all peoples. God's movement to achieve global worship through holistic salvation of the nations is not just something He *does*; it is part of His very being.

Like the "church growth movement" or the "missional church" conversation from previous generations, *motus Dei* has two slightly different nuances. As previously explained, it is primarily the situating of a new missiological concept, *motus Dei*, in the field of mission studies.² But secondly, it is the creation of a research network and the title of an upcoming book published by William Carey, *Motus Dei: The Movement of God and the Discipleship of Nations*. In time, we hope these two nuances will integrate into a deeper, richer understanding of *motus Dei*. Ultimately, we hope this will be as edifying to the Church as the concept of *missio Dei* has been.

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Reimagining Research on Movements

I have personally been interested in movements for around 20 years, ever since I read David Garrison's booklet *Church Planting Movements*.³ While causing me to question many of my own assumptions about ministry, the booklet also gave my spirit a joyful hope and gratefulness for the work of God. It even impacted how I read the New Testament.

² For an initial discussion of *motus Dei*, see Warrick Farah, "Motus Dei: Disciple-Making Movements and the Mission of God," *Global Missiology* 2, no. 17 (2020): 1–10.

³ David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements (Booklet)* (Richmond, VA: International Mission Board, 2000).

Yet as I continued to learn more about movements, I also discovered the ways movement ideas are perceived and described sometimes cause confusion. Additionally, some may even have a negative reaction before understanding the concept.

In light of this, I began to imagine a missiological research project on the topic of movements. What causes their emergence? How can their description be more nuanced? As I considered these questions, I quickly realized that researching movements is neither straightforward nor appropriate for one person alone.

As movements are a large phenomenon in our world today, researching movements is necessarily a vast exercise. To do it justice requires integrating multiple perspectives and multiple fields of study. This will require asking a variety of questions from a variety of angles. With this robust research approach, we can avoid either sensationalizing the emergence of movements or dismissing movements as the latest fad.

Communal Intelligence and the Body of Christ

It seems natural for people to constantly search for the genius in the room or hope to read books or articles by a single genius who will answer all our questions. But this is a myth, especially in the Body of Christ. We all need each other.

We consider it more helpful to frame our conversation through the concept of "scenius." As a play on words, this term conveys that *the scene itself is the genius*. In other words, instead of looking for the genius in the room, we may say the room *is* the genius.⁴

The *Motus Dei* Network is an application of scenius. In order to better understand movements and what God is doing today, we seek to embrace our unity in Christ and learn from one another. Extreme creativity, innovation, and knowledge come best from communal intelligence, not simply lone geniuses or great persons. *Motus Dei* is our attempt to gather this "ecology of talent" in a way that fosters communal intelligence on movements.

In this conversation, we have catalysts, researchers, leaders, practitioners, theologians and academics. Currently over 100 people are involved: men and women

⁴ "Scenius" originated with Brian Eno and I first heard it from Alan Hirsch at his *Movement Leaders Collective*. See <https://movementleaderscollective.com/why-scenius/>


from the Global North and the Global South. This informal network does not intend to train practitioners or mobilize prayer, although as solid mission research we expect it will be a seedbed for both. We are framing Motus Dei as a multi-year conversation on the topic of movements that is informed by missiological research and authentic relationships.

Relationships are important because we do not all agree on what “movements” are, how they should be described or how they should be catalyzed. But more importantly, we refuse to buy into the worldly pattern of controlling the narrative in order to marginalize voices of those who we disagree with. As we challenge the human tendency to form “silos” of information, we anticipate disagreements and even contradictions in our network. Yet we believe our discourse will be richer and deeper for it.

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Our first major output from Motus Dei is the book arising from our virtual *Movements Research Symposium* in October 2020. At this symposium, 20 chapters of the book were presented in abbreviated form and discussed. We see the symposium and book as only first steps. In the coming years, we intend to have different tracks of smaller working groups gathering to share research and wisdom around different aspects of movements: particularly biblical theology, the social sciences and missional praxis. Missiology includes integration of all three of these streams, so these working groups will be in conversation together.

Join the “Movement” Movement

Motus Dei is a learning community. If you have significant experience in movements and would like to join the Motus Dei conversation, or if you have movements research you would like to share, please connect with us at <http://motusdei.network>. Until then, enjoy this journey of *motus Dei*. As you read and reflect on our upcoming book, we pray you will be compelled in wonder and joy to join God’s redemptive movement among all peoples today. 



motusDEI

Network for the Missiological Study of
Global Movements to Christ

*A Collaboration Between Mission Agencies, Movement Practitioners, and Academic
Research Centers*

The Kingdom Is Continually Breaking Free of Christendom

BY REBECCA LEWIS

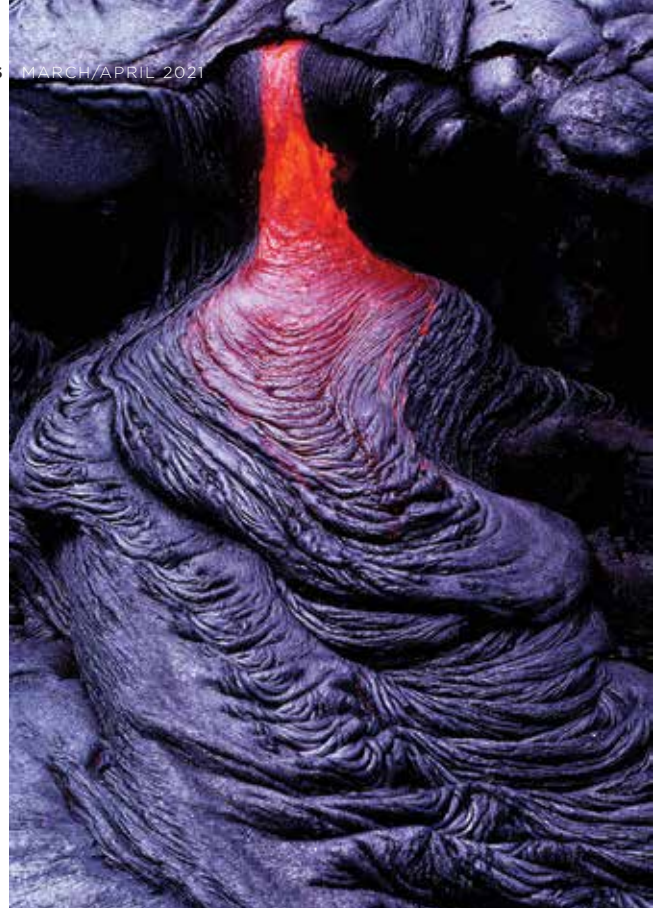
Rebecca Lewis has spent 40 years with her husband and family working to see the gift of God's blessing for families reach the most overlooked peoples on earth.

In Hawaii we visited a volcano famous for its red-hot streams of flowing lava. As soon as the hot lava hits the air, it cools rapidly, forming black crusts so hard it can be walked on while molten rock flows inside. But the heat and pressure builds relentlessly until the powerful sizzling red lava breaks unexpectedly out of its casing here or there, forcing its way to the ocean.

When I saw it, I was reminded of the history of God's kingdom on earth. When Jesus announced the coming of God's kingdom, He revealed the coming of a powerful movement of God that has worked its way relentlessly around the world ever since.

First it burst the bounds of Judaism, shocking the disciples who expected the Messiah's kingdom to overthrow the Romans and re-establish the rule of their people. Instead, it burst out of the hardened strictures of Mosaic Law, bringing its transforming power into the Greco-Roman world—toppling no governments, except those ruling people's hearts.

Paul called this amazing move of God into the Gentile world "the mystery of the gospel," hidden in prophetic writings but revealed in his day. Peter exclaimed, "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right!" (Acts 10:34)



When Jesus announced the coming of God's kingdom, He revealed the coming of a powerful movement of God that has worked its way relentlessly around the world ever since.

In the first century, the kingdom of God broke out in unexpected places, from Rome to Ethiopia to Persia to India. As each expression of the kingdom of God took form and hardened into casings created by mankind, the movement would slowly grind to a halt.

But, as Jesus predicted, the power of God is not so easily tamed and contained. While the Roman believers co-opted their empire's government structure and cultural strengths to organize and try to manage this phenomenon, God was establishing His kingdom in Celtic Ireland, far from their control—through a former slave boy! Meanwhile, the blacklisted Nestorian believers carried the message of the coming of God's kingdom as far as China.

Far from being a history of God establishing His kingdom through man-made ecclesiastical structures, we find the living power of Jesus has not ever been effectively contained by the best efforts

But, as Jesus predicted, the power of God is not so easily tamed and contained.


of His followers. The invention of the printing press ripped the Bible itself from their control, producing a red-hot reformation complete with the radical reaffirmation that through Jesus all believers are priests with direct access to God. Do we still believe this?

Modern transportation and internet communication have broken down the last barriers isolating people groups from this amazingly good news. And we are finding that once again God's kingdom is refusing to be limited to "Christianity-as-we-know-it"!

His kingdom is breaking out of the boxes we try to keep it in, again, and He seems to be inviting the least-expected people to His banquet, without our permission.

It is our turn to be shocked, like Peter, that God would bestow His Spirit on those outside of our acceptable religion. It was inconceivable to him that pagan households, like Cornelius', could receive God's Holy Spirit (even while uncircumcised and as yet unbaptized!). Likewise, we cannot fathom that God would have "no favorites" today and bestow His Spirit on Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and, in fact, all who through meeting a living Jesus "fear Him and do what is right." But His kingdom is breaking out of the boxes we try to keep it in, again, and He seems to be inviting the least-expected people to His banquet, without our permission.

Indeed, once again God is doing the scarily unexpected. But will we perceive it?

Jesus is alive and building His own kingdom in the hearts of people in many religious contexts. Just like in the New Testament, He does not seem to be concerned that religious structures or forms be established in His name. Once again, He has bypassed the competition between religions to go straight to the hearts of all people everywhere who are seeking to truly know God. 





All Things Are Yours

BY **H. L. RICHARD**

H. L. Richard is a research scholar currently focused on issues in South Asian culture and religion. Reprinted from *Mission Frontiers* May-June 2011

In a classic text on cross-cultural ministry Paul stated his policy of becoming all things to all men so that by all means he might save some (1 Cor. 9:22). This is sometimes treated as a specialist approach for experts in cross-cultural encounter, but the Bible presents it as a model for all ministry. It is exemplified in the incarnational pattern of Jesus who, due to the Father's great love for the world, was sent as a true human being into a specific historical and cultural context to announce and effectuate salvation for the world.

Paul's readiness to live like a Jew among Jews and like a Gentile among Gentiles (1 Cor. 9:20-21) was also rooted in a fundamental principle spelled out earlier in his first letter to the Corinthians. There had been factionalism among the Corinthian believers; some sided with Paul, some with Apollos, some with Peter. Paul rebuked this in various ways in a discussion covering the first three chapters of 1 Corinthians, coming to a climax at the end of chapter three. There he completely turned the tables and said that rather than the apostles owning factions of the believers, the entire Body of Christ owned all of the apostles.

In a typically Pauline flight to the highest elevations and deepest recesses of theological thought, Paul then jumped from the Corinthian ownership of the apostles to the stunning affirmation that "all things are yours" (1 Cor. 3:21). That sounds hyperbolic, but Paul spelled it out so it could not be dismissed as a mere rhetorical flourish; the world is yours, life and death are yours, the present and the future are yours, so yes, indeed, I really mean that "all things are yours" (1 Cor. 3:22). This of course is through Christ the Lord (1 Cor. 3:23).

The commentarial tradition of the Church has not applied this Pauline emphasis on the possession of all things to cross-cultural situations, but it clearly is an underlying principle that allowed Paul in practice to become all things to all men. What many commentaries do point out is that in affirming this possession of all things by the disciples of Christ, Paul was adapting a truism of some of the philosophical schools of the time, which had

particular relevance to the Corinthian context, where wisdom was a hot topic of discussion. The wise man among the Stoic philosophers was one who rose above all situations and problems by remaining in control of his thoughts and actions rather than being driven by external events.¹ Paul brought this Stoic concept into submission to Christ, where it was transformed into a larger and more profound theological truth that he affirmed to weak and immature Corinthian believers who were failing in some very basic aspects of spiritual life.

The possession of all things by the disciples of Christ was spelled out as a fundamental missiological concept by the Dutch missiologist Johan Herman Bavinck. He did not tie his exposition to Paul's teaching in 1 Cor. 3:31, but the relation of the two is unmistakable. Bavinck was concerned about syncretistic tendencies in the Roman Catholic theology and practice of accommodation wherein non-Christian practices are adopted by the Church. He wrote,

Here note that the term "accommodation" is really not appropriate as a description of what actually ought to take place. It points to an adaptation to customs and practices essentially foreign to the gospel. Such an adaptation can scarcely lead to anything other than a syncretistic entity, a conglomeration of customs that can never form an essential unity...We would, therefore prefer to use the term *possessio*, to take in possession. The Christian life does not accommodate or adapt itself to heathen forms of life, but it takes the latter in possession and thereby makes them new... Within the framework of the non-Christian life, customs and practices serve idolatrous tendencies and drive a person away from God. The Christian life takes them in hand and turns them in an entirely different direction; they acquire an entirely different content. Even though in external form there is much that resembles past practices, in reality everything has become new. The old has in essence passed away and the new has come. Christ takes the life of a people in his hands, he renews and re-establishes the distorted and deteriorated; he fills each thing, each word,

and each practice with a new meaning and gives it a new direction. Such is neither “adaptation,” nor accommodation; it is in essence the legitimate taking possession of something by him to whom all power is given in heaven and on earth.

The profound implications of Paul’s teaching and of Bavinck’s concept of *possessio* need to be at the center of biblical discussions of cross-cultural ministry, especially with regard to other religious traditions. These insights point to a positive approach to other religious traditions rather than a blanket renunciation or repudiation of them. Rather than renouncing the Buddhist heritage, a Buddhist who comes to Christ needs to be oriented towards taking possession of that heritage. Clearly there is a necessary discerning and sifting process in taking possession of truths and practices from other faith traditions; Paul after all was rebuking false wisdom in the Corinthians, and Bavinck clearly calls for a reorientation towards Christ.

Careful nuancing of this truth is essential in a number of directions. First, the missionary movement is still emerging from the shadow of colonialism, and nothing stirs anti-Christian emotions quite as much as a triumphalistic or domineering attitude. Can a Christian disciple of Jesus take possession of another faith tradition without straying into this offensive mindset? It is a delicate procedure to be undertaken with deep humility, yet Paul did not shirk from stating this truth into a complex situation in Corinth. Cross-cultural workers will rarely have the insight, sensitivity or humility to successfully negotiate this terrain even with guidance from local believers, yet they must not draw back from the implications of Paul’s teaching. J. H. Bavinck recognized the inadequacy of the cross-cultural worker as well; “the newly formed church is usually a better judge in such matters than we [missionaries] are” (ibid. pg. 177).


It is not possible for every part of the Body of Christ to take possession of every aspect of life; rather, some parts of the Body will more particularly be related to different aspects of God’s profoundly diverse world. It is particularly those who come to faith from Buddhist families who must wrestle with the meaning of *possessio* in Buddhist contexts, while people from Hindu and Muslim and post-modern contexts seek to apply this insight in their particular worlds. Cross-cultural workers will of course join as servants in the engagement of these issues in the various contexts.

It must be affirmed again that there can be no facile embracing of anything and everything taught or practiced

in other religious traditions. All is brought under Christ, and a sifting and filtering is necessary. Yet teaching new disciples of Jesus in other faith traditions that “all things are yours” and that it is your responsibility in Christ to take possession of your religio-cultural heritage challenges some assumed paradigms. Primarily challenged is the necessity of “conversion to Christianity.” If Buddhists who turn to Christ are taught that Buddha is theirs, are they really called to renounce Buddhism? Obviously they are called to discern and sift much that is unbiblical among the many traditions that are currently called Buddhism, but if they take possession of that heritage, how or why can or should they also renounce it? The same applies to the other major faith traditions, all of which are as much about culture as they are about theology, and all of which are multi-cultural as well as multi-theological.

The problem of neo-imperialist triumphalism is trumped by a missiology which rejects “conversion to Christianity” as an essential aspect of the gospel. The new disciple of Jesus is under a mandate from Christ and the New Testament to live within (take possession of) their birth community and religio-cultural heritage. This kind of surrender to the Lordship of Christ leading to *possessio* of one’s heritage in conformity to Christ can be viewed from another angle as well. To the birth community of the new disciple, be it Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim or other, it is not a rejection of the old or transfer to the new, but rather citizens of the original community taking possession of the truth of the Gospel. Thus hegemonic religious imperialism is avoided and the interpenetration of the Gospel among all civilizations and faiths is accomplished.

It is surely obvious, but will be stated here in closing, that this is not a simple process. J. H. Bavinck recognized this as well: “It is naturally much easier to speak theoretically of taking possession, than it is to give practical advice. The question of *possessio* leads to the greatest problems throughout the entire world” (ibid. pg. 179). Redefining the problems and complexities of cross-cultural encounter and contextualization in terms of *possessio* rather than of conversion and repudiation seems a helpful first step towards affirming in a fresh way the multi-cultural nature of the gospel and of its call for all peoples to surrender to Christ within their own heritage.

“The nations will walk by the light of the Lamb, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into the eternal city” (Rev. 21:24). 

NOTE: To see the End Notes, please go to the article posted at: www.missionfrontiers.org.



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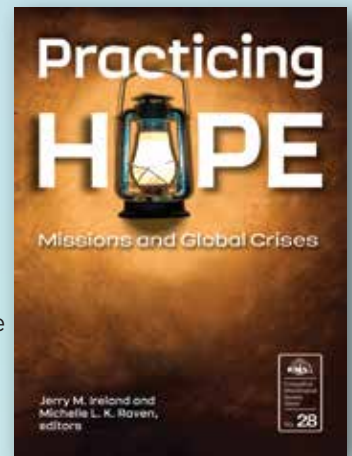
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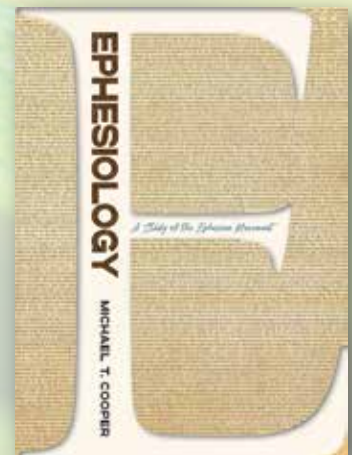
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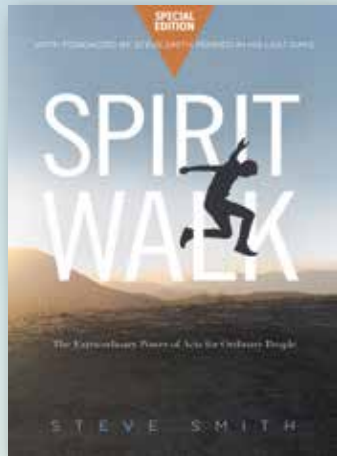
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Though we know the Bible says to walk in the Spirit, the majority of Christians are illiterate (and even nervous) about how to practically live in His power. The result is lives marred by continued brokenness and ministries plagued by fruitlessness. In contrast, believers from Acts understood the ancient path of the Spirit Walk. That extraordinary power was not just for them, but also for us.

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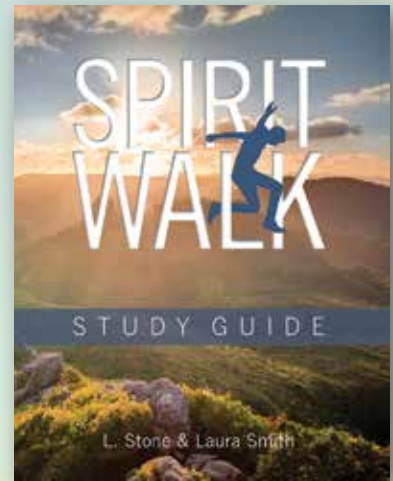
Spirit Walk, Study Guide

L. Stone
Laura Smith (Authors)

Spirit Walk: Study Guide is designed for either individual or small group use. In eight sessions of five days each, it guides you through the process of digesting biblical paradigms, surrendering to the Holy Spirit, being filled with the Holy Spirit, and cultivating an authentic relationship with Him. Along the way you will learn practices and rhythms for long-term spiritual growth.

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The Challenge: Give copies of *Remembering Jesus* to seed conversations.

A Hybrid World

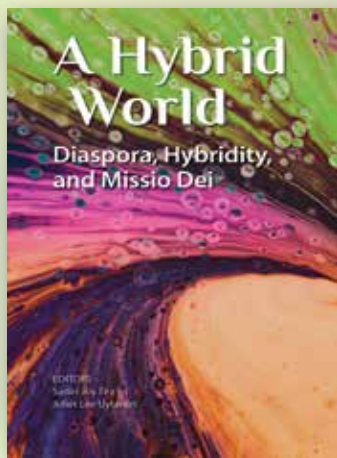
Diaspora, Hybridity, and Missio Dei

Sadiri Joy Tira and
Juliet Lee Uytanlet
(Editors)

Local Christ-followers are challenged with the opportunity of navigating both the global diaspora and mixed ethnicities.

A Hybrid World is the product of a global consultation of church and mission leaders who discussed the implications of hybridity in the mission of God. The contributors draw from their collective experiences and perspectives to explore emerging concepts and initiatives, and ground them in Scripture for application to the challenges that hybridity presents to global missions.

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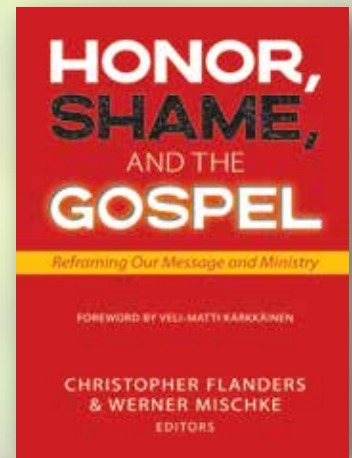
Honor, Shame, and the Gospel

Reframing Our Message and Ministry

Christopher Flanders
& Werner Mischke
(Editors)

In Honor, Shame, and the Gospel, over a dozen practitioners and scholars from diverse contexts and fields add to the ongoing conversation around the theological and missiological implications of an honorific gospel. Eight illuminating case studies explore ways to make disciples in a diversity of social contexts—for example, East Asian rural, Middle Eastern refugee, African tribal, and Western secular urban.

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Direction—Purpose—Vision—Hope

BY GREG PARSONS

Greg Parsons has been on the staff of Frontier Ventures (formerly USCWM) since 1982, and currently serves as Director of Global Connections. He and his wife Kathleen have two children and three grandchildren.

As he shared with our worldwide staff recently, Frontier Ventures' General Director Kevin Higgins summarized our overall organizational direction:

Our board of directors and lead team see Frontier Ventures with a renewed clarity of apostolic purpose tied to a deep commitment to spiritual formation and community—a multi-centralized future in which most of our hubs are not in North America, and most of our members are not North American.... This is an intentional 're-investment of social capital' with a different return on investment: a more diverse missiological voice, more microphones placed close to more voices in more languages, and more breakthroughs among more of the least-reached peoples of the world.

That direction is expressed by our latest statement of **Vision**, or **Hope**: *The fullness of God's blessing for all peoples and the reconciliation of all things in Christ.*

That works its way down into our particular **Mission**, meaning what we try and do ourselves, and alongside and through others: *To nurture new ways for least reached peoples to experience the fullness of life in Jesus.*

Much of **what** Frontier Ventures will be doing is similar to the past, but **how** we pursue that vision and mission is changing. Some are *organizational* changes, which includes the expectation that within one-two years Frontier Ventures will relocate from our current headquarters in Pasadena, California and reallocate resources to a network of hubs (including a hub in southern California).


These *Global Hubs* will serve as centers of our staff—in community—working alongside key national, regional and local leaders to identify, initiate and foster new efforts. These efforts are seeking to both overcome the barriers that inhibit movements to Jesus, and to share what we learn for reflection, by us and others.

Our **Core Functions** revolve around the idea of being “alongsiders” with others as we serve:

- We seek to love and follow Jesus *alongside followers* of Jesus to be mutually formed in Him for the sake of all peoples. (**Formation**)
- We foster discernment and innovation to *lead alongside leaders* to nurture innovation at the edges of socio-religious peoples. (**Innovation**)

- We shape environments to *learn alongside learners* to grow our collective understanding of the work of Jesus at the frontiers. (**Missiology**)
- We communicate alongside communicators to *give wider voice for ideas from those “on-the-ground” at the edges of the kingdom.* (**Mobilization and Publications**)

In many ways, this won't change things in terms of what you see us producing. For example, we still:

- Publish books and resources through William Carey Publishing (missionbooks.org)
- Encourage *prayer for the unreached*—the **Global Prayer Digest** is now part of another ministry of ours, **Joshua Project**. You can get a daily email or phone notifications to remind you to pray for a specific group each day. Go to joshuaproject.net/pray/unreachedoftheday to sign up.
- Produce **Mission Frontiers**, and (as usual) talk about what God and others are doing around the globe.
- Challenge people in their approach to mission strategy through the **International Journal for Frontier Missiology**. (See: ijfm.org)
- Mobilize and mentor many through a number of things, including the Perspectives Study Program (perspectives.org), both here and in more than 20 other nations (perspectivesglobal.org)
- Serve others in everything from innovation workshops through our **Winter Launch Lab**, to medical professionals seeking health for all nations (through healthforallnations.com).
- Network with many other partnerships and global bodies, including WEA–Mission Commission, NEXT Move network—serving within global migration, the Lausanne Movement and many others.
- And that doesn't include our sister organization **William Carey International University** (wciu.edu) and its degree programs. *Did you know* you can get an accredited MA and never leave your home? (Well OK, you might want to go out and do some research or outreach!) 



FRONTIER VENTURES

catalyzing kingdom breakthrough

Since its inception in 1976, Frontier Ventures has served initiatives to increase momentum for the breakthrough of movements to Jesus among the remaining unreached people groups of the world.

We expand missiological insight.

Joshua Project | Mission Frontiers and Global Prayer Digest | International Journal of Frontier Missiology

We foster environments for collaboration and innovation.

Ralph D. Winter Launch Lab | Alternative Funding | NextMove

We shape spaces for training and mobilization,

Perspectives on the World Christian Movement | NextGen | Insight | Commission Training

We share ideas with the world.

Mission Frontiers and Global Prayer Digest | William Carey Publishing | International Journal of Frontier Missiology

Our aim is unchanged after 40 years: movements to Jesus within every people.

Coming out of a rebranding in 2015 and a refreshing of our Board and leadership in subsequent years, Frontier Ventures is positioned for continued service to pioneering leaders and organizations.

We are executing a multi-year transition from a single North American hub to a multi-centralized network of hubs that are closer to the frontiers. This will posture our community to be more diverse, closely engaged with practitioners, and connected to the contexts we hope to influence. We will continue to shape environments for pioneering leaders to engage the emerging world with missiological insight, collaboration, innovation, training, mobilization, and publishing to see breakthroughs of the gospel and movements to Jesus among all peoples.

Join the movements! frontierventures.org/partner2020

THANKS to many of you who are already engaged with these ministries or are praying with and for us. Many also give sacrificially to support specific projects and people (keep it up!). Perhaps you or someone you know would like to join our team and part of our missiology, innovation and forward thinking. Write to me and let's talk about opportunities to serve with us!



SCAN ME



Insider Church: Ekklēsia and the Insider Paradigm

What is Church? Explore that question with S.T. Antonio and engage in the conversation around how insider movements navigate ekklēsia.

In the last few decades, the Church has witnessed a growing harvest of Muslim-background believers coming to Christ. However, a divide remains over whether the “insider” paradigm contributes to the flourishing and multiplication of healthy, biblical churches among Muslims.

S.T. Antonio advances this conversation beyond the old arguments through a fresh analysis of the insider paradigm by asking the question, *What is church?* Starting with the identity-shaping narrative of the people of God, Antonio digs deep into the nature of biblical ekklēsia from multiple angles—local and universal, visible and invisible, the classical “marks” of the church, and missional identity. Combining a robust, biblical vision with a nuanced contextualization framework, and informed by firsthand ministry among Muslims, Antonio uncovers the roots and contours of the ekklēsial vision of the insider paradigm. *Insider Church* provides an innovative diagnosis of a paradigm that has been surrounded by controversy, challenging it with constructive analysis for multiplying biblical churches among Muslims.

This book models a truly crucial approach. As an advocate of insider movements, I acknowledge that the author took great pains to reach out to myself and others for input. As such, while we will continue to differ on important topics, this book models something much needed in this hour of history: to seek understanding before seeking to be understood.

KEVIN HIGGINS, PhD, general director, Frontier Ventures and president, WCIU

Insider Church provides a wise, biblically and theologically informed, and missiologically sensitive perspective on one of the most controversial missiological issues. The author is not only thoroughly at home in the relevant academic literature, he is also a seasoned practitioner with significant ministry experience among Muslims.

HAROLD NETLAND, PhD, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

S. T. Antonio (pseudonym) is a church planter in the Middle East with Pioneers, along with his wife. He is a graduate of Biola University and a perpetual member of its Torrey Honors College, and he holds MDiv and ThM degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He is the editor of *Seedbed*, a journal published by Pioneers for mission practitioners serving among the least reached.

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Epilogue: Recommendations for Multiplying Biblical Churches among Muslims





Formerly known as the Global Prayer Digest

Note: Scripture references are from the *New Living Translation* (NLT) unless otherwise indicated.



MARCH

■ 1 Bosniaks in Turkey

Considered to be one of Europe's least evangelized peoples, the Bosniaks who live beyond their ancient borders are war refugees from the early 1990s. They are trying to maintain their cultural and religious values. Many have settled in cities like Istanbul, Turkey, where given some time, their children have begun to speak Turkish. Streets in Istanbul have been renamed in Bosniak to reflect the more than three million that now live in Turkey.

Ps 29:11 | *The Lord gives His people strength.
The Lord blesses them with peace.*

- Pray for new believers among this people group to be blessed with strength and peace.
- Pray for exposure to Jesus Christ as the only Lord and Savior.
- Pray that many Bosniaks would repent and be saved from their sins with the preaching of the gospel.
- Pray that the Lord would raise up workers that would begin movements to Christ among Bosniaks, whether they are in Eastern Europe or Turkey.

■ 2 Uyghur in Turkey

The Uyghurs are a Turkic-speaking people who converted to Islam in the 10th century. Most live in Xinjiang Province, northwest China. Recently more than a million Uyghurs have been detained in Chinese internment camps. They are being indoctrinated in the ways of communism, speak Mandarin, and expected to denounce their culture including Islam. Many have sought refuge in other countries, and several thousand are presently living in Istanbul.

Ps 31:10 | *I am dying from grief; my years are shortened by sadness. Sin has drained my strength; I am wasting away from within.*

- Pray that this people group will understand that sin drains and destroys, but the Lord offers forgiveness and spiritual refreshment.
- Pray that God will give wisdom and guidance to Christ followers who reach out to the Uyghurs.
- Pray the Uyghurs will desire to know God and accept His grace through Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Uyghurs.

■ 3 Spanish Jews in Turkey

How would you like to be pressured to change your language, culture and religion? That is what the Jewish people in Izmir and Istanbul face. Most are Sephardic, which means they trace their ancestry to Spain. For many years, Turkey's Islamic government has pressured these Sephardic Jews to assimilate into the Turkish culture, which is primarily Islamic, and demanded that they no longer speak their Ladino language.

Ps 31:21 | *Praise the Lord, for He has shown me the wonders of His unfailing love. He kept me safe when my city was under attack.*

- Pray that this people group will be drawn to the unfailing love of the Lord, our eternal Heavenly Father.
- Pray that the words of Romans 8:31 "If God be for us, who can be against us?" will penetrate the hearts of Sephardic Jewish people in Turkey and beyond, so they will know Him and His saving grace found in Jesus.
- Pray for a powerful movement to Christ among them in Turkey.



■ 4 Chechen in Turkey

After Chechnya declared their independence from Russia in 1991, Russian troops have repeatedly invaded the Chechen homeland to regain control. Especially during the last 30 years, Chechens have attempted to find peace in other countries like Turkey. They have a large community in Istanbul. Those who live in Turkey have found peace, and they live among the Turks, who speak a similar language. Today Chechens in Turkey work in oil refineries and breed fine-fleeced sheep.

Ps 32:8 | *The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you."*

- Pray for this people group to accept the Lord's guidance and salvation.
- Pray for believers to take Christ to the Chechens in Turkey.
- Pray for a spiritual interest on the part of Chechens leading their elders to allow people to share Christ with their people.
- Pray for an undying movement to Christ among the Chechens.

■ 5 Hindu Halwai in Bangladesh

Though most members of the Halwai community live in India, today we are praying for this Hindu community living in the predominantly Muslim country of Bangladesh. As is traditionally true of most Hindu castes, its members usually focus on one primary type of job. The Halwai are a caste of sweet makers and confectioners. The Hindu communities respect them because of the importance of sweets in both their religion as well as in festivals associated with childbirth and marriage. Now, many Halwai have branched out into other occupations.

Ps 32:10 | *Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the Lord.*

- Pray for many from this people group to notice this stark difference and turn to the Lord.
- Pray for the Lord to bless the Halwai people materially and spiritually.
- Pray for a movement to Christ in the 2020s.

■ 6 Hindu Turi in Bangladesh

The traditional occupation of the Turis is working with bamboo and making items such as baskets, mats, hats, and furniture. Some others work as landless agricultural laborers. Over one third of the Turis are unable to read or write. Illiteracy eliminates many opportunities for them to improve their lives economically and spiritually. Illiteracy is also a main obstacle for reaching the Turi with the gospel.

Ps 33:5 | *He loves whatever is just and good; the unfailing love of the Lord fills the earth*

- May this people group seek and find the Lord's unfailing love!
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to work powerfully through believers who are ministering to the Turi people.
- Pray for Turi families to turn to the loving arms of God, the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. May they come to know that they are highly loved in His holy kingdom.

■ 7 Paliya in Bangladesh

The Hindu Paliya living in Bangladesh are considered a "disadvantaged" caste. They are not considered Dalit or untouchables, but their status is not much higher. They are mainly agricultural workers and many are landless. Since they are not well educated, they need to hear the gospel in oral form.

Ps 33:12 | *What joy for the nation whose God is the Lord, whose people He has chosen as His inheritance.*

- May this people choose the Lord, and no other!
- Pray for a spiritual hunger that will drive the Paliya into the arms of Jesus.
- Pray for workers who are filled with the fruit and the power of the Holy Spirit to go to the Paliya people.
- Pray for a people movement among them in the 2020s.
- Pray for their educational needs to be met so they can improve their lives and the future for their children.

■ 8 Hindu Tamboli in Bangladesh

Imagine that your people group was named after a popular tea or coffee. The Hindu Tamboli people of India are named after their main crop, "betel nut." This is a leaf that many people in South Asia chew as a stimulant much like others drink coffee or tea.

Ps 33:20-21 | *We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help and our shield. In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name.*

- May this people group rejoice in the Lord always.
- Pray that the Tamboli would have opportunities to hear about Jesus through the JESUS Film.
- Pray that their bondage to idols would break in Jesus' name. Many of the Tamboli are pre-literate, which prevents economic advancement.
- Pray for more educational opportunities.
- Pray that this will be the decade when there is a great harvest and a movement to Christ among the Tamboli people in Bangladesh.

■ 9 Tiyar People in Bangladesh

How would life be different without electricity? Most Tiyar people live in fishing villages with little access to electricity or indoor plumbing. The Bangladeshi government is working to improve this situation. When the fishing season is not good, the Tiyar people suffer greatly. Fortunately, the JESUS Film is available in the Tiyar's language, Bengali. Bengali-speaking believers can take this film to them.

Ps 33:22 | *Let your unfailing love surround us, Lord, for our hope is in you alone.*

- Pray for this people group to give their love and devotion to the Lord and be rewarded with hope and joy forever.
- Pray that they would find ways to diversify their economy so that they can rely on other industries for income.
- Pray that education would become more accessible so the next generation can continue advancing.
- Pray that Jesus would captivate the hearts of key Tiyar leaders and use them to begin a movement to Christ in Bangladesh.



■ 10 Hindu Beldar in Bangladesh

The name "Beldar" of Bangladesh is derived from the words "digging instrument" and the person who uses it. They are a people most known for agricultural work. As with most modern people groups, they have since moved past their traditional roles. Some Beldar are now engaged in animal husbandry, business, and industrial or unskilled labor. Most Beldar hold to Hinduism. Because of their low standing, they likely have never been honored or served. Workers could strive to love and serve them from a position of lowliness in order to introduce them to the God who washed the feet of fishermen.

Ps 34:1 | *I will praise the Lord at all times. I will constantly speak His praises.*

- May many from this people group praise Him at all times!
- Pray that Beldars would be hungry for spiritual truth that will lead them to Christ.
- Pray for outrageous boldness and Godly wisdom for the few believers, and for Disciple Making Movements to spring up in their communities.

■ 11 Mahishya in Bangladesh

Agriculture is the traditional occupation of the Mahishya people, who believe they are descendants of Krishna. On a daily basis, their women worship Lakshmi, the goddess of good fortune. Modern Mahishya are still a primarily agricultural people, though they are landowners, marking them as part of an upper class. Perhaps a possible outreach avenue could be to teach the Mahishya about the price paid by Christ for His bride, and the role that we have in accepting His invitation.

Ps 34:5 | *Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces.*

- May there be many from this people group who look only to the Lord for help, and may they be filled with joy and peace.
- Pray that the Mahishya would be open to the gospel and that the kingdom of God would be sown liberally in their hearts and communities.



■ 12 Phula in Vietnam

The Phula are an indigenous people who live in the forests and mountains of Vietnam's Lao Cai Province near the Chinese border. Today we begin a week of prayer for people in this location. Phula women are known for their weaving and dyeing skills. As far as we know, there are no believers among them.

Ps 36:5 | *Your unfailing love, O Lord, is as vast as the heavens; your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the ocean depths. You care for people and animals alike, O Lord. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the ocean depths. You care for people and animals alike, O Lord.*

- Pray for this people group to understand the vastness of the Lord's faithfulness and righteousness. May the Phula be drawn to Him.
- Pray that the hearts of the Phula would be open when they hear the message of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for a powerful Disciple Making Movement among the Phula people.

■ 13 Giay in Vietnam

Twice a year the Giay people gather at the largest tree in the village area. There, they sacrifice pigs and chickens to the forest spirits to gain their favor for the next half year. The Giay practice folk religion and venerate their ancestors. The Giay need access to modern medicine. Vietnamese believers can go to them to provide it and point them to Christ in the process.

Ps 38:17-18 | *I am on the verge of collapse, facing constant pain. But I confess my sins; I am deeply sorry for what I have done.*

- Pray that this people group finds peace and salvation when they confess their sins to the Lord.
- Pray for whole Giay families and villages to come to the knowledge of Christ.
- Pray that the Giay come to understand that God's power is much greater than that of the spirits of nature and ancestors they worship.

■ 14 Hani in Vietnam

How do you grow rice if you live in the mountains? Build terraces or flat plots of land along the slopes. This has been the practice of the Hani people for hundreds of years. They live in plaster and wooden houses in villages of 50 households. The Hani believe that spirits inhabit objects of nature and that these spirits must be appeased by prayers and offerings, or they may bring disaster. The JESUS Film is available in the Hani language. Vietnamese believers can take this valuable gospel tool to the Hani.

Ps 42:1 | *As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God.*

- Pray that the small group of Hani believers would grow strong in the faith.
- Pray that each Hani village has the opportunity to hear the saving message of Christ, resulting in a movement to Christ.
- Pray for this kind of longing for the Lord among today's people group!



■ 15 Tai Don in Vietnam

One of the Tai Don legends teaches that their ancestors emerged from a pumpkin. They had taken shelter in the pumpkin during a flood that had been divinely wrought to drown all mankind because of evil-doing. Weekly radio broadcasts bring the gospel to the Tai Don. Scripture portions are available in their language, but the people continue to practice animism. They show no interest in Christ at this time.

Ps 42:8 | *But each day the Lord pours His unfailing love upon me, and through each night I sing His songs, praying to God who gives me life.*

- Pray for many from this people group to find the Lord's unfailing love and respond with praise and worship.
- Pray for their elders and family heads to embrace the gospel and quicken the day when Jesus will be given the honor He is due in every White Tai village.
- Pray for an abundant harvest this season that will give the Tai Don people cause to praise the Lord of lords.

■ 16 Tai Daeng in Vietnam

The Tai Daeng live together as families and organize their communities by rank: merchants outrank craftsmen, who outrank farmers. The largest group are rice farmers, and priests are in a class of their own. They believe in animism mixed with Buddhist teachings. The people must appease the spirits in order to stave off ill-fortune. They have very few Christian resources.

May God show the Tai Daeng that He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He is not fickle, and we do not have to appease Him but instead we need to be devoted to Him.

Ps 43:3 | *Send out your light and your truth; let them guide me. Let them lead me to your holy mountain, to the place where you live.*

- Pray that this people group will respond to the Lord's light and truth.
- Pray that Asian missionaries will bring God's international message of peace to the Tai Daeng, resulting in a Disciple Making Movement.

■ 17 Tai Dam in Vietnam

The majority of the Tai Dam live in northern Vietnam around the city of Dien Bien Phu. But the largest population abroad live in Iowa in the USA. The Tai Dam take pride in being cloth weavers. They practice Buddhism mixed with folk religion. Often seeking help through supernatural spirits and objects, they have ceremonies for recalling the soul. They practice ancestor worship and believe there are spirits within every object.

Ps 47:9 | *The rulers of the world have gathered together with the people of the God of Abraham. For all the kings of the earth belong to God. He is highly honored everywhere.*

- Pray that the Lord will find honor and worship from today's people group. May they understand that they belong to Him.
- May the Tai Dam come to know the God who is simultaneously good, just and merciful.
- May they know of the Holy Spirit who can dwell in them and guide them.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among them to thrive this decade.

■ 18 Tay in Vietnam

Can you imagine living in a fortified village surrounded by a moat to protect your people from invaders? This describes the Tay people, who have survived this way for centuries. Over 1.8 million Tay live in 15 provinces throughout northern Vietnam, including Lao Cai Province. Though mainly farmers, some Tay people live in urban centers. As of 2017, the Tay have the New Testament in their language, along with audio Bible teaching and limited radio broadcasting.

Ps 50:1 | *The Lord, the Mighty One, is God, and He has spoken; He has summoned all humanity from where the sun rises to where it sets.*

- Pray that today's people group will respond to God's summons to come to Him!
- Pray these resources penetrate Tay families throughout Lao Cai Province.
- Ask that the small number of Tay believers are disciplined to boldly share Christ among their people.
- Pray for a gospel harvest of Tay people, leading to Disciple Making Movements that bless Vietnam's entire Tay people group.

■ 19 Jaunsari in India

Do you ever want to go back to Bible days? You might feel like you are doing that by visiting the Jaunsari community in Uttarakhand, the state we are praying for today. They still plow with oxen. They cultivate fields and graze cattle and goats. Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights, may be a bridge of God. John 8:12b: "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

Ps 51:2-3 | *Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night.*

- Pray for true heart-felt repentance to come to leaders of this people group.
- Pray that the Jaunsari will see Jesus as the only answer to their fears of ghosts and spirits.
- Pray for a full Bible translation and Christian witness, leading to a Disciple Making Movement.



■ 20 Hindu Silpkar in India

Silpkar is a generic name, meaning “craftsman” due to their historic craftsman roles. Although many are in the profession, others are beggars. They are at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. The Silpkar engage in the occult and shamanism. Crafts need markets, thus Christian entrepreneurs could help establish a market cooperative and be witnesses to the craftsmen among them. The JESUS Film shows Jesus casting out demons; evangelism could focus on power encounters.

Ps 51:4 | *Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just.*

- Pray that leaders among this people group will understand the depth of their sin just as King David did.
- Pray that this entire group would seek to truly become children of God (John 1:12).
- Pray that they would have dreams and visions of Jesus.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Silpkars.

■ 21 Bhoksa in India

The Bhoksa people have 15 clans. They are Hindu, but still like celebrating Christmas! They are a Scheduled Caste, so they have low status. The Bhoksas fear spirits, worship Hindu gods, and hold Hindu festivals. Rugged terrain and minimal infrastructure are obstacles to getting the gospel to the Bhoksa people. Christmas can be used as a bridge to open them to the gospel.

Ps 51:7 | *Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me—now let me rejoice.*

- May members of this people group be broken, and willing to repent and follow the Lord.

- Pray that God will direct believing physicians, agriculturalists, educators, sanitation engineers, and Bible translators to work among the Bhoksas.
- Pray that the very few believers will grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord and in boldness of witness, especially at Christmas time.

■ 22 Gangadi Brahmin in India

Most Gangadi Brahman families want their sons and daughters to take advantage of educational opportunities and earn a good living as computer engineers, doctors or business managers. One can never predict what an individual Brahman might believe or disbelieve. One who would reach them with the gospel must be ready to deal with any spiritual mindset. Their main needs involve relational strains that are usually kept behind closed doors. Loving believers can earn the trust of Gangadi Brahman families and help them weather these heart-level problems that few are willing to address.

Ps 51:10 | *Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.*

- Pray for leaders among this people group to have hearts that seek to be clean before the Lord, and that they will teach others His ways.
- Pray that they will take what they learn to their families and that Disciple Making Movements will occur among them soon.

■ 23 Garhwali Rajput in India

Rajput means “son of a ruler.” Since India became an independent nation in 1947, the Garhwali Rajputs have had to find other types of employment besides being landowners and military officers. The Garhwali Rajputs consider themselves to be devout Hindus, and their Hindu religious system is a large part of their identity. The Garhwali Rajputs need to hear the life-changing message of Jesus Christ in a way that does not add barriers of cultural acceptance..

Ps 51:12 | *Restore to me the joy of your salvation and make me willing to obey you.*

- Pray that when some from this people group accept the ways of God that they will be refreshed with joy and share it with others.
- Pray for the Lord Jesus to speak clearly to Garhwali Rajputs in ways they cannot miss and to reveal Himself to their family leaders, giving them a desire to be children of the true God.

■ 24 Kumaoni Rajput in India

The eastern half of the state of Uttarakhand, bordering Nepal and China, has a beautiful landscape with green valleys, hills and snowy peaks. This is the home of the Kumaoni Rajputs. Kumaoni Rajputs live a meager lifestyle, supported through farming. Unemployment is rampant. Believers with the means to do so can offer education, job opportunities and practical help. From there, they can have the privilege of sharing the blessings of Christ.

Ps 51:17 | *The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.*

- Pray for the Lord to break the spirits of members of this people group and bless them with joy of salvation and mercy.
- Ask the Lord Jesus to open the eyes of the Kumaoni to the light of Jesus Christ.
- Pray that Kumaoni Rajput families would find the loving Savior together, leading them to disciple other families in the faith.
- Pray that they will be set free from strongholds that leave them with a false foundation.

■ 25 Hindu Baghban in India

Baghban means “one who looks after the garden.” They grow, harvest and sell their crops in markets. Others hold government and business positions of influence in their respective districts. They are a family-oriented, hardworking and industrious people. They value education for both boys and girls. Some Baghbans have become teachers, doctors and engineers.

Ps 56:8 | *You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book.*

- Pray for members of this people group to turn to the Lord with their sorrows and trust Him to wipe away their tears and replace it with eternal joy.
- Pray for spiritual breakthrough among Baghbans and that whole families will turn to the Lord.
- Pray for workers to go to their communities.



■ 26 Radhi Brahmin in Bangladesh

The Radhi Brahmins are mainly in India’s eastern state of West Bengal and Khulna, a province of Bangladesh that we will feature for prayer today. Some benefit from owning farmland while others are businessmen. To reach them for Christ, someone will have to enter their world and learn how to communicate in the Brahman way. This will involve much listening and learning before speaking.

Ps 62:1-2 | *I wait quietly before God, for my victory comes from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will never be shaken.*

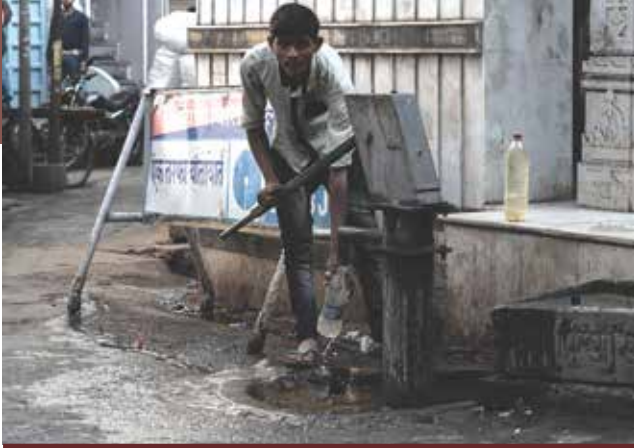
- Pray that many from this people group will make Christ the rock of their salvation this decade.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will reveal Christ to this community and use Brahmins to preach and teach about Christ to all Hindu communities.
- Pray for a massive movement to Christ in the Radhi community.

■ 27 Bhuinmali in Bangladesh

The Hindu Bhuinmali people are mainly a landless agricultural group, though some work for government agencies. Considered a scheduled caste, they are from the Bengali language cluster of people groups. Not surprisingly, they live mainly in the Bengali-speaking parts of India and Bangladesh including Khulna. Only one in 300 Bhuinmali identify as a Christian believer while the rest identify as Hindu.

Ps 62:8 | *O my people, trust in Him at all times. Pour out your heart to Him, for God is our refuge.*

- Pray that the Holy Spirit will draw many from this people group to trust the Lord at all times and share their hearts with Him.
- Pray for the Kingdom of God to come to the Bhuinmalis and help them understand that they have the dignity of being created in the image of God.
- Pray that they will hunger for God’s truth and compassion and that there will soon be a movement to Christ among them.



■ 28 Hadi in Bangladesh

The Hadi are Dalits, the lowest status groups in Hindu society. The word Dalit means “broken or scattered.” They are relegated to the lowest most menial jobs. For the Hadi, that means jobs like collecting trash and sweeping the streets. Reaching them will require an insider movement in which Hadi people share the good news with others from their community, demonstrating God’s love.

Ps 63:1 | *O God, you are my God; I earnestly search for you. My soul thirsts for you; my whole body longs for you in this parched and weary land where there is no water.*

- Pray that hundreds from this people group will earnestly seek God and find Him.
- Ask Him to send His Spirit to soften hearts and prepare them to receive and respond to His gift of salvation.
- Pray for the Lord to speak to key members of the Hadi community who will then share Christ with their families and friends until there is a movement to Christ.

■ 29 Baiti in Bangladesh

How would you like to be known for rolling cigarettes? What about having a reputation as a basket weaver? These have probably never been your professional or personal goals in life, but they are the heritage and present circumstance of the Baiti people. As Dalits, the lowest community in Hinduism, they have little else to hope for. The Baiti lead difficult lives.

Ps 63:3 | *Your unfailing love is better than life itself; how I praise you!*

- May many from this people group understand this and act upon it.
- Pray for the Lord to enter into their hardship and reveal to them His love and life.
- Pray for the Baiti to have open hearts and be responsive to God’s presence by moving as a group into His loving community.

■ 30 Hindu Mochi in Bangladesh

The name Mochi means “cobbler,” a label that describes their place in the caste system. Most are still employed in the shoe-making occupation along with making other leather products. There have been reports of a few Mochi putting their faith in Christ. This small but vital minority could be the key to reaching the rest of this people group for the Lord.

Ps 63:4-5 | *I will praise you as long as I live, lifting up my hands to you in prayer. You satisfy me more than the richest feast. I will praise you with songs of joy.*

- Pray that much praise will soon reach the heavens from Mochi people.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to give the few Mochi believers a passion for sharing His love with their friends and family, leading to an unstoppable movement to Christ in the 2020s.
- Pray for the Lord to reveal strategies for overcoming social, political, religious, and caste limitations.
- Ask the Lord to raise up men and women willing to teach the Mochi to read and in the process, make His name known among them.
- Pray for internet and audio ministries to be used effectively to share Christ with the Mochi.

■ 31 Jhalo Malo in Bangladesh

“Malo” is an Arabic word that means “boatman,” and many of the Jhalo Malo people live in the Bangladeshi states of Dhaka and Khulna. The traditional means of survival for the Malo people is fishing. When fishing is good, they can earn enough money to provide for themselves, but when their catch of fish is less than normal, they can starve. Some of them also work as landless agricultural laborers. These Hindus are devoted to Vishnu (the Hindu preserver god and his avatars: Rama and Krishna). It will be very hard for them to give Jesus Christ their full devotion.

Ps 64:9 | *Then everyone will be afraid; they will proclaim the mighty acts of God and realize all the amazing things He does.*

- Pray for a healthy fear of God among this people group.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will show them how futile idolatry is and that their good works are useless in making them right with God.



APRIL

■ 1 Sadgope Yadav in Bangladesh

The Yadav peoples are rare! Unlike most agricultural people, their status is neither high nor low. Many of the Chasot, or Sadgope Yadavs, own land and work in agriculture and small businesses. Their education does not usually go beyond secondary level. They are concentrated in West Bengal, though a number also live farther east in Bangladesh.

Ps 65:5

You faithfully answer our prayers with awesome deeds, O God our savior. You are the hope of everyone on earth, even those who sail on distant seas.

- Thank the Lord that He is the hope of all the earth and the only hope of the Sadgope Yadav people!
- Pray for a spiritual hunger that will drive the Sadgope Yadavs to the loving arms of Jesus.
- Pray for workers who are filled with the fruit and the power of the Holy Spirit to go to the Sadgope Yadavs.
- Pray for a movement to Christ that will affect this community in Bangladesh and India.

■ 2 Audhelia in India

Where did COVID-19 come from? The Audhelia people believe that illnesses come from the wrath of a Hindu goddess. The Audhelia is a small hybrid caste located in the central states of India including Chhattisgarh, the state we will pray for today. They are largely known as pig herders, but in modern day many are farm laborers.

Ps 65:8

Those who live at the ends of the earth stand in awe of your wonders. From where the sun rises to where it sets, you inspire shouts of joy.

- May many from this people group stand in awe of the Lord's deeds and joyfully follow Him.
- Child marriage is very common among the Audhelia. Many girls get married between ages five to seven.
- Pray for new laws to protect children and for Jesus' love for children to be revealed to them.
- Pray that there would be a movement to Christ among the Audhelia people that will spread to other people groups in Chhattisgarh.



■ 3 Bhaina in India

What are some wedding traditions in your culture? For the Bhaina people of India, washing feet and applying vermilion, a red pigment, to the bride's hair are common customs. The Bhaina reside in the fertile plains of the Raigarh and Bilaspur Districts of the state of Chhattisgarh. They work as farmers and laborers. There is a lack of Christian workers among the Bhaina people which hinders the spread of the gospel.

Ps 66:1-2

Shout joyful praises to God, all the earth! Sing about the glory of His name! Tell the world how glorious He is.

- May there be many from the Bhaina people doing just this very soon!
- The illiteracy rate among the Bhaina is extremely high.
- Pray that they would have access to more education and that the parents would place higher value on education and economic advancement.
- Pray for a vibrant movement to Christ among the Bhaina people that will bring joy, peace, and wholeness to their community.

■ 4 Chauhan in India

The Hindu Chauhans give special devotion to the goddess Durga, who embodies local gods associated with mountains, plants and fire. Their name comes from a past ruler, and they belong to the Kshatriya caste, just below the high Brahman priestly caste. They earn their living in farming, business, and banking. Even though they are Kshatriya, they seek upward mobility through marriage.

Ps 66:8 | *Let the whole world bless our God and loudly sing His praises.*

- Pray that today's people group will loudly sing His praises to other nations.
- Pray that the Hindi-speaking churches in their areas will see these "hidden people" and seek to witness to them until there is a movement to Christ.
- Pray that God opens the hearts and minds of the Chauhan people to the gospel, that the JESUS Film will be viewed by many, and that many will read the Scriptures and respond positively.
- Pray also for dreams and visions that will help them to realize that there is no true God but Jesus.

■ 5 Ganda in India

How would you like to be part of a people group whose name means "donkey?" The Ganda of India are a Dalit people, very low in the Hindu caste hierarchy. Unlike some Dalits, however, the Ganda are mostly closed to the gospel. They are farmers who marry young and live in various parts of India including Chhattisgarh. They speak Odia and Hindi, two of India's major languages.

Ps 66:10 | *You have tested us, O God; you have purified us like silver.*

- Pray for the Lord to test and purify today's people group and lead them to Himself.
- Pray for faithfulness and witness of the few Ganda believers.
- Pray that they will remain strong in their faith, thereby attracting inquiries concerning the Savior.
- Pray that the Ganda will become open to the gospel and will access Christian literature and media, leading to a movement to Christ.
- Pray for the Lord to bless the Ganda people economically and spiritually this decade.

■ 6 Hindu Ghasiya in India

How do you reach a people group with a very low literacy rate? You would primarily focus on oral and visual teaching tools. Sometimes these groups are skilled in memorizing what they hear. Their primary occupation has been scavenging and agricultural labor, and some are engaged in other services now, including playing music. Because of their poor economic condition, the Ghasiya seldom send their children to study beyond primary school. Raising their literacy rate would go a long way to improving their occupational opportunities. Telling Bible stories through songs may be an effective way to reach these Hindus.

Ps 66:16 | *Come and listen, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what He did for me.*

- Pray for bold testimonies of the Lord's deeds of love to come from today's people group.
- Pray that Ghasiya parents will see the need and importance of providing a good education for their children.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Ghasiya this decade.

■ 7 Halba in India

"Friendly" is the word used to describe the Halba people of Chhattisgarh, India. The Halba people live with exquisite beauty all around them. Their homeland includes dense forests, mountains, waterfalls, and natural caves. Some from the Halba community are affluent landowners. However, many of them still face challenges such as poor health care, high infant mortality rates, child marriage, and child labor. They also have a low literacy; their villages do have primary schools, but they don't function regularly. Only about one in 300 claims to be Christian of any kind.

Ps 67:2 | *May your ways be known throughout the earth, your saving power among people everywhere.*

- Pray that His ways will soon be known by Halba people.
- Ask the Father to strengthen their faith and to do miracles in their midst that will draw eyes to Jesus, their Savior.
- Pray for a significant people movement to Christ among the Halba people in the 2020s.





■ 8 Majhi in India

The Majhi community is a low status Dalit formerly called “untouchables.” They work as landless farm laborers for other landowning castes. As keen craftsmen, they also make bamboo baskets to sell at the market. Majhi houses are made of mud and thatch. They were formerly animists but now consider themselves as Hindus, although they are shunned by some other Hindu communities. Their low status keeps them away from people from other communities who might otherwise introduce them to the Savior. Nonetheless, they are said to be a clever, strong and industrious people.

Ps 67:3-4 | *May the nations praise you, O God! Yes, may all the nations praise you. Let the whole world sing for joy because you govern the nations with justice and guide the people of the whole world.*

- Pray that this day will come soon!
- Ask the Holy Spirit to bring forth a zealous, reproducing Majhi church that will boldly lead thousands to God’s throne of grace.

■ 9 Garasia in India

The Rajput Garasia are believed to be descendants of Rajputs who lost their land to invaders. The majority of the Garasia are farmers who own their small to medium plots of land. Unlike many peoples of India, Garasia people choose their own spouses. A newly married couple lives with or near the groom’s parents. The Hindu faith of the Garasia is heavily mixed with folk religion. They believe in magic, charms and that evil spirits inhabit the objects of nature.

Ps 67:7 | *Yes, God will bless us, and people all over the world will fear Him.*

- Pray for fear and worship to rise up from all peoples.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to soften the hearts of these Rajputs toward Christ so that they will be receptive to His ways.
- Ask the Lord to call willing people to share Christ with the Rajput Garasia.
- Pray the Lord to raise up a Disciple Making Movement among the Garasia in this decade.

■ 10 Padharia in India

What good does it do to have public jobs and special consideration for university admissions if you have a low literacy rate? That is the situation for the Padharia, a Scheduled Tribe of Gujarat. They live as landless agricultural workers. Some fish and rent out their boats. Their brand of Hinduism is influenced by traditional animism and a veneration for their ancestors.

Ps 68:4 | *Sing praises to God and to His name! Sing loud praises to Him who rides the clouds. His name is the Lord—rejoice in His presence!*

- May the Padharia people feel His holy presence when they worship Him.
- Pray that the Lord sends teachers to help the Padharia increase their literacy rate.
- Pray for them to have a hunger for His Word and the desire to have their sins forgiven.
- Pray the Lord raises up a Disciple Making Movement among the Padharia in this decade.

■ 11 Sentinelese in India

The Sentinelese people of the Andaman Islands were recently in the news, and it wasn’t pretty. A young Christian man felt led of the Lord to go to their island and tell them about Jesus. Unfortunately, the Sentinelese people killed him. The Sentinelese are one of the last truly isolated tribal groups on the planet. The Indian government has strictly forbidden any contact with them. Due to their isolation the Sentinelese lack any protection against modern diseases.

Ps 68:5 | *Father to the fatherless, defender of widows—this is God, whose dwelling is holy.*

- May the widows and orphans among this people group become part of His family.
- Pray for the Lord to go to this people through dreams, visions or angelic visitations.
- Pray that the Indian government would allow Christian medical teams to come to the island with the necessary precautions.
- Pray that the Sentinelese leaders would come to Christ and lead the rest of their people to the Savior.





■ 12 Wollo Amhara in Ethiopia

The once homogenous Oromo have split into subgroups divided by mutually intelligible dialects, religion, and by location. The Wollo are among the least known of several Oromo subgroups.

All Oromo people adhere to traditional religious practices. When faced with a serious need or crisis, the Wollo Oromo people look to traditional religion for help. However, there are Oromo subgroups with Christ followers that could reach out to their Wollo cousins.

Ps 68:19 | *Praise the Lord; praise God our savior! For each day He carries us in His arms.*

- May today's people group allow the Lord to carry them in His powerful and loving arms.
- Pray that believers from other Oromo subgroups will introduce Jesus to the Wollo people.
- Pray for a peaceful solution between the Ethiopian government and the Oromo peoples.

■ 13 Najdi Arabs in Saudi Arabia

Najdi is one of the varieties of the Arabic language spoken by Saudi Arabs. The public practice of any religion other than Islam (including Christianity and Judaism), the presence of churches, and possession of non-Islamic religious materials is not allowed. Saudi Arabian dress follows strictly the principles of hijab, the Islamic principle of modesty.

Saudi Arabia is completely off limits to any kind of indigenous Christian presence.

Ps 68:32-33 | *Sing to God, your kingdoms of the earth. Sing praises to the Lord. Sing to the one who rides across the ancient heavens, His mighty voice thundering from the sky.*

- May all the nations praise Him including the Najdi!
- Pray the few believers among the Saudis will grow in sharing and discussing God's Word with their families and communities.
- Pray the Saudi Arabs will hunger to know forgiveness of sin, found only through faith in the work of Christ on the cross.
- Pray they will hunger to know God's love, found through faith in Christ's work and life.

■ 14 Iraqi Arabs in Iraq

Arabs form about 70% of the total population of Iraq, the majority being of the Shiite branch of Islam and living in southern Iraq, with the Sunnis living primarily in central Iraq. Social life is important to Arabs. They like to share a daily coffee time by sitting on the floor and drinking from cups without handles. The ancient Church was centered in and spread from the Assyrian city of Arbel, located in the north. The Christian Church has been a part of Iraqi culture since that time.

Ps 68:34-35 | *Tell everyone about God's power. His majesty shines down on Israel; His strength is mighty in the heavens. God is awesome in His sanctuary. The God of Israel gives power and strength to His people.*

- Pray for many from today's people group to tell of God's power and goodness to others.
- Pray the Lord will encourage them and give them fruit from his Spirit: love, joy and peace.
- Pray for peace and stability in Iraq, that the government will be able to maintain order, and the various factions within the Arab community will give up hatred and revenge against each other.

■ 15 Jordanian Arabs in Jordan

The lifestyles of Jordanian Arabs are mixed. A minority are highly educated and serve in the highest levels of society. A growing middle-class work in businesses, factories, in education, and as government employees. Unfortunately, most Jordanians live at the poverty level. They work in agricultural on land owned by others, as day laborers and as herdsmen. Extended families often live and work together. Jordanian women are freer and better educated than in most Arab Muslim countries.

Ps 73:24 | *You guide me with your counsel, leading me to a glorious destiny.*

- Pray that today's people group will seek God's counsel and be led to His glorious destiny.
- Pray that the believers in Jordan get a vision and burden to share the good news with their neighbors.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Jordanian Arabs in this decade. Ask the Lord to make the Jordanian Arabs into a ripe harvest field in the kingdom of God.



■ 16 Palestinian Arabs in West Bank / Gaza

Palestinians are generally pleasant, generous and friendly. They are traditionally hospitable and prepare elaborate dinners for their guests, regardless of their economic situation. Palestinians are predominantly adherents of Sunni Islam with a minority Christian community. The Holy Land, birthplace of Jesus Christ and the land from where Christianity spread over the entire world, is also the birthplace of the Palestinian Church.

Ps 73:25-26 | *Whom have I in heaven but you? I desire you more than anything on earth. My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; He is mine forever.*

- Pray for many Palestinian people to know that they must have no other God but the Lord.
- Pray the Palestinians who know God will become wise in sowing the Word of God among their families.
- Pray for the believers in Christ, that they will be accepted by both Muslim Arabs and Jews.
- Pray for the Palestinians in both Israel and the West Bank / Gaza to increasingly experience peace, with political stability, and improving economic conditions.

■ 17 Shuwa Arabs in Chad

Chad is one of the poorest and most illiterate countries of the world. The Arabs of Chad are mostly nomadic, but some live in the villages and towns. The language of the Arabs is the main language of communication in the country, which makes it especially important to share the gospel with Arabs. Although Arabs are respected by the Chad government because of their wealth in animals, they don't play a very large role in Chad's political arena.

Nigerian believers may be able to carry the gospel northeast to the Chadian Arabs.

Ps 75:3 | *When the earth quakes and its people live in turmoil, I am the one who keeps its foundations firm.*

- Pray that many from Shuwa people will allow Him to be their firm foundation in times of trouble.
- Pray for the few Arab believers in Chad, that they will be faithful witnesses to family and friends, wise as serpents but harmless as doves.
- Pray for the Arabs of Chad, that they will be able to provide adequately for the needs of their families.



■ 18 Tunisian Arabs in Tunisia

In the first few centuries after Christ, a strong church was established in present-day Tunisia despite intense persecution from the Romans. Disunity, factions, and a failure to translate the Bible into the local languages weakened the church. When Arab invaders arrived in the 7th century an empty shell of a church was all that existed. Islam spread rapidly and the Christian roots of the people were forgotten.

Ps 75:9 | *But as for me, I will always proclaim what God has done; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.*

- Pray for many from today's people group to tell of God's wondrous deeds to their families.
- Pray that Tunisian Christians would be impassioned to reach their own people, sharing a clear, succinct, and reproducible Gospel presentation.
- Pray for the Arabs to become aware of their spiritual bankruptcy before God.
- Pray that Jesus would use dreams and visions to open their eyes and to show them that He is the only way to God.

■ 19 Ansari in India

The Ansaris were traditionally silk weavers but they now involve themselves in small businesses throughout India. Ansaris are a supportive and friendly people, as implied by their name, which is Arabic for "those who support." Yet they try to remain a distinct people by guarding who marries their women. Ansari women are noted for wearing bangles and beads, and in some communities, they wear glass bangles, which signifies that they are married.

Ps 76:4 | *You are glorious and more majestic than the everlasting mountains.*

- Pray that this people group will realize the eternal majesty and glory of the Lord and give Him praise.
- Pray that God would send many Indian followers of Jesus to these Muslim neighbors with a heart to befriend them and lead them into Christ's abundant blessings.
- Pray that Ansari leaders who have heard the gospel will following Christ and open the doors for others to do the same.
- Pray for an Ansari Disciple Making Movement to Christ this decade.



■ 20 Azeris in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijani settlements were traditionally divided into villages made up of extended families. In an attempt to protect their culture, marriage within the family was encouraged. Religious practices are less restrictive of women's activities than in some Muslim countries, and many women have jobs outside the home.

Georgian Christians may be able to carry the gospel message to the Azeris.

Ps 79:9 | *Help us, O God of our salvation! Help us for the glory of your name. Save us and forgive our sins for the honor of your name.*

- Pray that many from this people group will call out to the Lord as desperately as the psalmist did in this verse.
- Pray for the followers of Jesus among the Azeri, that they will faithfully fellowship together, be well-taught in the Scriptures, and grow to become mature in the Lord.
- The Azeris have centuries of historical commitment to Islam, not easily changed. Pray for a new attitude of their minds.
- Pray that the Azeris will increasingly be drawn to Jesus (whom Muslims call Isa al-Masih) as they study the Koran, that they will desire to know more about him.

■ 21 Muslim Jats in Pakistan

Muslim Jats are fiercely independent and highly value their self-respect. Although these qualities are highly admired in most societies, they do not rate highly in God's eyes. Jesus came to be a humble servant to others. He taught His followers to esteem others more highly than themselves and to turn the other cheek. Someone with the right skills could interview Muslim Jats as an historian as a way of having social contact with these fascinating people

Ps 81:8 | *Listen to me, O my people, while I give you stern warnings. O Israel if you would only listen to me!*

- Pray for this people group to heed God's warning and listen to Him!
- Pray for the Muslim Jats of Pakistan to encounter our suffering servant Jesus and invite Him to change their hearts.
- Pray for sensitive, trained evangelists to reach out to Jat communities to help them to begin a Disciple Making Movement.

■ 22 Fula Jalon in Guinea

The Fula Jalon are a large people group located in the western African nations of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Senegal. A small population resides in Guinea Bissau. The culture and heritage of the group is nearly the same in all three countries. Their livelihood is primarily based on farming and shepherding. Although Fula Jalon villages are scattered, each village has a central court and a mosque. Islamic schools are set up for the children in some of the villages.

Ps 81:11-12 | *But no, my people wouldn't listen. Israel did not want me around. So I let them follow their own stubborn desires, living according to their own ideas.*

- Pray that this will be the year when this people group stops following their own stubborn desires and begins to follow the Lord.
- Pray for those who know and follow Jesus among the Fula Jalon.
- Pray they will learn to live in the power of Christ's Spirit, demonstrating the fruit of his Spirit.
- Pray the Fula Jalon people will increasingly be drawn to Jesus (whom Muslims call Isa al-Masih) as they study the Koran.
- Pray they will have a desire to learn more about him, and that he will reveal himself to them.



■ 23 Sunda in Indonesia

The Sunda are the largest Indonesian unreached people group. Almost all Sunda are Muslims. In many areas, Islam is mixed with Sunda traditional customs.

The Sunda seek to protect their harmony with the natural world. In the legend of Lutung Kasarung, there is a belief that God incarnated a little of himself in the world in order to protect the life of man.

Ps 84:2 | *I long, yes, I faint with longing to enter the courts of the Lord. With my whole being, body and soul, I will shout joyfully to the living God.*

- Pray that the Lord will raise up many from this people group who have this kind of heart for being in the presence of the loving Lord.
- There are only a few followers of Jesus among the very large Sunda community. Pray for them to cling strongly to the truth of Scripture, to be firmly established upon God's character and promises.
- Pray they will faithfully fellowship together even in spite of opposition.

■ 24 Nigerian Fulani in Nigeria

Scattered mostly in Nigeria and Cameroon, these semi-nomadic people fiercely reject anything they perceive as contrary to their lifestyle of roaming with their cattle herds. This includes education (they are mostly non-literate) and permanent homes. Their inability to read and intense independence have placed them on unequal footing with greedy people who take advantage of them.

Ps 84:12 | *O Lord of Heaven's Armies, what joy there is for those who trust in you.*

- Pray for many from this people group to find joy and hope in trusting the Lord Almighty.
- Pray they will find each other in order to fellowship together.
- Pray they will learn to live in the power of Christ's Spirit, experiencing the fruit of Christ's Spirit consistently.
- Pray the Fulani will be able to care adequately for their families, and be led to be better prepared for the rapidly changing conditions of the 21st century.

■ 25 Hausa in Niger

The Hausa is the largest ethnic group in Niger and one of the most influential groups in West Africa. Nearly one out of every two Nigeriens is Hausa. The majority have been Sunni Muslim since the 11th century. In addition to Islam, many continue to practice their traditional religion, called Maguzawa, especially in remote locations. Hausa Muslims are known for being hospitable to strangers. In the Hausa language, one word, *bako*, is used to define both "guest" and "stranger".

Ps 85:8 | *I listen carefully to what God the Lord is saying, for He speaks peace to His faithful people. But let them not return to their foolish ways.*

- Pray that those who follow the Lord among this people group will never return to their old ways.
- There are a number of Hausa believers. Pray that they will be trained to engage their families and community in discovering and experiencing God's blessing through sharing and discussing Bible stories.
- Pray for Hausa believers to be obedient to the call to make Jesus known.
- Pray for a movement to Jesus to multiply among Hausa families and communities.

■ 26 Moor in Mauritania

The Moors are very proud people, conveying a sense of superiority to others in the area. Within their society, the Koran is faithfully followed. The term "Moor" is generally applied to any person, regardless of skin color, who speaks one of the Hassaniya dialects.

Scripture availability is limited in the language of the Moors, and access to the Moors is limited.

Ps 85:9 | *Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, so our land will be filled with His glory.*

- Pray for the land of this people group to soon be filled with His glory and mercy!
- Pray for Moor believers to become effective and fruitful in sowing God's Word among their own families and communities to fuel a movement of God's blessings spreading from household to household.
- Pray for the relatively few believers among the Moors, that they may be like-minded, being one in spirit and purpose, looking not only to their own interests but also to the interests of others.
- Pray each individual in the Moor community may be prepared for the gospel message when it comes to them.

■ 27 Arabic-speaking Moroccans in Morocco

Although Morocco allows people from other religions to have religious freedom, the King of Morocco has declared that all native Moroccans are Sunni Muslims. Historically, ministry in Morocco won individuals away from their families and gathered them into new churches. As a result, many view Christianity as a threat to their families and communities.

Ps 86:5 | *O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your help.*

- Thank the Lord that He is eager to offer love and forgiveness to peoples who turn to Him for help!
- Pray for Moroccan Arab believers to become effective and fruitful in sowing God's word among their families and communities to fuel a movement of God's blessing spreading from household to household.
- Pray that a strong movement to Jesus will bring whole Moroccan Arab families and communities into a rich experience of God's blessing.

■ 28 Tajik in Tajikistan

Most Tajiks are farmers and shepherds. They also practice a remarkable system of terraced, mountainside irrigation so that wheat and barley can be grown at the higher, dry altitudes. An increasing number of Tajiks have moved to the cities over the past 50 years. Poetry plays an important part in Tajik culture. It is read at important celebrations and often sung. Even the Koran has been put to music.

Ps 86:9-10 | *All the nations you made will come and bow before you, Lord; they will praise your holy name. For you are great and perform wonderful deeds. You alone are God.*

- Pray for this people group to understand that God's name is holy and that He performs miraculous deeds.
- Pray that Tajik believers will live such holy lives that others will desire to have the same spiritual riches found only in Christ.
- Ask God to raise up more long-term missionaries who will go to Tajikistan to raise up an unstoppable Disciple Making Movement among the Tajiks in this decade.



■ 29 Tatar in Russia

Tatars are descendants of Mongol, Bulgar and other peoples, and are predominantly Muslim. Russian domination of Tatars began when Ivan the Terrible conquered the Tatar Khanate in 1552 and long periods of forced Russification have since occurred. Since the late 1980s there has been a resurgence of Tatar nationalism. Tatars have a long, if interrupted, history of resisting both imperial Russian and Soviet domination and this has included resistance to the Orthodox Church's attempts to convert them.

Ps 89:7 | *The highest angelic powers stand in awe of God. He is far more awesome than all who surround His throne. O Lord God of Heaven's Armies! Where is there anyone as mighty as you, O Lord? You are entirely faithful.*

- Pray that many from today's people group will understand that the only God is the Lord, and they must turn to Him. Pray they will be in awe of His might.
- Pray for the Tatar believers, that the Lord will send qualified teachers and pastors, and that it will be more important to them to follow Christ than gain community approval.

■ 30 Turkmen in Turkmenistan

The Turkmen were mainly a nomadic people for most of their history and did not settle in cities and towns until the advent of the Soviet system of government. Many pre-Soviet cultural traits have survived in Turkmen society, however, and have recently undergone a kind of revival, including the return of a moderate form of Islam. Secularism and atheism remain prominent for many Turkmen intellectuals.

Ps 89:26-27 | *And he will call out to me, "You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation." I will make him my firstborn son, the mightiest king on earth.*

- Pray that this people group will seek and find this King!
- Pray the Turkmen who know God will become wise in sowing the Word of God among their families and multiplying the blessings of God to other Turkmen households.
- Pray for the believers among the Turkmen, that they will be accurately instructed in the faith and will grow in their love for Christ and each other.
- Pray for them to have full freedom of religion in their country, to worship safely as they choose.

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