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# Innovation Grounded in the Spirituality of Frontier Mission

BY PAUL DZUBINSKI  
& STEVEN SPICER

**Paul Dzubinski** is the Innovation Catalyst of Frontier Ventures and the Director of the Winter Launch Lab, the innovation lab of Frontier Ventures. He is on the Vision 5:9 European Region Core Team and served many years as a church-planter in Spain and Austria. He currently resides in Los Angeles with his wife.

**Steven Spicer** is the Innovation Lead in Frontier Ventures' Winter Launch Lab, where he works to integrate innovation and spiritual discernment in mission. His orientation towards group discernment was shaped by four years in a prayer ministry focused on encouraging intercession and member care for emerging movements in the Middle East and Central Asia.

We are talking about innovation that brings about the breakthrough of Jesus' kingdom.

From big business to the laboratory to tech companies, everyone is talking about innovation and how to make the next incredible new thing. And we think about the amazing innovators of the past like Madam Curie (who discovered radioactivity and won Nobel Peace prizes in two fields), Thomas Edison and his light bulb, the Wright Brothers (who gave us flight), and Dr. Shirley Jackson (who completed research that led to solar cells, fiber optic cables, portable fax machines, touch-tone telephones and caller ID.) These are amazing people and quite honestly, we are grateful to God for the innovations that they discovered, but we are not talking about that kind of thing in this edition of *Mission Frontiers*.

We are talking about innovation that brings about the breakthrough of Jesus' kingdom. You will see articles that discuss innovation in multi-cultural settings, innovation related to alongsiders and how

Jesus-centered innovation can bring change to ministries and even social contexts. This is part of kingdom transformation.

At Frontier Ventures we define innovation for integral mission as the creation of sustainable new solutions to the problems faced in discerning, proclaiming and living out God's good news for individual persons, societies and creation. We approach this with tools and practices of design thinking and systems thinking, but we insist on adding to them group thinking, spiritual discernment, theological grounding, and a missiological focus.

We believe that significant innovation in missions requires a group of believers to be on a journey of discernment together.

## Group Spiritual Discernment

We believe that significant innovation in missions requires a group of believers to be on a journey of discernment together. Insights and innovative ways forward emerge from communities of prayer.

They surface over time through a group's experience of transformation together that leads to new ways of seeing, listening, and being. While innovation practices provide helpful ways of thinking, asking questions, and reframing challenges, prayerful group discernment is about creating space to abide in Jesus, allowing the Spirit to inspire fresh imagination in us as we follow the Father's wisdom and direction.

## Theological Grounding

The articles in this edition of *Mission Frontiers* address things like ministry models, contextualization and social transformation. But all of them have a theological grounding in a holistic understanding of the gospel of Jesus. As Colossians 1:14-20 shows us, it is the saving message of the cross, but because that work was so powerful in its impact on humanity, it also unites all peoples into the family of God, produces an ethical transformation in all of us, exposes evil before God's judgment and is the power of God at work in history and in creation (*The Whole Church Taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World* condensed, 2010).

## Missiological Focus

The focus of *Mission Frontiers* is the frontiers of mission. That is also where we want to see innovation happen. We agree with the definition of frontier missiology that is used at Frontier Ventures. It is the attempt to understand and encourage the initial incarnation of the gospel into relational networks of people, and the growth of the initial disciples within such initial efforts into biblical, indigenous, holistic and sustainable movements of Jesus followers.

Not all of the articles in this edition of *Mission Frontiers* fit squarely into this definition. However, they all express an innovation in missions that either can be or is already at the frontiers of mission.

## Inside This Edition

With that in mind let us look at the edition of *Mission Frontiers* that we have at hand. The nine articles that make up this edition can be divided into three categories of innovation in mission. Each expresses a different focus: alongsiding innovation toward localized gospel expressions, societal transformation and ministry design. Let's look at each of them.

### Alongsiding Innovation toward Localized Expressions

Grab a cup of coffee or tea and dive into the lead article. It is here that we, Steven Spicer and Paul Dzubinski, describe how discerning innovative ways forward in frontier missions requires personal and community transformation. A group that is open to being led by God into new and life-giving ways of being in Jesus outside of our cultural models and worldviews can help forge new paths forward at

the frontiers of mission. Those paths might look and sound quite different all while following the same Jesus who shepherds us.

Some of the most difficult barriers to the gospel require new localized expressions of following Jesus.

Some of the most difficult barriers to the gospel require new localized expressions of following Jesus. This often involves walking alongside others from a particular context as they discern faithful ways of expressing the Good News. This type of innovation in a multi-cultural setting is addressed by Kevin Higgins in his regular article entitled "Toward the Edges." He shows us what innovating at the edges of mission can be like when insiders begin to explore ways for least-reached peoples to experience new life in Jesus. Innovation practices yield unexpected results. And while that can be true, Claire TC Chong's article about contextualization in Cambodia shows how Cambodian leaders come alongside their culture to find nuanced insights toward new localized expressions of faith for the sake of the gospel.

### Societal Transformation and Innovation

Innovation aimed at societal transformation is often called social innovation. It is about the creation of new value and good for the community by aligning people, relationships and resources in new ways. In mission this is expressed with a focus on kingdom

transformation and expressing God's blessing. A wonderful example of this is the work of Wordly Collective, which has built a collaborative ecosystem to help minority language communities flourish. Steven interviewed Pastor Melvyn Mak to hear more about Wordly's fascinating work. Another example is the work of Ed and Joan McManness with a community of students from around the world. Their work integrates care for people, community, creation and God's spiritual directives.

### Ministry Design and Innovation

The last four articles show innovative approaches and practices for ministry design. They focus on ways in mission for creating sustainable new opportunities, services, and impact in people's lives. Here, Victor Tukura beautifully shows us how Africans mobilize the church for global missions. Brent McHugh challenges us to adopt design thinking in order to reach the 7,000+ unreached peoples. Ryan Crozier describes an approach to support and walk alongside the underdogs who have a calling to bring change through all sectors of society. Finally, Derek Seipp gives us a disciplined approach to planning ministry differently.

All of these nine articles will give you a wonderful taste of innovation in missions both internationally and domestically.

May God bless you as you read. 

# INNOVATION



# IN MISSIONS



# Transformation in Community: Discerning Innovative Ways Forward in Missions

BY **PAUL DZUBINSKI**  
& **STEVEN SPICER**

**Paul Dzubinski** is the Innovation Catalyst of Frontier Ventures and the Director of the Winter Launch Lab, the innovation lab of Frontier Ventures. He is on the Vision 5:9 European Region Core Team and served many years as a church-planter in Spain and Austria. He currently resides in Los Angeles with his wife.

**Steven Spicer** is the Innovation Lead in Frontier Ventures' Winter Launch Lab, where he works to integrate innovation and spiritual discernment in mission. His orientation towards group discernment was shaped by four years in a prayer ministry focused on encouraging intercession and member care for emerging movements in the Middle East and Central Asia.

## Introduction

Innovation often springs from a need or opportunity. There is a problem, a challenge or an issue that needs to be addressed, or changing circumstances that present new possibilities. That's also true for missions innovation. When people think about innovation in missions, they often think about technological innovations, the use of web apps like TikTok, new ways to do translation work like Katie Kuykendall outlines in her *MF* article from 2018 called "There's an App for that,"<sup>1</sup> or ways to get the gospel into closed countries through media. These are fantastic but are not the primary area of innovation we have wanted to explore in Frontier Ventures' Winter Launch Lab.

So what challenges or issues have grabbed our attention? We are intrigued with the challenge of exploring local and culturally relevant ways for least-reached peoples to experience new life in Jesus. This requires prayerfully discerning new ways to express and live out the gospel where it has been rejected for hundreds of years.

For example, the gospel has been in the Buddhist world for generations, but there have not been many movements to Jesus in the majority-Buddhist countries. Why is that? Another example would be the country of India, where, according to tradition, the Apostle Thomas witnessed 2,000 years ago. There are some great movements of God in India, but many castes and sections of the country have never seen a Jesus movement. Why is that, even after many centuries? These types of complex gospel challenges are the ones we would like to prayerfully consider in order to discern innovative ways forward.

<sup>1</sup> Kuykendall, K. (n.d.). *There's an App for That: Technology Transforms Bible Translation*. Retrieved May 14, 2021, from <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/theres-an-app-for-that1>

**We are intrigued with the challenge of exploring local and culturally relevant ways for least-reached peoples to experience new life in Jesus.**

We jumped in with both feet. And after a number of attempts at innovation in Muslim, diaspora, and Hindu contexts, we came to realize there was another significant barrier—an unexpected challenge. In order to pursue this type of innovation, we ourselves had to become a different type of person. There is a need for humility, flexibility, holy curiosity, self-awareness, Spirit-sensitive creativity and faithfulness in discerning how Jesus is leading. We realized that at its heart, innovation in mission is about the process of transformation as God shifts our ministry paradigms, focuses our vision and calls us into new expressions of His kingdom we might not have imagined before. In other words, we are not only seeking fresh ideas or new ways of delivering the gospel message, but we are also expecting God to reshape us in the process. Who we are matters greatly for how we see and understand the challenges, how we live in healthy relationships, and how then to creatively act and follow God's lead in the world. Ways forward to address long-standing challenges will emerge from new ways of being in Jesus and walking alongside others at the frontiers of mission.

As a group goes through an innovation process of seeking understanding, prayerfully reflecting, and then discerning new ways forward together, everyone in the group is changed. In one innovation group we facilitated someone said, "If we take this step to consider these things, we will



be changed people. This process will change us. Is that okay with us?" It is not enough just to think differently. The barriers to the gospel at the frontiers of mission are deeply spiritual, in addition to all the complex social, cultural, religious, and linguistic factors. They require us to be different.

This is why we call our innovation process a Transformation Collaborative. It is a group spiritual journey as well as a personal spiritual journey into the challenge, into the call of God to innovate.

So, in a Transformation Collaborative, who is a part of the group that will be transformed, and what is the process we follow to move toward transformative innovation?

**In other words, we are not only seeking fresh ideas or new ways of delivering the gospel message, but we are also expecting God to reshape us in the process.**

### **Forming the Innovation Community**

We begin with the conviction that innovation in mission will emerge from worshipping and praying communities that are committed to walking together with God and one another. While God blesses human creativity and ingenuity, He also leads and gives vision and wisdom as a community prayerfully looks to Him. Ways forward will emerge from a group that is centered in Jesus, committed to relationships like Jesus is, and who accept that God wants them to bring their full selves to the innovation process. If the desire of God is to be glorified and dwell among His people, then the ways in which we move toward that end ought to embrace the importance of unity in community.

With this communal aim in mind, formation of the group begins with one or more catalyst leaders who have some sense of call to respond to a complex gospel challenge. These are often people with expertise, capacity, and connection to rally others, to champion an issue, and possibly even to catalyze movements. Walking with them, we assist in the process of clarifying the challenge. That challenge is formulated in a question that expresses

**This is why we call our innovation process a Transformation Collaborative. It is a group spiritual journey as well as a personal spiritual journey into the challenge, into the call of God to innovate.**



curiosity and invites further exploration. For example, how might we bridge the gap between Buddhist and Christian worldviews so that Buddhists are able to understand the gospel as Good News? Or how might we incorporate whole-person healthcare (mind, body, spirit) into the DNA of movements to Jesus? Or how might we imagine appropriate ways for Hindus to begin following Jesus and remain in their families?

With some initial direction in place, the next step is for the catalyst leaders to begin inviting a larger, diverse community of others around the challenge as members of the core team. The aim for this core team is to become a prayerful and discerning community that will explore their shared challenge together. Just by looking at the example questions above, it is quickly apparent that the core team will need to include representatives from the relevant global communities and backgrounds to meaningfully respond to these challenges.<sup>2</sup> Bringing their whole selves to the group, the team's diverse perspectives and life experiences of following Jesus aid in the process of exploring complex gospel challenges and being transformed together as a community in Christ.

Allow us to give you a picture of what this looks like.

### The Innovation Community's Discernment Process

When we walk with a group facing new challenges and opportunities in mission, there are some important questions we all should be asking. How is God already at work? In what ways is the Spirit inspiring us, giving us vision? As Jesus shepherds us forward, what might He be saying to us? Where do we sense He might be leading us?

Along with these prayerful questions we might also be asking, who are all the stakeholders involved—who is impacted by this challenge? Who might benefit from the creation of new opportunities? Who is missing out on life in Jesus? These questions help us to know where to begin carefully and humbly listening to others.

And underneath that we are asking, what are the deeper barriers and contributing factors? What are the relational or systemic patterns that are dysfunctional, not bearing fruit of blessing and righteousness? What is happening spiritually that might require intentional intercession?

<sup>2</sup> For example, movements themselves should be the ones discerning and making sense of new ways forward in their contexts. To the extent that others, or particularly Westerners, are involved, they will be walking alongside and encouraging in the process.

**Discernment in innovation is about seeing rightly so that we might become wise and faithful in all our being, living and doing.**

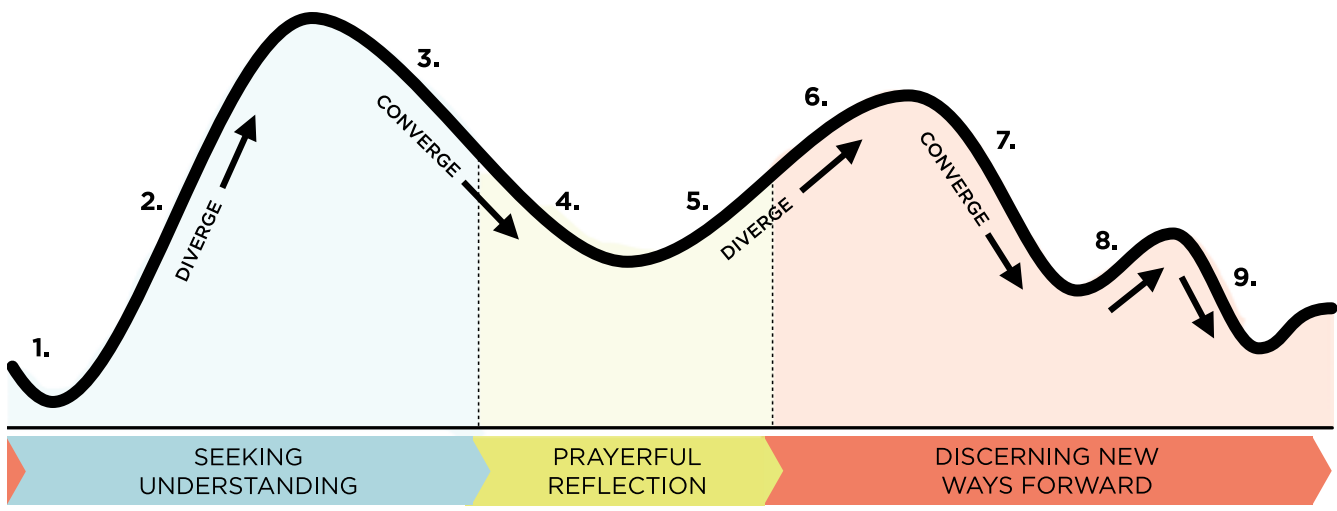
What are the opportunities and possibilities? These questions are about making sense of the challenge. We may begin with some starting understanding, but that will only get us so far: often challenges in mission are challenges precisely because our current understanding and practice are not enough. We will need to prayerfully explore and discover new insights that point toward possible ways forward.

The Winter Launch Lab's iterative approach to innovation and discernment encompasses three main phases (see graphic on the following page):

- *Seeking understanding* around the complex problem through prayer, interviews, Scripture study, research, and experiential learning
- *Prayerful reflection* on emerging insights and any initial sense of where God might be leading
- *Discerning new ways forward* by designing creative prototype initiatives that lead to further innovative insights and breakthroughs

Throughout the process we bring together innovation practices of design and systems thinking with group spiritual discernment. That means prayer and discernment play a central role in *both divergent and convergent ways of thinking*.

Divergence is about exploration of our curiosities and the creation of possibilities. It widens the scope to include more information. Convergence is the opposite: it is about synthesizing information to draw out insights, limiting options, and making decisions. Normally prayerful discernment is associated with convergent thinking. We all turn to God asking for direction when we are trying to make a decision. That still holds true here: when a group needs to decide which direction to move or which prototype(s) to create and test, it is important to make space for team members to sense how God might be leading. But that is only one expression of prayer in the innovation process.



- |                        |                                 |                       |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Gather what we know | 4. Submit everything to God     | 6. Generate ideas     |
| 2. Prayerful discovery | 5. Imagine future possibilities | 7. Discern prototypes |
| 3. Synthesize insights |                                 | 8. Test for feedback  |

For us, discernment in innovation is about seeing rightly so that we might become wise and faithful in all our being, living and doing. Let us unpack this statement. While *seeing rightly* certainly includes convergence, narrowing toward decisions for ways forward, it also includes divergence as we together prayerfully explore ways to understand the challenge and envision new possibilities. In an innovation process we need the Spirit's help and inspiration to perceive or imagine other ways of framing the challenge and creatively responding. From there, *wisdom* is about synthesizing the understanding and insights that emerge from beginning to see well. These insights not only signal direction for potential ways forward but can also impact and change us. They have real implications for who we are in Jesus, in the world. By sensing how God is already at work in a context and what He might desire to do to express His character and blessing, we are then also able to act *faithfully*. That takes place at the level of our *being*, as we are being conformed and transformed into His image in agreement with His purposes. It also plays out in our *living* and the ways we form relationships and are present to God and others. And finally, changes in our being and living will impact and shape our *doing* as we also discern the next practical steps to take together, in alignment with the ways we have sensed God is leading us. The journey of prayerful discovery and discernment is also the journey of transformation.

### Iterative Discernment & Transformation

We in the Winter Launch Lab recognize that discernment and hearing God's voice or leadership can be a messy and uncertain thing. Some traditions emphasize God's will in such a way that it is a search for a specific and sometimes hard-to-find answer. It can be paralyzing. Others move in the opposite direction, suggesting that believers already know God's general will and can follow it in many ways, believing we're too small to disrupt God's purposes for our lives or contexts through our decisions about career paths, spouses or houses. Our approach is somewhere in the middle, emphasizing both that God desires to speak and lead the innovating community, but that He also invites our own participation as people who are also being formed over time to desire His kingdom.

**The journey of prayerful discovery and discernment is also the journey of transformation.**

When it comes to exploring new ways for the least-reached to experience life in Jesus, we already know the general will of God—that is not the question. The issue is that there are difficult barriers where current practices

and understanding are not sufficient to see new movement to Jesus. Even worse, sometimes it is our own attitudes and approaches to mission that are part of the problem! Our knowledge, wisdom, and creativity are not always enough because the things we are hoping for—God moving to bless peoples and reconcile them to Himself—are only done by God. So without creating a trapping dependency on hearing a specific set of instructions from God, in our innovation process we recognize the need to humbly and prayerfully do our best to align our hearts and intentions with God's heart and desires.

**Sometimes there are moments of great clarity where God is surely moving, speaking, and guiding in some specific directions.**

Sometimes there are moments of great clarity where God is surely moving, speaking, and guiding in some specific directions. On other occasions ways forward may not quickly emerge, but it is that intentionality of listening, reflecting, discerning, trying small things and giving space for feedback through which we may learn and discern together how God is leading over time. It is in the midst of life that God shapes us and forms all of us, and it is in the midst of challenging contexts that we listen, reflect, and pray about next steps in an iterative way, rather than expecting God to show us the entire path at once.

Importantly, all of this happens in the context of group discernment. We hope to see groups genuinely discern and follow the will of God in the context of diverse community that brings their full selves, formed over time in their own walks with Jesus. While prayerful discernment is always a subjective matter, a group seeking God's guidance, sitting at His feet in prayer, and listening carefully with an open mind, heart and will is a healthy and balanced starting point. In a safe space it is possible for a group to share and reflect on the ways they sense God might be leading and to practice self-awareness about the lenses through which they are hearing. This allows openness to the move of the Spirit while grounded in a space of contemplation and

waiting on the Lord. It also allows the wisdom of diverse perspectives and experiences to balance the potential for quickly running in a direction of an individual's interests. In summary, just as God forms us over time, He also forms us in the midst of community.

## Conclusion

For the most difficult challenges in mission, this type of transformation is paramount. To be able to perceive and lean into the new things that God is desiring to do in the world, we need to be a different kind of people. This is not simply a deconstruction of Western missions practices, though some of that critique may be required, but an openness to being led by God into new and life-giving ways of being in Jesus outside of our cultural models and worldviews. The paths of following Jesus at the frontiers might look and sound quite different all while following the same Jesus who shepherds us.

In one Transformation Collaborative, after sitting with the Scriptures for some time, we asked the core group and catalyst leader to spend an hour or so in individual prayer. The group was going in a nice direction, and it was time to make some decisions. We did not expect what happened next. Instead of coming back from prayer fully ready to move forward, more than half the group came back and confessed to one another that they were repenting from sins and from following Jesus in ways culturally foreign to their context. The group did eventually take steps toward innovation, but the key moment of the entire time was that repentance. This transformative time of prayer and discernment was the backbone of the innovation that was to come.

In our experience to date, innovation in missions includes the whole person, bringing our full lives and selves, and that means new ways forward will include our own transformation in communities. 

**The transformative time of prayer and discernment was the backbone of the innovation that was to come.**

# Answering the Cry of the Poor in a Million Villages

The Church is facing a strategic opportunity—85 percent of people living in extreme poverty around the world reside in villages. These villages are also home to the majority of the world’s least-reached people. The Church has historically played an active role in wholistic ministry and alleviating global poverty with a goal of encouraging sustainable community development. However, while these outreaches may succeed in “helping without hurting,” they still often focus on limited-scope projects that provide good solutions to a single community.

In *Beyond Poverty*, Terry Dalrymple calls us to move beyond sustainable projects in a single village to transformational movements that multiply change from village to village and sweep the countryside. Through multiple case studies based on the actual experiences of more than 900 organizations in 136 different countries, this book tells the story of a large and growing network of ministries around the world using the strategy of Community Health Evangelism (CHE) to change the life of the poor forever. The principles in this book are not just a theory, but proven strategy.

The Church is uniquely positioned to accelerate poverty alleviation worldwide. After reading this book, pastors, mission leaders, mission professors, field workers, and any other Christians working among the poor will understand the fundamentals of catalyzing transformational movements that make disciples among the poor while lifting whole communities out of cycles of poverty and disease.

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*In Beyond Poverty, Terry Dalrymple presents the challenge of moving Christian servants of God beyond sustainable development work in a single village to transformational movements that sweep the countryside, based on the strategy of Community Health Evangelism (CHE), a global network which Terry founded and now serves as coordinator. I have come to know and appreciate Terry as a co-catalyst for Transform World’s Poverty Challenge, which focuses on transforming communities among the unreached and unengaged people who live in the 10/40 Window. Terry envisions the Million Village Challenge—which is strategically based on clusters, models, and tipping points—as a bold mission initiative that has the goal of reaching one million mission villages where the remaining Unreached People Groups and the poorest of the poor live.*

**DR. LUIS BUSH**

former International Director, AD 2000 & Beyond  
International Facilitator, Transform World 2020

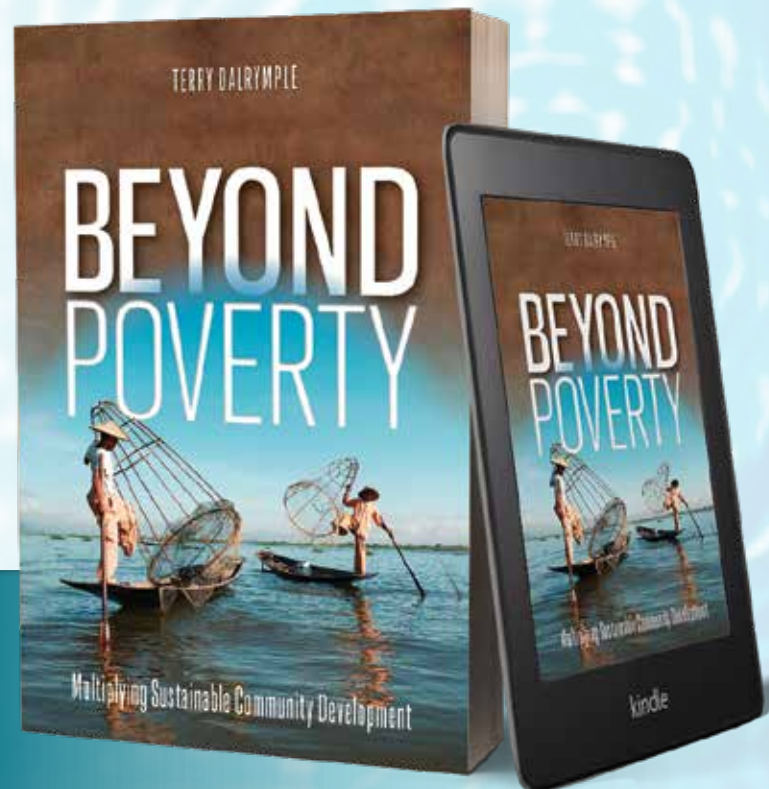
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### TERRY DALRYMPLE

has trained and mobilized workers around the world to initiate transformational ministries in villages and slums—ministries which make disciples, plant churches, and lift families and communities out of cycles of poverty and disease.

Terry’s strategy, Community Health Evangelism (CHE), is currently being used by Christian ministries and denominations in 136 countries.

Terry was the founder, and is now the coordinator, of the Global CHE Network ([www.chenetwork.org](http://www.chenetwork.org)). He was a cofounder, and is now the vice president, of the Alliance for Transformational Ministry. He also serves as a catalyst for Transform World’s Poverty Challenge and as an instructor at the Geneva Institute for Leadership and Public Policy at the United Nations.



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# Doing Contextualization in Cambodia: Communities of Dialogical Practice

**CLAIRE TC CHONG**

**Claire TC Chong** lived in Cambodia as a missionary and tentmaker for 15 years. Her passion and work revolve around the crafting of an Asian missiology through research, resource development and training. She is an associate with the Singapore Centre for Global Missions, a country coordinator (Singapore) of SEANET, an innovation catalyst with the CTWt.co.lab (Christ in Theravada Worlds Transformation Collaborative Lab; Winter Launch Lab), a research scholar with the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, a member of the Steering Committee of Asia2021 Congress and a member of the Lead Cohort of WEA Mission Commission. Claire currently lives in Singapore, married to Dr Kevin Lowe, and has three children.

## The Gap Between Theory and Practice

Contextualization, especially in highly pluralistic Asia, is needed more than ever in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The rise of Asia is unfortunately accompanied by a disenchantment with the West and its religion—Christianity. The pandemic is precipitating reverse globalization and intensifying ethnocentric and nationalistic sentiments.

However, contextualization is a project in malaise. It is an old topic, originally conceptualized in the 1970s. Fifty years on, the gulf between talk and practice has not significantly closed. At three separate forums in early 2021, Asian thought leaders were still appealing to Christians to do contextualization. The question that begs to be answered is, “Why isn’t contextualization implemented?”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Contextualization: The Theory, The Gap, The Challenge* by Darrell Whiteman (1997) for a review on this topic. “Why Isn’t Contextualization Implemented?” is the title of Chapter 5 in *Appropriate Christianity* by Charles Kraft. Two forums, “Missions Perspectives in Asia,” were organized by the Singapore Centre for Global Missions; the third forum is Lausanne Regional Listening Call (Southeast Asia).

This article is a reflection on promising activities in Cambodia in the last few years. By creating communities of dialogical practice committed to exploring the intersection of faith and culture, the Cambodian Church is inching forward in crafting out a distinct Khmer Christian identity. It is hoped that this report may encourage more robust practices of “being and doing church” in Asian contexts.

**The pandemic is precipitating reverse globalization and intensifying ethnocentric and nationalistic sentiments.**

## Faith and Culture Work by EFC

The “Faith and Culture Committee” of the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia (EFC) was started in 2016 for the purpose of researching and teaching contextual theology. Three ongoing projects are “Christian Wedding Ceremony according to Cambodian Culture,” “Christian Birth and Death Ceremonies according to Cambodian

Culture” and “Can Cambodian Christians *tvaibongkum* (worship) Their Parents?” The former two will be published in the Khmer language, and the latter, which was co-presented by Tep Samnang, the Director of EFC and by me at the SEANET mission conference in January 2020, is slated to soon become available in English.

The *tvaibongkum* project is an interesting one. According to Khmer customs, all children of any age should ritually demonstrate their respect by bowing to their parents on special occasions—this ritual act is called *tvaibongkum*. However, the Cambodian word *tvaibongkum* is translated into English and understood as “worship” among Christians. This poses a problem. The issue of Christian prohibition of “worshipping” parents and the ancestors is similar to that caused by the Jewish insistence of circumcision in the first century church. In this article, I thus frame my reflection on the process of contextualization according to some lessons drawn from the landmark debate of Acts 15.

## 6 Ps of Contextualization

**1. Participatory**—Being collectivistic in culture, Cambodians do not conceive contextualization as the work of an individual theologian; rather, it is carried out communally and includes diverse voices. The account in Acts 15 provides a model of such a communal and participatory approach. A sharp dispute between two competing views on circumcision had broken out (Acts 15:2), and to resolve the issue, the Jerusalem Council (of apostles and elders) convened before the church. (Acts 15:4,22) After much discussion (vs. 7), a carefully negotiated response was crafted. This narrative shows us that each “stakeholder,” regardless of his/her ideological position, should participate and contribute to the contextualization dialogue so that discussions may be rigorous and a shared decision may be made.

The Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia (EFC) is comparable to the Jerusalem Council; it is an umbrella association under which churches and Christian organizations are registered. The EFC Faith and Culture committee of eight people, representing heads of denominations, principals of seminaries, and leaders of Christian organizations, organizes forums in different provinces to engage with pastors all over Cambodia. The response to such forums is overwhelming, indicating the relevance and

pertinence of the subject matter. “Ninety percent of Cambodian pastors are favorable of doing contextual theology,” said Tep Samnang, the Director of EFC, “some are disagreeable, but it’s okay, in everything there will be some objections.”

**It dawned on me that the way faith is practiced in the Christian religion based on the critical analysis of Scriptural text and formulation of doctrinal concepts is not the way Cambodians conceive religion.**

**2. Practical**—One of the most striking features of the Cambodian approach of contextualization is the decision to center the work of theologizing around ritual. The subject of debate in Acts 15, similarly, revolved around a ritual—circumcision.

Tep Samnang explained, “The customs of *ka* (marriage), *kart* (birth), and *kok* (burial) are the three most important things in the life of Cambodian people. To focus on doctrinal theology is challenging for Christians, and even Cambodian pastors.” Ritual, on the other hand, is a Khmer way of life and an Asian spirituality. Ritual is not a pure religious category, as Christians commonly deem so; to evaluate it solely through the tenets of dogma does not justify what ritual means to the whole person and his/her whole life *in* community.

This primacy of ritual practice over abstract doctrine is also apparent in a conversation I had with two Cambodian monks studying at a Buddhist university. I had asked them what the central Buddhist *koletthi* (Cambodian Christian word for doctrine) are, and they curiously asked me what I meant as *koletthi*? It dawned on me that the way faith is practiced in the Christian religion based on the critical analysis of Scriptural text and formulation of doctrinal concepts is not the way Cambodians conceive religion. The Venerable Chuon Nath (1883–1969), the father of Modern Buddhism in Cambodia, taught Buddhism as propriety of behavior, and the proper way to behave as a Cambodian Buddhist is largely expressed ritually, through specific behavioral enactments or customs of relating to one another in daily life and special occasions.

Thus, doing contextual theology through ritual may be considered as an indigenous way of knowing (epistemology). A lot of contextualization done by current scholarship revolves around theological and doctrinal theses—a product of European Enlightenment, privileging mind over body and reason over experience. This could be one explanation for the tardiness of the contextualization project in Asia; we could be using the wrong tool for the job.

3. **Pastoral**—Doing contextualization is not just about acquiring and applying yet another new set of methodological techniques; rather, it is about nurturing a pastoral posture emanating lovingkindness (*metta*)—a cherished Khmer virtue. In this setting, *metta* is expressed as a willingness to patiently listen to the other, to empathetically understand and sincerely appreciate the other.

In the contextual approach employed by the Cambodian Church, exegeting culture is more than intellectually analysing the doctrinal meanings and functions of ritual acts. One needs to intuitively capture the affective meanings as well—the psychological, familial, social, and moral implications. Contextualization is not a rationalistic and evaluative exercise, assessing “right” from “wrong.” Rather, it calls for a “gentle, humble” and pastoral disposition toward the other, seeking to appreciate and affirm “whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure.” (Matt. 11:29, Phil. 4:8)

Paul and Barnabas exhibited this kind and pastoral posture. In Acts 15, they noted that circumcision “troubled their [Gentile] minds” (Acts 15:24), and made it “difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.” (Acts 15:19) It is apparent that they empathized with how the Gentiles thought and felt about the ritual practice of circumcision. Compassion superseded orthodoxy.

Similarly, listening to Cambodians, *tvaibongkum* is understood as a profoundly reverential and honorable way of demonstrating respect, gratitude and affection to one’s parents. Not to do so is an unthinkable behavior. *Tvaibongkum* is more of a social and moral category, and does not carry the same weight of religious nuance of “worship” implicit in Christian parlance.

4. **Perceptive**—One of the key points of Barnabas and Paul’s persuasion in the Acts 15 debate was the apparent evidence of God’s presence among the uncircumcised Gentiles through signs and wonders. (Acts 15: 12) Peter and James also recognized the undeniable movement of the Holy Spirit among the Gentiles. (Acts 15: 7-9, 13, 15, 17, 28) “See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” (Isa. 43:19) Contextualization calls for prayerful discernment of God at work in unfamiliar yet creative ways. It invites us to exercise restraint from being judgmental and too quickly labeling something different as heresy or syncretism.

Perceptive intuition is not an invalid way of knowing, according to Buddhist epistemology. In addition to the faculties of reason, perception is a form of knowing that comes from contemplating lived experiences, and raising insights leads to the realization of truth. Interestingly, in Acts 17, Paul invited the Athenians to “feel their way toward [God] and find Him.” (Acts 17:27) It is apparent that in the philosophical tradition of the Age of Reason, perception has been dismissed and even ridiculed.

In the *tvaibongkum* project, research revealed at least three cases in which godly men and women of vibrant churches are creating innovative ways to redeem the custom of demonstrating reverence to parents without compromising Christian allegiance to God. God is at work, and the Christian faith is blossoming in new ways in Khmer soil.

**Contextualization calls for prayerful discernment of God at work in unfamiliar yet creative ways. It invites us to exercise restraint from being judgmental and too quickly labeling something different as heresy or syncretism.**

5. **Pro-creative**—The Jewish Council saw that God was doing something new among the Gentiles, and what they saw renewed their hermeneutical paradigm and transformed their theological interpretation. Re-reading an old prophecy in an illuminating new way, James redefined what “people of God” meant:



from one that was ethnocentric, exclusively referring to Israel as God's chosen, to one that includes "the rest of mankind" and "all the Gentiles." (Acts 15:17) Similarly, Paul had a more nuanced interpretation of the doctrine of circumcision. Emphasizing the spirit of the law rather than its letter, he censured the legalistic demands of physical circumcision and preached on the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit. (Rom. 2:25-29)

Instead of imposing predetermined theological conceptions, the Jerusalem Church allowed God to transform their long-established theological ideas. The hermeneutical process that we see here is one that oscillates between text and context, one that is deeply rooted in the Word and yet sensitive to the work of the Holy Spirit in the present and to God's continued authorship in writing history.

Re-reading Scriptures through Khmer eyes, it was noted that Moses bowed before his father-in-law, Jethro, a Midianite priest (Exod. 18:7), King Solomon bowed before his mother, Bathsheba (1 Kings 2:19), and Abraham even bowed before three strangers (Gen. 18:2) and the Hittites. (Gen. 23:7) The Hebrew word used for "bow" in all these verses is *shachah*, the same word for "worship" to God (Gen. 22:5) and the prohibition of "worship" of idols. (Exod. 20:5) The Khmer notion of *tvaibongkum* parallels the Hebrew practice of *shachah*. As explained to me by a Cambodian monk, the word *tvaibongkum* simply refers to an outward demonstration of respect and does not carry the meaning of worship as Christians define it; another Khmer word *bozhea* would come closer to worship.<sup>2</sup>

6. **Peaceable**—In Acts 15, the Jewish Council did not just "repeal" the law of circumcision for the Gentiles, they negotiated a holistic response. They recommended that the Gentiles followed certain purity codes so as to maintain the unity of fellowship between Jews and Gentiles. The Council exercised the principle of 1 Cor. 10:32-33: not being a stumbling block to Jews, Gentiles or the Church of God. Contextualization involves a complex negotiation of different relations. Leveraging the core Khmer value of harmony and conflict-avoidance, the Cambodian process of contextualization endeavors towards peace-building relations by honoring indigenous socio-cultural norms:

**"Ninety percent of Cambodian pastors are favorable of doing contextual theology."**

<sup>2</sup> Hear the interview with the monk on this at SCGM Mission Resource Hub App, available at all app stores.

**Instead of imposing predetermined theological conceptions, the Jerusalem Church allowed God to transform their long-established theological ideas.**


- a) Deference is given to Christian elders. It took more than a year to seek the endorsement of certain senior pastors who are well respected in the Cambodian community. The contextualization endeavor is owned and led by mainstream players; it is not a fringe activity of a maverick or young leader who has been groomed in foreign methods and manners.
- b) Respect is given to the Buddhist community. Christian pastors in the *tvaibongkum* project engaged with Buddhist monks, temple leaders and elders in the community, and even engaged with explaining the Christian dilemma and in seeking suggestions.
- c) Esteem is given to the governing authorities. Christian pastors and leaders are keenly aware of the importance of developing positive relations with the local governing authorities. The book, *Christian Wedding Ceremony according to Cambodian Culture*, when published this year, will be gifted to the Ministry of Cult and Religion to demonstrate Christian cooperation to “Khmerize” Christianity.

## Envisioning Communities of Dialogical Practice

This Cambodian case study provides some nuanced insights for an innovative practice of contextualization. Building on the concepts of critical contextualization and the hermeneutical community endowed to us by Paul Hiebert, I wish to describe a community of dialogical practice based on a reading of Acts 15. The work of contextualization by such a community of dialogical practice is:

- (1) *participatory*—it involves a community and invites its members not to just sit and talk with one another, but actively engage with Christians and non-Christians outside the inner circle, experimenting and innovating practices, and critically reflecting together.
- (2) *practical*—it does not dichotomize faith and life, doctrine and practice; theologizing is performed within the locus of ritual action.
- (3) *pastoral*—rather than executing contextualization as an analytical project with an evaluative mentality, it is approached as an appreciative inquiry with an empathetic heart. Change is not imposed from without, but compelled from within.
- (4) *perceptive*—contextualization calls for intuitive discernment. It is not a unilinear process employing didactics; it is a spiral process employing dialogics.
- (5) *pro-creative*—instead of translation of forms and/or meanings, it is co-creation, birthing something anew.
- (6) *peaceable*—contextualization by a community of dialogical practice is not merely a theological exercise; it is a relational endeavor and an intricate negotiation.

I hope that this report of the Cambodian Church may encourage others to persevere in exploring and experimenting new localized expressions of faith for the sake of the gospel.

Contextualization is a very difficult thing to do. It challenges deeply ingrained understandings and practices and demands radical and uncomfortable shifts in mindsets. 



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# Wordly Collective: Building a Collaborative Ecosystem for Minority Language Community Flourishing

An interview by Steven Spicer with Melvyn Mak

**Steven Spicer** is the Innovation Lead in Frontier Ventures' Winter Launch Lab, where he works to integrate innovation and spiritual discernment in mission. His orientation towards group discernment was shaped by four years in a prayer ministry focused on encouraging intercession and member care for emerging movements in the Middle East and Central Asia.

**Melvyn Mak** was a banker and stockbroker, then a pastor, and is now in the midst of combining the two for the restoration of the kingdom. He has been married 40 years to Linda and has three adult daughters.

**Relationships are at the heart of social innovation in mission.**



**The essence of social innovation is the creation of new opportunities for people to overcome social challenges and barriers through the alignment of healthy and collaborative relationships.**

New ways forward in mission often emerge by making connections between people who are able to collaborate together to address a challenge. In other words, relationships are at the heart of social innovation in mission. This rings particularly true when it comes to serving and working among minority language communities (MLCs) who lack access to important information, resources and opportunities due to language barriers. Mission organizations have long been at work among these communities from the angle of Bible translation and gospel witness. However, there are also incredible opportunities to express the gospel in innovative and holistic ways through the formation of collaborative relationships at the nexus of language translation and community development.

One non-profit social enterprise inviting the church into this collaborative space is Wordly Collective. In partnership with SIL International (a faith-based NGO focused on language), they aim, “to help minority language community flourish using the languages they value most.”<sup>1</sup> More specifically, they, “seek to empower marginalized minority language communities, help more people step out of poverty, create localized information that will improve overall health and well-being and improve access to education.”

To discover more about what makes Wordly Collective's approach innovative, I recently had an opportunity to interview Pastor Melvyn Mak. In addition to being a board member of Wordly, Melvyn is also chairman of Transformational Business Network (TBN) Asia, which takes an ecosystem approach to supporting social entrepreneurs, and co-founder of Actxplorer, which combines travel with benefit to local communities. He describes his call and gifting as being an integrator, which I might suggest is a synonym for “social innovator.” The essence of social innovation is the creation of new opportunities for people to overcome social challenges and barriers through the alignment of healthy and collaborative relationships. That seems to me an apt description for what Wordly Collective is doing.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wordlycollective.asia/>

See Pastor Melvyn's explanation and reflections on Wordly Collective:

**Steven:** Hi Melvyn, could you share some about how Wordly Collective was developed, particularly with a collaborative approach that connects many different stakeholders around minority language communities?

**Melvyn:** Wordly Collective is about mother tongue language and how language can help bring people to the forefront of opportunities. We want to take whatever we have in terms of the linguistic side of things and connect with the world at large to bring about community flourishing—in other words, it's about the whole idea of missions but done in a more collaborative and integrated way.

Wordly Collective runs a translation platform. We are basically an ecosystem builder. The translation app will connect translators with users from the different sectors of society, and as we do that, we actually are a connector. If you need a document, a health advisory, a curriculum, a book, or whatever to be translated, we can actually connect them. Then we give a fee to the translators according to what is normally accepted as a translation fee.

Now, of course in the beginning some NGOs wanted to be translated, but they could not afford it. Likewise, missions organizations could not afford it, so then we would raise funds for them. In other words, we pay one side [translators], but to help the other side. We bring forth connection so that the people working with a particular minority language community can actually speed up a lot of things and exchange ideas—what works and what does not.

Let's say, for example, we look at a minority language group in Myanmar. That is really at the forefront because they have many minority language groups with more than a million

people in Myanmar. (Wordly has chosen to focus on the roughly 386 MLCs with at least one million speakers each.) We connect people with these minority language communities. It could be foundations, it could be governments, it could be the United Nations, or it could be social enterprises. And when we can start connecting them, then we realize that actually there's a role for us to play. Basically, we are trying to create turnkey projects that deal with economic, social, mental well-being and so on. And the Church has a role to play because the Church is involved with the spiritual and emotional well-being part of it.

**Steven:** Could you share about the role of geography and location as you work with stakeholders and minority language communities in the Wordly translation ecosystem?

**Melvyn:** For example, in Singapore we have migrant workers. They're from Bangladesh; they're from Myanmar. And it's not just in Singapore. You see, in Malaysia, you see similar representation of migrant workers as well as refugees, like those that are in Indonesia too.

In other words, we're talking about the diaspora. Now, our heart is that if we are reaching a particular language group, we always have this belief that, like the Book of Revelation says, God gathers the nations, every tongue, every tribe, every people, every nation. It is about the mother tongue. The heart language is still very key. God has not forgotten that, so just because people migrate to English for economic reasons doesn't mean that it's forgotten. In fact, I think the mother tongue can help speed up opportunities, and also it connects them in the diaspora. In other words, the Malaysian site working with the Rohingyas can know what the Indonesian site is doing because Wordly seeks to be that ecosystem builder.

**Steven:** As you bring together all of these different stakeholders and work with minority language communities at home and in diaspora, there are people from many different cultures and backgrounds involved. How does Wordly Collective think about this interreligious space of collaboration?


**Melvyn:** The proposal is that the space where the Jubilee Gospel [the bringing together of the Church and marketplace for the sake of alleviation of poverty] operates is perhaps the largest evangelism space that the Church has not thought about. Because our model [of evangelism], and I speak about myself as well, is people coming to listen. But I've realized that in this space of fighting poverty through enterprise, you have so much connectivity—with the Muslims, the Buddhists, the Hindus, the Christians—the different faiths all mixed up together. For example, every one of our Transformational Business Network Asia conferences has interfaith collaboration. Those guys know that I'm a pastor. Sometimes my team would slip up and say, "Oh, Pastor Melvyn!", so they know. And there's nothing that I hide. I work with, for example, the CEO of the Buddhist foundation organization, who is a great man—a great guy with a big heart of compassion—and then we work with the Islamic boarding school principal, their leader, and we all know our own religious affiliations.

But we all know that we all need to come together to help one another, especially actually Christians helping Muslims. Because in our region is Indonesia, which is the largest Muslim nation in the world, and they need help. So the question is who will help them?

## Conclusion:

So, what makes Wordly Collective innovative? Christians have already been at work among minority language communities. In fact, Wordly's partnership with SIL International builds upon years of language work in mission. Translation services also are not new. Phone apps providing services are not new. Neither are non-profits focused on health, education, and community development. But the reality is that with all those things in place MLCs too often lack the information they need to make informed decisions, to access new opportunities, and to move out of cycles of poverty. The innovation modeled by Wordly Collective is the creation of new opportunities through collaborative relationships. It is the connecting together of all of these contributors in one ecosystem, and then applying them together in new contexts. The result is a sustainable new offering to overcome barriers to MLCs flourishing "in the languages they value most." By thinking holistically about the people and communities that need to be involved, Wordly is able to offer services and relationships that bring opportunity—it is social innovation to address social challenges of marginalization due to limited language access.

It is no coincidence that MLCs are also often Unreached People Groups. While Wordly Collective is a neutral platform, it is an expression of a vision for kingdom transformation to improve spiritual, physical, mental and emotional well-being. It demonstrates value for the ethnolinguistic identity and dignity of peoples. Additionally, it provides a space for humble witness—both among the MLCs and with other stakeholder organizations in the midst of interreligious collaboration. It is an invitation for followers of Jesus to apply their vocational skillsets in a broader collaborative ecosystem that aims to bridge the information gap to see minority language communities flourishing. Thus, it is also creating new opportunities for us to follow Jesus faithfully alongside these communities.

**The innovation modeled by Wordly Collective is the creation of new opportunities through collaborative relationships. It is the connecting together of all of these contributors in one ecosystem, and then applying them together in new contexts.** 



# Rich Soil for Spiritual Innovation

## JOAN & ED MCMANNES

**Joan and Ed McManness** are based in Lancaster, PA. They enjoy being around and doing life with curators, entrepreneurs and creatives where community, the teachings of Jesus and culture intersect. Together they live out the contemplative life in action where care of people, community and creation are prioritized.

**Imagine the scene:** we're at the final interview for an Executive Director role of a 100-year-old ministry. The Board has just offered the position to us, but the Board Chair shared a caveat, "Do not say yes to this position unless you are 100% sure you've heard from God that He wants you to accept this role."

**For academic purposes, permaculture is "the conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive systems which have the diversity, stability, and resilience of natural ecosystems."**

It was clear in the interviews that the ministry, with ten acres of land and five buildings, had struggled financially. It was at a crossroads and needed new innovative initiatives to help it move forward sustainably. The question of hearing from God is not new for any of us, so, after compelling evidence through prayer and discernment, we decided to jump in headfirst into a context that needed a new approach of thinking and living—and to our surprise—it came partially through the son of a Tasmanian fisherman who first coined the phrase "permaculture" ("permanent agriculture"). In fact, we had heard about permaculture from a close friend who was planning to farm an acre on our property and had just completed a course on permaculture. For academic purposes, permaculture is "the conscious design and maintenance of agriculturally productive systems which have the diversity, stability, and resilience of natural ecosystems. It is the harmonious integration of the landscape with people providing their food, energy, shelter and other material and non-material needs in a sustainable way" (*What Is Permaculture?*, n.d.). "Permies," as they are often called, preach of "working with, rather than against, nature" and of engaging in "protracted and thoughtful observation, rather than protracted and thoughtless labor."

For our purposes, permaculture principles gave us a new framework to imagine and live out God's creative genius on our campus. In fact, how we interpreted permaculture was certainly not the original intent of those who developed the concept. However, when we reflected on the principles and what we could learn from them, we began envisioning deep design parallels with biblical stories and the values of our mission. As we prayed and interacted with our team, community, and friends that included people from around the world who live and study on our campus, inside and outside our faith tradition, it was clear God was calling us to something different, something more organic and natural in a permaculture sort of way.

We see connections between innovation and spirituality woven into our context where we intentionally engage with people of other faiths in our community. Our mission is to welcome people from around the world to live and study on our campus. In fact, we frequently have a dozen or more nationalities living in the International House, with another dozen studying in our newly-accredited academic English program.

Our campus has been a place of refuge for orphans, troubled teens and international students (in that order) for over 100 years. God has been orchestrating symbiotic activities that have thrived here throughout that time. As we prayed and discerned, we began to dream about how thriving could occur once again on this property while reflecting on the permaculture principles we were applying to our land and work. Permaculture has 12 main principles that aligned loosely with our mission to care for people, community and creation. For sake of brevity, below we'll share just five of the permaculture principles with related stories.

### **Permaculture Principle 1: Observe and Interact**

This principle emphasizes being observant to what is around us. So, we spent months in a design and innovation discernment process, walking our property, sitting quietly on campus, and interacting with friends, neighbors, students and residents while observing our natural and ministry context. We began seeing the organic around us taking shape—we just needed to cultivate the cross-pollination and co-supporting activities while recognizing the gifts we already had in the living things and components all around us. In fact, the web of cross-pollination seemed endless as our gardening, composting, continuing education offerings and prayer garden with a pond all naturally nurtured to another in our community. This also helped us relax into a posture more of observing “what is God doing” rather than “what do we have to do to make something happen.” That isn't to say that we didn't (and still don't) nurture projects and keep them moving forward or need great patience when there is a lull in activity, but I guess you could say we've also become more participant observers in planning for kingdom results in our ministry.

**Permaculture has 12 main principles that aligned loosely with our mission to care for people, community and creation.**

### **Permaculture Principle 2: Catch and Store Energy**

This principle suggests there are energy and resources that, if given the opportunity to grow, could also be valued, treasured and stored for continued use. The ideas that were generated during the discernment process

were seeds ready to sprout to life. Many ideas were easily transferable, like catching rainwater for use in our garden. Others involved more time to mature, like making space for community life on the half-acre adjacent to our international house. So we involved all acting participants, harvesting the feedback from those who lived here, visited here, worked here or lived nearby while taking the time to discern which of their ideas to launch as prototypes of projects that had potential—that may or may not fail. In these ways we thought that we could “catch and store” energy that could take root over time and recycle itself in exciting symbiotic ways on our campus. Our mission and commitment to People Care, Community Care and Creation Care was stored perennial energy waiting to fulfill multiple functions toward sustainability.

**Many ideas were easily transferable, like catching rainwater for use in our garden. Others involved more time to mature, like making space for community life on the half-acre adjacent to our international house.**

### **Permaculture Principle 8: Integrate Rather than Segregate, a Reflection on Care of Community**

This principle values collaboration and cooperation of a variety of community players. Obviously, every person who comes to our campus is already part of a community they left. But, when they arrive here, we are pleasantly challenged to care for them individually because we live in close proximity. This gets played out in very tangible ways. While Miriam was here visiting from Egypt, she was wrestling with a major decision. Knowing our spiritual inclination, and having gotten to know us through shared meals, she chose to seek out our advice. Also, being a business major, she learned of a local business employing local refugees that one of our board members owns. Miriam was excited by the coaching times she received, and the practical learning experiences gained. She also loved to see the surrounding community come on campus for our monthly farmer's market and asked to sell some of her native food. She did quite well at the market and gave all her proceeds back to our ministry, which was used to purchase a book to teach the Enneagram to students who came the following year.

**Obviously, every person who comes to our campus is already part of a community they left. But, when they arrive here, we are pleasantly challenged to care for them individually because we live in close proximity.**

### **Permaculture Principle 11: Use Edges and Value the Marginal, a Reflection of Care for People**

We related this principle to Jesus' ministry, specifically who he was attracted to and who he cared for. Another master's level student named Sarah from South Africa, who was studying at the nearby university, came and brought great energy to our small campus. We had many thoughtful spiritual conversations with her. She attended our house church and later met with a staff member for further clarification of the conversation. A large church in the area which loves serving our residents took her and other students on a kayak trip. This greatly facilitated her sense of belonging with the broader community. Once when we were tutoring high school students from Nepal in the dining room of the house, she walked through after classes and asked what we were doing. When I told her, she excitedly offered to help out once a week. The students loved being tutored by her.

**Once when we were tutoring high school students from Nepal in the dining room of the house, she walked through after classes and asked what we were doing.**

### **Permaculture Principle 12: Creatively Use and Respond to Change, a Reflection on Care of Creation**

And finally, a story about stewarding and caring for our property which demonstrates in a practical, welcoming way our love of creation and the invitation to others to experience God in the space. There had been a small pond and garden that disappeared in the overgrowth some years ago. After a local business dedicated a workday on campus, the pond was cleaned out. This gave us the inspiration we needed as a staff to weed and plant flowers. Residents and local neighbors were invited to join us. Slowly, a prayer

garden was formed. Now, locals who walk by are invited to sit on the benches along the winding path to rest. The small sign leading the way reads, "welcome to all who seek peace."

We also hope that they will feel welcome to join us for a cup of coffee at our pop-up café on Fridays.

This pop-up café is an example of learning through prototyping and moving from one iteration to another. We found that this weekly café became more successful when we tried mixing it into our monthly farmer's market. Integrating the café into the narrative of our monthly events gives the community a connection point and invitation to stop by and join us weekly.

As you can see, we have been captivated by permaculture design, which we interpreted for our context as a unified and multi-dimensional ecosystem working symbiotically within our mission.

**The integrated care of people, community and creation, and the spiritual directives God speaks to us offer us the thinking tools that help interpret and cultivate the natural and people resources around us. MF**





# ‘Little Drops, Mighty Ocean’: An African Case Study in Partnership

BY  
**VICTOR M. TUKURA**

**Victor M. Tukura** is a lawyer by profession and serves as the International Director of Missions Supporters League (MSL), a missions agency he founded with his wife Nosa, in 1998. He has also served in numerous capacities at various levels of the public and private sectors in Nigeria. Victor is a prolific writer, who has authored more than 20 books on the twin-theme of missions and discipleship.

It was a long road trip from Abuja, Nigeria’s capital city, to Latana, a rural settlement located in Billiri Local Government of Gombe State, in the northwest region of the country. The rainy season was regressing, and the dry weather was just setting in. The cool harmattan wind and the towering mango tree above us did a lot to cushion the impact of the African sun, making our outdoor meeting an entirely refreshing experience.

I was in the village to meet with the members of the Latana Chapter of the Missions Supporters League (MSL). They were pleasantly surprised at my visit. It sounded unbelievable that the International Director of MSL would travel a distance of almost seven hours to meet with “unschooled people.” Indeed, uneducated, elderly women made up a large percentage of their membership, and they reasoned that their chapter was way down the pecking order, compared to other chapters of means.

Such gestures and relationship building are an integral part of who we are in MSL. Humility and servant leadership are highly prized among us. Our membership is drawn from all strata of society, and we strive to give everyone a sense of belonging.

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## Vision and Mission

MSL was founded by me and my wife Nosa. She is a physicist, while I am a lawyer. After my university and law school training, I was called to the Nigerian Bar in 1985. Shortly afterwards, I took up the challenge of mobilizing resources for mission work, and this set me on the path of

missions advocacy. In 1988, I set up a law office—Victor Tukura & Co. (Missions Chambers), with the primary aim of raising funds for missions. In the course of time, Nosa and I founded MSL, which serves as a platform for the mobilization of resources for global missions.

**These chapters are clusters of Christians from different local churches, who come together to fulfill the common goal of reaching the nations with the gospel, through missions partnership.**

As captured in our books and other publications, the vision of MSL is: “A God-centered and dynamic missions support movement committed to the holistic transformation of peoples of the world.” Our mission statement is, “to raise prayer, financial, material support and other resources for all aspects of missions, through



the mobilization of the Church for the salvation of nations.”<sup>1</sup> The objectives of MSL are discharged through the establishment of chapters in various villages, towns and cities. These chapters are clusters of Christians from different local churches, who come together to fulfill the common goal of reaching the nations with the gospel, through missions partnership.

### Why Chapters?

At the commencement of the vision, our ministry efforts were restricted to funds raised from the law office and other family sources, but God told us to go further to broaden and open things up by involving the Body of Christ (the Church). Whatever was ongoing on the family platform in praying and funding missions would only remain a drop in the ocean in view of the magnitude of need on the mission fields. But opening up channels of support for missionaries through chapters would constitute many drops that would in the long run become a mighty ocean. Consequently, we evolved a principle of “little drops, mighty ocean” in establishing clusters of Christians in mission partnership.

Problems we were trying to solve by adopting the chapter model:

1. Multiplying available channels for the funding of missions.
2. Trying to avoid donor fatigue that comes from individual or families for consistently bearing the burden of supporting myriad needs at the same time.
3. Providing a more robust spiritual cover to prevent or minimize spiritual attacks that come from supporting missions if done alone.

Some advantages of the chapter model are:

1. Provides a platform for the involvement of every Christian to pragmatically participate in the Great Commission, irrespective of status and class.
2. Denominational barriers are broken as chapter members are made up of Christians from various denominational backgrounds working together.
3. Little resources from each member can go a long way in accomplishing much when pulled together in a chapter, thereby creating multiplication and synergy.

4. Adoption of a mission field or work by the members of a chapter gives them concentration and focus on service instead of dissipating resources on many needs at the same time.
5. Mission work is backed with prayers and finances with equal intensity.
6. Creates a bonding and fellowship between Christians within the chapter which showcases the unity in the Body of Christ.
7. Everybody has something peculiar to bring for the advancement of the gospel work on the missions fields, e.g., giftings, expertise, experience, etc.
8. Carrying the burden of the field is spread and shared by many and therefore less cumbersome.
9. It creates opportunity for family involvement in missions that could endure from generation to generation, which leads to sustainability.
10. The whole Church is strategically engaged in the task to preach the whole gospel to the whole world.

**But opening up channels of support for missionaries through chapters would constitute many drops that would in the long run become a mighty ocean.**

### Methods and Membership

Our goal is to build bridges between Christians and Unreached People Groups, in the mission fields, by making disciples in the nations, one field at a time. It is our belief that Christians of all persuasions who are not missionaries serving God on the mission field are only at “home” to service all aspects of missions in partnership with the missionaries, by providing the resources needed to get the nations saved. Each and every Christian should, as a matter of necessity, be either a missionary or a partner, serving as yoke fellows and equal stakeholders in the mission of planting churches in the nations of the earth.

So, while MSL Chapters range in size from five to 20 persons, the numerical strength of the chapter is not the main issue. The most important thing is the commitment of the members to their collective assignment.

<sup>1</sup> MSL Handbook.

Each chapter adopts a mission field and works with missionaries to proclaim Jesus within an Unreached People Group. Through sustained involvement in these fields, the chapters provide prayer, financial and material support to missionaries.

### Prayer Thrust

Prayer is key to every missions endeavor. With this consciousness, MSL has put in place prayer platforms for members and Christians to stand in the gap for missionaries and mission work. The first platform is the prayer segment of the monthly MSL chapter meetings. In addition, the Prayer Web, which is the prayer calendar of MSL, is used to develop a global praying web of Christians for missions.

**MSL has put in place prayer platforms for members and Christians to stand in the gap for missionaries and mission work.**

### Financial and Material Support

In MSL, we have professionals like lawyers, engineers, medical doctors, judges, architects, nurses, entrepreneurs and teachers; but we also have artisans and local farmers. Some chapters periodically raise and send large sums of money to their adopted mission fields. However, some other chapters generate small amounts of money, but they do so faithfully. Some chapters send funds to their adopted mission field once a year, while others do so more frequently. Ultimately, each chapter adopts the approach that suits them.

**It goes beyond contributing money to establishing a viable collaboration which makes the two parties yokefellows and equal partners in the missions endeavor.**

### Relationship

In the traditional ways of missions support and partnership, donors contribute money to fund mission programs and projects. In MSL, we go further by establishing a consummate relationship between the

supporter and missionary. It goes beyond contributing money to establishing a viable collaboration which makes the two parties yokefellows and equal partners in the missions endeavor. The partner does not support from afar but takes personal interest in the fruitful outcome of the endeavor.

An example of this relationship between the missionary and supporters was demonstrated in what the MSL Jos chapter did sometime in year 2000. They had adopted a remote mission field located somewhere in the Mandara mountains along the Nigeria/Cameroon border for support. Accessing the field takes a six-hour trek climbing through the range of mountains from the base. The converts were constructing a church building made of mud bricks and had gotten to the roofing level. The dry season had just ended, and the rains were threatening. Any delays would bring down the whole structure and the efforts of the converts would be reduced to ground zero. Being an emergency, the missionary quickly rushed to the chapter and they promptly rallied round to raise the needed funds. Joyfully, the missionary went back to the field with all the materials required for roofing and windows. Immediately, the roofing was completed, the rains came down heavily, but the building was spared. The villagers were astonished and held the view that the God of the Christians is very powerful. He withheld the rains until the church building was completed.

One of the ways of fostering this missionary/supporter relationship is through field visitations. In this case the supporters, at the convenience of the missionary, visit the latter on the field for fellowship and encouragement. Some have even engaged in medical outreaches.

On the flip side, the missionary could be invited to spend some time with the supporters when on vacation or when he or she needs to take some time off the field. In the process, a relationship commences and is sustained over time. It is this synergy that provides the needed impetus for field work to thrive.

**The villagers were astonished and held the view that the God of the Christians is very powerful. He withheld the rains until the church building was completed.**

## Mobilization and Ministry Growth

### Mobilization Thrust

In order to fulfill our mandate of mobilizing the Church and creating awareness among believers, MSL has adopted some measures, which include the Senders Assembly, an annual missions conference, and state summits, which are a one-day awareness program aimed at mobilizing Christians for missions in the different state capitals. We also organize breakfast meetings where the vision of MSL is shared with the invited guests. In addition, church visitations are conducted for the purpose of creating awareness in churches.

Other forms of mobilization include the MSL New Frontiers, an arm of the ministry that specifically targets the mobilization of 10,000 youth towards various aspects of the global mission workforce within designated periods. The essence is to inculcate a missions mindset in the youth and to prepare them for the emerging new frontiers in missions.

### Ministry Growth


The first chapter was established in Jos, in Plateau State, but the vision has spread steadily to other parts of Nigeria. MSL is contributing modestly, and in productive ways, to global missions, discipleship and evangelism, through the network of chapters and the adoption of Unreached People Groups. Currently, MSL has chapters spread across 22 of the 36 States in Nigeria, and we are in partnership with 25 mission agencies based in Nigeria and other African countries. So far, we have adopted more than 102 mission fields or Unreached People Groups.

MSL is gradually spreading outside Nigeria. We earnestly believe that the task of reaching the remaining unreached nations of Africa is achievable. Just imagine what could happen if a fraction of the human and material resources locked up in the African church is released for cross-cultural missions globally. Certainly, no ethnic group would remain unengaged, as all would be ultimately reached with the gospel.

**We earnestly believe that the task of reaching the remaining unreached nations of Africa is achievable.**

### Conclusion

We believe that every Christian has something to bring to the table. The salary earners and big-time businesspeople bring in their contribution, the small fish farmer brings in the proceeds of his fish farm, the petty trader brings in her small income. A little of this and a little of that, and gradually something substantial is raised for the furtherance of the gospel in the mission fields.

Through simple but strategic ways, MSL members are touching the world by doing global missions in their local chapters. It is these little drops of water dotted all around the globe that will transform into a mighty ocean, and the knowledge of the glory of God will cover the earth as the waters covers the sea. (Hab. 2:14) 





# Design Thinking: Designed for Missions

BY **BRENT MCHUGH**

After serving in the Middle East with his wife Kim for nearly 10 years, Brent currently serves as the International Director of Christar, where he provides spiritual, visionary, executive and developmental leadership. His charge is to serve God, Christar workers and the least-reached by shepherding the cooperative ministries of Christar in order to cultivate Christ-honoring transformation in least-reached communities.

In 2018, as headlines in the global press became captivated by the daily increasing influx of migrants and refugees to Europe—to Germany, Italy and then Spain—a group of ministry practitioners gathered in southern Spain. As Spain’s shores and airports together became the largest receiver of a cornucopia of least-reached people groups fleeing their homelands, this group saw a vast open door.

Those of us who had taken the *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* course were reminded of Dr. Ralph Winter describing involuntary coming (“when people were forced to migrate to areas of believers and were influenced toward the believers’ faith”) as one of the mechanisms by which the kingdom of God has expanded throughout history. The immediacy of the opportunity before us to engage the people the Lord was bringing to us prompted local actors to come together to brainstorm, discuss and collaborate to meet the God-sized opening to serve. It was humbling to listen and work with leaders from multiple organizations and churches, as well as with community advocates with years of practical knowledge, skill and gifting.

I have been a big fan of the app Meetup since 2013 and have benefited from its service to announce innovation meetings in our region. It was through one of these Meetup events that I met Gijs, the president of Bold Thinking, as he facilitated several workshops focused on developing solutions for big challenges. He soon began mentoring me in Bold Thinking practices, and I later completed a strategic planning and implementation certificate program through the University of Virginia Darden School of Business that hooked me on design thinking processes.

Though, as the name suggests, design thinking is rooted in the strategies and processes designers use, its principles provide a people-centered approach that can benefit a wide range of fields. This creative problem-solving process focuses heavily on the needs of the people who would benefit from the products or services that are created. As such, it’s a powerful tool that can lead missions practitioners to strategies that address the challenges experienced by the people we are seeking to reach with the gospel and in turn open doors for church-planting.

**The immediacy of the opportunity before us to engage the people the Lord was bringing to us prompted local actors to come together to brainstorm, discuss and collaborate to meet the God-sized opening to serve.**

**This creative problem-solving process focuses heavily on the needs of the people who would benefit from the products or services that are created.**

Our group in southern Spain saw this several times over. Through a series of Bold Thinking exercises built on design thinking, our local community initiated a call to action that has led to several solutions that have positively impacted the lives of migrants and refugees. The first was the development and launch of an NGO by leaders from at least six organizations; this entity continues to meet the needs of immigrants through activities like food distribution and language classes.

Our design thinking approach then led to the development of start-up academies that equip entrepreneurs in the immigrant community to incubate and accelerate their microenterprises. These programs engage the largest experienced need of the immigrant and refugee community—the need for employment and income—by coaching, mentoring and training newly arrived migrants to start local, regional or global companies.

These start-up academies were created to provide environments that inspire and facilitate experimentation, development and growth. They are labs where immigrants' ideas are developed into products or services that are designed and tested, and where customers become partners. The academy serves as a greenhouse where the facilitators are the gardeners making sure to provide the conditions and nourishment needed for enterprises to grow and become sustainable. So far, three start-up academy programs are being offered in our community, and a fourth is beginning in another city soon.

From there, design thinking has led to the development of a tool to identify the skills of immigrants and refugees and assist them in integrating into the workforce of southern Spain. This initiative has grown exponentially and led to participation in a European Commission-wide call for wider implementation.

Most recently it has led to the development of an artificial intelligence tool that helps immigrants and refugees understand the pathway to asylum and access other services. Applying for asylum is a human right (according to the United Nations), so everyone must be able to enter another country to request it. Despite the fact that Spain and the European Union have clear protocols regarding asylum applications, many migrants do not know where and how to find this information; even when they find it, it is not always available in their native language.

Our solution gives asylum-seekers and other migrants access to the pathway in their own language so they can enter the asylum process and gain access to the labor market. The platform has a simple objective: to combine co-creation and artificial intelligence to make it easier for migrants to understand and access the services to which they are entitled.

**Our design thinking approach then led to the development of start-up academies that equip entrepreneurs in the immigrant community to incubate and accelerate their microenterprises.**

**So far, three start-up academy programs are being offered in our community, and a fourth is beginning in another city soon.**

Design thinking has led to these durable solutions that are allowing ministries throughout southern Spain to engage immigrants and refugees at their points of need for the purpose of planting churches among the people groups that God has brought to our region. These strategies are enabling us to build bonds of trust in migrants' social networks and establish a respected name in the immigrant and refugee community—benefits to our church-planting strategy that have been affirmed as fruitful practices in the research of Eric Adams, Don Allen and Bob Fish. In addition, these solutions have reduced the number of refugees and immigrants who leave our community, thus increasing the likelihood of sustainable gatherings of believers from among least-reached people groups.

In addition, these solutions have reduced the number of refugees and immigrants who leave our community, thus increasing the likelihood of sustainable gatherings of believers from among least-reached people groups.

As we as a community of church-planting practitioners consider the 7,000+ unreached peoples that must still be engaged with the gospel, design thinking is an important resource for developing durable solutions to reach them.


### UVA Darden School of Business

Our design thinking approach was impacted greatly by Professor Jeanne M. Liedtka of the University of Virginia, who, by her instruction, has enabled our staff to grow in our ability to adapt to new opportunities such as expanding mobilization from the Majority World. She also taught us to respond to church-planting opportunities among the largest movement of people in our lifetime by asking four questions:

- “What is?” (focused on what exists in the present)
- “What if?” (focused on building on the present to envision a new future)
- “What wows?” (focused on helping teams hone in on solutions that stand out)
- “What works?” (focused on testing possible solutions with actual users in the real world)

Based on my experience, I believe design thinking is an important resource for identifying solutions to the challenges we are facing in fulfilling the Great Commission. Numerous aspects of this approach make it a good fit for missions practitioners:

- **Emphasis on engaging people:** As mission organizations and cross-cultural workers continuously strive to connect with least-reached people groups in more direct and relevant ways, the people-centered approach inherent in design thinking provides a range of practical methods and processes through which we can realize the outcomes we are seeking for the kingdom in all its varied contexts.
- **Future orientation:** As an integrative practice that focuses on identifying opportunities and obstacles through imagination, modeling, experimentation and visioning, design thinking offers tools that enable decision-makers to challenge and often redefine their assumptions about a challenge or opportunity they face.
- **Ability to operate in complexity:** Design practices fit well with the complex multi-stakeholder landscape of church-planting. With its emphasis on integrating many different perspectives, design thinking offers tangible means of benefiting from strategic collaboration.
- **Systematic methods:** Design thinking, as opposed to more loosely formulated terms like “innovation” or “creativity,” offers well-described methods and tools that can be readily adopted by mission leaders and field personnel.

As we as a community of church-planting practitioners consider the 7,000+ unreached peoples that must still be engaged with the gospel, design thinking is an important resource for developing durable solutions to reach them. In a world where the windows and doors of opportunities to engage people groups are opening and closing faster than at any other time in history, I hope you will consider adding design thinking processes to your team or organization as a fruitful means to foster innovative change. 



# Accelerating Transformation

BY RYAN CROZIER

**Ryan Crozier** moved from Indiana to Bucharest, Romania with his wife in 2012. He founded Good Bureau, a local nonprofit to invest in leaders and their missions to help change the nation. He also founded Agency Boon, a full-service digital marketing agency, and Boonforce, a salesforce implementation team. Collectively, these businesses employ talented Romanians.

There's something special about seeing a group of people overcome obstacles and achieve that which many thought impossible.

I like to root for the underdogs. There's something special about seeing a group of people overcome obstacles and achieve that which many thought impossible. This might just be part of the reason that Romania captivated my heart at such a young age.

Romania is an underdog country. As one of the poorest countries in the European Union, Romania is still overcoming the devastation of 40+ years of Communism. Problems like brain drain, human trafficking, corruption and social injustices can leave the average person feeling hopeless. Many people have chosen to leave the country in hopes of a better life.

We serve a relentless God. He is at work in this nation.

I've seen God raising up a generation of leaders who have a calling to bring change through all sectors of society. They aren't willing to simply prioritize their own interests but instead are making sacrifices to help others.

They have chosen to stay in the country and start a nonprofit organization or social enterprise to solve one of the many problems facing society.

One of these entrepreneurial leaders is a young man named Andrei. I first met Andrei when he was a student of Teen Challenge Romania, a substance abuse recovery program. After fighting a heroin addiction for over 13 years, Andrei got a new chance at life. He found freedom and a new purpose in life through his relationship with Jesus. After graduating from Teen





## Empowered Leaders

Great leaders are emerging in Romania. We connect them with the support they need to do more.



## Meaningful Connections

Many are working in silos around the country, so we bring leaders and investors together to multiply their impact.



## Lasting Change

With enough capital, the right connections, and a community supporting them - these leaders are changing Romania, for good.

Challenge and getting married, he found a great job as a manager of a restaurant owned by a local Christian businessman. While this job provided the income and security for his growing family, it didn't satisfy his heart's desires. God began speaking to Andrei about starting a nonprofit organization that would educate young people about the dangers of drug abuse. A few years back, he took the bold step of resigning from his job to start this new venture. These bold steps of faith are easy to read about, but often difficult to live out.

The world celebrates the successful entrepreneur, but only once an idea has been proven to work. The journey of an entrepreneur is full of struggles. While many people start out full of hope and a clear vision for their work, they often find themselves discouraged and questioning if they've made an irreversible mistake by starting down this path. A few of the common reasons for this discouragement are the lack of financial support and not seeing the impact as quickly as they had hoped. The risks of entrepreneurship are high, especially in developing nations. The risks of social entrepreneurship are even higher.

For too long the American Church has focused on sending missionaries and often overlooked the opportunity of equipping local leaders. In many nations, it's far more effective to invest in leaders who are already at work and help them increase their impact. A benefit of this model is the long-term sustainability of the work. I also believe this is truly representative of how we see Paul establish the early church by building up local leaders, allowing him to move on to new communities.

**We believe the best way to have a lasting impact in Romania is to invest in local leaders, regardless of their faith background.**

At Good Bureau, a nonprofit organization in Bucharest, Romania, we want to see this nation transformed. We believe the best way to have a lasting impact in Romania is to invest in local leaders, regardless of their faith background. While seeking God on how we could best serve these emerging entrepreneurial leaders, we were impressed with the popular model of incubators and accelerators helping launch new business ventures across the globe. These programs typically last anywhere from a few weeks to a full year and provide a support system designed to grow a successful business. One of the biggest advantages of such a program is the chance to pitch investors who will provide financial capital to sustain the business during the startup phase. Another benefit is having access to a community of entrepreneurs who share their experiences and lessons learned. These types of programs were a real inspiration to us as we designed our own.

Last year we started the Good Accelerator, a 12-month program that brings concentrated funding and support along with an invitation to join a like-minded community of leaders. While the program lasts just 12 months, we see the community being a life-long investment. We desire to walk alongside these leaders during the course of their lives to offer ongoing support. The intensive effort




is designed to help them launch a new mission or make an even greater impact where they're serving already. A key element of our program is that it's not so much about the venture itself, but about making a concentrated effort to invest in the leader behind it. We have found that the leader makes all the difference, and yet his or her own well-being is often overlooked and forgotten in the process of scaling impact. One of the ways we make this personal investment is through one-on-one coaching with our team. These coaching sessions create a space for the leaders to pause from their busy schedules and process their thoughts and feelings aloud.

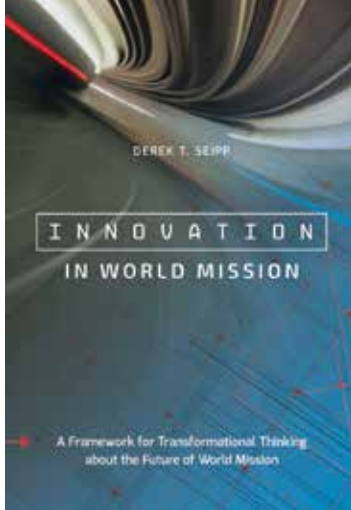
**A key element of our program is that it's not so much about the venture itself, but about making a concentrated effort to invest in the leader behind it.**

Andrei joined the Good Accelerator program during the first year of starting his nonprofit, Teen Challenge Smart. We intentionally picked a leader like Andrei because we believe God has great plans for him and the work he's doing. It's been a privilege to journey alongside him as

he's grown in his development as a leader. The work of Teen Challenge Smart continues to flourish. Andrei and his team of volunteers are running a powerful drug prevention program in schools across Romania. Students have a unique opportunity to hear personal stories from former addicts and how their choices led to destruction. They are also leveraging social media to reach millions of young people with the devastating stories of drug abuse.

When I reflect on the lives of our faith heroes, I like to think back to their start before they were recognized and celebrated for their accomplishments. I recall that season of life when they had taken the step of faith but didn't yet see the results coming into fruition. They stood on God's promises but questioned the vision and their own abilities to accomplish it. I wonder if someone came alongside to encourage and support them during this difficult season. I don't want to risk these leaders giving up on the mission before them; the stakes are too high. I want to be that cheerleader in their life.

In this life, we are all underdogs. Thankfully, we serve a God of the underdogs. He loves using underdogs to accomplish His will. This makes sure that He gets the glory. We each have a part to play in bringing transformation to the nations. Thank you for the part you play. 



# The Discipline of Innovation: Approaching Planning Differently

BY  
**DEREK T. SEIPP**

**Derek T. Seipp** is the East Asia director for Beyond and has been working with church movements around the world for 20 years. He's the author of *Innovation in World Mission* (William Carey Library), and a contributor to "Extending God's Kingdom: Church Planting Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow" (*EMQ*). Derek has a master's degree in Organizational Leadership and Innovation from Regent University.

World mission is not immune to the massive changes that are happening in our world today. In response to those changes, we see local churches engaging in mission overseas, bypassing mission agencies in the process. Churches (knowingly or unknowingly) recognized the gap between those massive changes and what is happening in missions today and simply stepped in. Most every mission leader I know admits to feeling that new pressures are emerging. People's giving patterns are changing. Young missionaries have different motivations than the previous generation. The mission field itself has changed. Strategic drift is keeping us from being as effective as we could be.

What does this teach us? It shows us that those who align themselves with the future are consistently better prepared. They stay ahead of the curve by having strategies in place by the time the future arrives. It's driven by an insatiable curiosity that seeks to understand the changes happening around us; changes which others miss (Oster 2011). The more we understand these changes, the better we are at finding creative solutions we can begin implementing today.

It is not easy to do so. Our brains are hard-wired to identify familiar patterns. Pattern recognition is geared to recognizing that which has remained the same. This helps us recognize faces, learn languages, and remember where we placed our car keys. But this also hinders us from recognizing change. As a result, we ignore the important cues, that change happened faster than we realized (Hannagan 2009).

Further complicating matters, the projects we manage and the organizations we lead have inertia; individuals and finance are invested in current plans. Assuming we even fully recognized a change, we still have to convince others of its existence, then agree upon how to react. Such discussions are often held off for annual reviews, where, because there are other expedient issues needing to be discussed, any big changes simply fall off the table.

Consequently, we react even slower still. Organizations are designed for stability.

With our brain's inherent biases against change, corrective steps usually fall short of what's actually needed (Hannagan, 2009). This results in small, but growing gaps between what we do and what needs to be done. To make matters worse, these corrections are generally reactive, rather than proactive in nature. This means we're constantly trailing behind while change gains an increasing lead. Hannagan calls this widening gap "strategic drift."

Strategic drift eventually increases to the point that the gaps become vast chasms. Because drift is so gradual, most organizations don't realize the resulting chasm until it's too late. It's the classic boiling frog syndrome.

So, how do we recognize and fill the chasm? How do we choose the right actions amid such uncertainty?

## Innovation

Peter Drucker said, "In a time of rapid change, the opportunities for improving, for getting results, are also changing rapidly. Things that were impossible or unnecessary yesterday suddenly become possible, and things that made great sense yesterday no longer make sense . . . One of the tasks of leaders is to make sure that we constantly put our scarce resources (people and money) where they do the most good. . . . Good intentions are no longer enough" (Hesselbein & Cohen 1999).

It might surprise you, but Peter was writing to leaders of a non-profit volunteer organization, helping underprivileged inner-city youth. He was helping the organization find the actions which would have the greatest impact on literacy and graduation. Knowing this, you may want to read that passage again.

He continues, "What we have really done is learn the discipline of innovation. . . . It means being able and willing

to abandon efforts that don't get results—either because we don't know how to produce results or because we are misdirecting our efforts... It's not looking at need alone, but looking at need and opportunity... We need the discipline of innovation because in a rapidly changing society, our problems are changing" (Hesselbein & Cohen 1999).

If we enact new strategies designed to deal with changes that we recognize today, and have *already* happened (*past tense*), we simply align our organizations to the past. See the fundamental flaw? Yet, this is what most planning methodologies produce.

The most common planning tool, the SWOT analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat), does nothing to envision the future, track emerging trends, analyze their interactions and explore the new horizons of *tomorrow*. SWOT and most planning processes merely create incremental changes in strategy, when in reality, we have to jump the chasm and get ahead of strategic drift.

A better way forward is scenario planning. It comprises a set of tools which, since the 1970s, are now becoming mission-critical business processes to most corporations and are taught in the business institutes of Ivy League schools. The traditional strategic plan is out. Scenario planning has become the practice of many of the world's largest companies.

Instead of predicting "the" future which will emerge, it's more advantageous to think of the future in the plural, as an array of plausible futures (Hines & Bishop 2006). This helps us position ourselves favorably within a variety of different future scenarios.

A weather forecaster looks at various weather patterns and how they will interact; then a forecast is developed for the next few days and weeks (2006). As weather trends develop and change, the forecaster updates his forecast to match new emerging information. Over time, the weather forecaster develops his skills and begins to understand to which types of information he must pay close attention.

Predictions are precise, exact statements about what the future will be. Forecasts, however, provide just enough meaningful information to help us make better decisions about our day: should I take an umbrella, should I delay my beach vacation, or should I buy a snowblower?

Scenario planning thinks about the future in terms of forecasting multiple scenarios. We track various trends and events impacting the environment surrounding our ministries in order to paint various probable scenarios impacting the future of our ministry. Forecasts give us

information about the future that empowers us to take meaningful action in the uncertainty of today (Saffo 2007).

In the process of exploring these scenarios, we learn that there are ways we can create meaningful dialogue and influence the future as it emerges (2006). A good scenario simply helps us think about the future in a way that helps us become like the leaders of Issachar, understanding the times and knowing what to do as a result. This recent pandemic has been a perfect example of why scenario planning is so important.

Certainly life returning to "normal" was one potential scenario. In this scenario we could all plan for when borders would open up, and we could get back to our respective ministries. But other scenarios begged the question, "What if life doesn't return to 'normal'?"

Considering all the global forces converging upon this pandemic (political changes, technical abilities, global missions trends, indigenous church trends, etc.), allowed us to imagine several new scenarios highlighting what "might" emerge. Suddenly, a return to the "old normal," didn't seem as plausible as it once did.

Very early on, we used the time to retrain many of our teams. We helped them see lockdowns not as a restraint, but a gift to re-evaluate their work. The goal was to change their perspective from an "inside worker" to an "outside catalyst."

Considering multiple new future scenarios, we prayerfully explored *the kind of future we wanted to emerge after the pandemic*. This allowed us to take a proactive approach to the lockdowns, looking for the forces we have control over, and what other forces we can actively influence.

Now, even as life slowly returns to the "old normal," many of our workers no longer want to engage the way they always have. They see new options to engage with greater influence. Through changing their view of the future, they've changed how they engage with the present.

In the end, that's what innovation is all about. 

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# Is This China's Final Solution for the Uyghurs?

BY KEITH CAREY

**Keith Carey** has been on staff with Frontier Ventures since 1986, mostly with the *Global Prayer Digest*. *GPD* merged with Joshua Project's Unreached of the Day prayer effort this year. Keith has spent most of his time gathering information about specific Unreached People Groups, networking, coordinating writing assignments, editing and preparing for future prayer efforts. He also writes for the online *Window Reporter* and has recently written a novel which is intended to encourage prayer and faith in challenging circumstances. All photos in this article are from iStockPhotos.com

Gulbahar Haitiwaji (not her real name) was a Uyghur exile in France who returned to China to sign important papers. Chinese government officials had a photo of her daughter attending a Uyghur cultural event in France where the Uyghur flag was displayed. For this reason, Mrs. Haitiwaji was regarded as a terrorist and sent to a re-education camp for two years. Such reports keep pouring in from credible publications like *BBC News* and *The Diplomat*.

The first contact between the Han Chinese and the nomadic ancestors of the Uyghurs in 130CE was positive. These ancestors were ethnic Tocharians, Buddhists who founded the Kushan Empire. City-states thrived along what we now call the Silk Road. Trade lasted for hundreds of years bringing prosperity to many. The Kingdom of Khotan, surrounded by the Kushan Empire, was especially prosperous during the time it was a protectorate of China's powerful Tang Dynasty, which defended it from nomadic marauders.

Trade eventually shifted to the oceans rather than land-based caravans. China's Tang Dynasty fell, and the new Song Dynasty was powerless to protect this region, which was soon ravaged by Tibetan and Turkic marauders, the Uyghurs being among the latter.

In the 900s and 1000s, there was mass conversion of Central Asian Turks to Islam, including the Uyghurs. Eventually the Uyghurs assimilated the peoples who lived in this region, which came under control of the Mongol Empire in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It took another four centuries for the Chinese to regroup under the Qing Dynasty and conquer this area. By that time the region had fallen into poverty.

The Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911, began to refer to this region as *xin jiang*, meaning the “new frontier.” That name demonstrated a key difference in how the Chinese viewed this Turkic region, and today one of the five stars on the Chinese flag represents the Uyghurs. The Chinese ruled through the Turkic-speaking Muslim elite, and from the start there were rebellions. One revolt resulted in an independent government which lasted from 1867–1878. This region, called both *xin jiang* and Eastern Turkestan, was devoured by the Qing Dynasty and named Xinjiang in 1884.

The Qing Dynasty controlled Xinjiang until this dynasty collapsed in 1911. During the next three decades, there were attempts to create two independent Muslim states. With the rise of Mao Zedong's Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1949, these states were taken by China.

In 1955, the People's Republic of China created the Xinjiang Uighur "Autonomous" Region as a concession to the Turkic Muslim majority that lived there. The centralized authority of the PRC was weakened during the chaotic time of the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution, and the Uyghurs demanded independence. Part of this was because there had been a steady stream of Han Chinese settling in their homeland. This process of making Xinjiang more Chinese accelerated in the decades to come. By 2000, 40 percent of the Xinjiang population was Han Chinese—not even including Chinese troops.



As the nearby USSR dissolved in the early 1990s, Turkic "Soviet Socialist Republic" became independent, and Uyghurs under China's control were hoping for their own independence. Fearing a spread of such independence movements, the Chinese government doubled down by suppressing demonstrations. The Uyghur separatists went underground.

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China began major development projects in Xinjiang, which brought economic prosperity to urban centers. The good jobs went to Han Chinese, while Uyghurs watched from the sidelines, growing increasingly resentful.



The Uyghurs lashed back. In 2009 there were large-scale ethnic riots in the capital city of Urumqi, and 200 perished in the bloodshed, most of them Han Chinese. From then on, the Chinese government has blamed the entire Uyghur population, regarding them as Muslim terrorists. Throughout the 2010s Uyghur terrorists conducted a blur of hijackings, riots and attacks on police stations.

**With a population of about 12 million, about one million Uyghur men and some women have been sent to detention camps, which the Chinese government has given the euphemism "re-education camps."**

Starting in the 2010s, the Chinese government became increasingly cruel in their treatment of the Uyghurs. With a population of about 12 million, about one million Uyghur men and some women have been sent to detention camps, which the Chinese government has given the euphemism "re-education camps." Instead of the vocational training that the Chinese government tells the public they are offering, Uyghurs are subjected to endless indoctrination sessions. While they are away, their wives and children face even grimmer consequences since the Chinese want to drastically change Uyghur families to become loyal to the government. Uyghur children are sometimes "adopted" by Han Chinese families. Under the guise of what the Chinese government calls the "Pair up and become a family" program, Han Chinese monitors stay with Uyghur families every two months, work and eat with them, and even sleep in the same beds as the wives.

Women who are sent to internment camps face even greater cruelty and humiliation. A February 2, 2021 article in *BBC News* reports gang-rapes of interned Uyghur women. The Chinese government responded by banning *BBC News* from their country after this story was published. Governments have spoken out against the cruel government actions, but Beijing is far from repentant. Uyghurs who remain in China are vulnerable to incarceration if their relatives outside the country speak out.



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What is China trying to accomplish? Is the end goal to terrorize the Uyghurs into submission, or is it actually genocide? There has been a forced sterilization among the Uyghurs program since 2016. They have also used forced birth control and mandatory abortions to lower the number of newborn Uyghurs. These efforts have been very successful according to a graph published by the *Associated Press* in June 2020.

Historically speaking, totalitarian governments do not respond to outside pressure, and China is no exception. Yet there can be pressure brought on them from above. God is much more powerful than any government, and we need to turn to Him.

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- Pray for the Lord to intervene and bring truth, justice and mercy to the situation.
- Pray for Him to provide spiritual and emotional healing to the traumatized and for Uyghurs who have escaped and are experiencing “survivors’ guilt.”
- Pray for the Chinese Church to be salt and light in this increasingly dark situation.

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# Innovation in a Multi-cultural Setting

BY 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 and the proud grandfather of Henry.

*“So, brother, here in the West we have these lists of people groups, and as you know, there are organizations devoted to seeing movements to Jesus among all of the ones that aren’t reached. And ‘reached’ means...”*

## Unreached Peoples And Communication Challenges

I have had that conversation in various ways off and on for about 25 years, meaning I have talked about these things with believers within what would be considered Unreached People Groups. I have talked about the meaning of people groups, what the lists mean and how mission organizations view it all.

I have listened to the feedback, too. I have seen the different ways that people *in* those groups see themselves and their people. I have learned a lot about how some people groups on the lists see other people groups on the list.

Now, none of that has made me think that the lists are wrong or unhelpful! But my experiences have caused me to work hard at communication and at thinking about vocabulary. Of course, in many cases I was not using English, so I had the disadvantage, and advantage, of being able to use words of my choosing. In English, I needed to use long explanations.

## Unreached Peoples, Innovation, And Even More Communication Challenges

But more recently I have faced a different communication challenge.

How do we explain innovation? And beyond that, how do we explain it when we at Frontier Ventures are developing a unique approach to it? And how do we explain it to leaders of a movement to Jesus among a people group that is still unreached? How do we explain it relative to how that movement

might use “innovation” to see a breakthrough in another people group? And how do we do all that using English but preparing for it to not be in English? To add one more wrinkle, how do we do that in a context with none of our usual tools?

## Innovation in Frontier Ventures and Picking a Case Study

As others will explain further in this edition, Frontier Ventures’ approach to innovation is a unique mix. It combines design thinking and systems thinking. Those are pretty common in the “innovation world,” but Frontier Ventures adds a dimension that also blends spiritual discernment, theological grounding and a missiological focus.

The latter means we particularly aim innovation toward exploring new ways for people in least-reached people groups to experience new life in Jesus.

The process starts with a catalyst leader, who works with a core group to ask a question about a difficult or complex problem, and then the spiritual discernment and systems and design elements begin to kick in.

In the case I will relate here, this meant working with a team in South Asia. This team consisted of leaders from a large movement to Jesus as they sought to consider how to foster new approaches to reach what we now refer to as a Frontier People Group (groups with no known movement, less than .1% believers of any sort).

We were considering a particular Frontier People Group. The original framing of the question or problem was something like, “How can the barriers that keep the \_\_\_\_\_ people from coming to Jesus be understood and overcome?”



So how did all of this work in another cultural context and with all the challenges that were presented?

## Step by Step

I recently interviewed the South Asian leadership we worked with, and without going into all of the details of the process, I want to share the key insights from the interview.

*“I missed a lot.”*

The main interpreter mentioned this first. He had been involved through it all, had helped us design the process, had talked with us about how to understand it and explain it, etc. His assumption was that if he did all of that, he would be able to learn the process and reproduce it again.

But he felt that he did not absorb as much as he had assumed. He had to give too much of his creative energy to translation and interpretation.

**But ...** *“This was really helpful, I saw the fruit.”*

He was asking how he could learn the process better. He saw how the people he brought together had responded, what they had learned about their assumptions and ways of making decisions in their own attempts to cross cultures, and how they ended up reaching more people with the good news.

**However ...** *“We didn’t reach the people group we thought this was for.”*

As we proceeded, the participants did in fact gather a lot of data about the Frontier People Group that I had suggested we focus on. We learned a lot about them and confirmed that while there are some believers among them in the current movement, there is a barrier and a new movement will be needed.

But the group that gathered, as we entered spiritual discernment and listening prayer, identified several different areas of focus.

They identified a number of people groups that need movements, but none of them were the one we thought we had gathered in order to “innovate” together to reach!

A further observation... *“I don’t think I gathered the right people.”*

One of the most important elements in the whole innovation process is to have the right champion (which

we did) and then the right “core” of people. In our case the champion determined afterward that he would have picked people differently had he better understood everything.

That led me to ask about what could have been prepared better, and he responded, “Nothing, I just needed to learn more about the process”.

## And More

Other points of learning our friend reported:

“We gained a whole new understanding about why certain peoples are not coming into our movement.”

“We understand better why this is hard, why some people are harder to reach.”

“We thought we understood how to reach Muslims in our country but we really only understood how to reach our people.”

(from a participant) “I never really noticed that in my area all these \_\_\_\_\_ people were living. I just never thought about them. Then God told me to reach them, and I saw I would have to change my way of speaking and dressing and much more”

“Having outsiders there on the one hand was not a problem, but it meant we needed to be sure everyone understood why.”


“Using inductive Bible study helped us because that is what we do in our normal lives.” (Note, this was a change the Frontier Ventures team made)

## And ... a Surprise

I said above that our process resulted in specific new efforts to reach some Unreached People Groups, but *not* the one I had assumed or suggested.

However, just asking the questions, gathering the data and experimenting in other peoples has resulted in our trial people group landing on the radar of the movement leaders, and there has been a trickle of people starting to come to faith.

## Edges to Edges

This case study is an abbreviated example of how working at the edges can lead to new insights, new approaches, and also to new edges! 

# 24:14 Goal



Movement engagements in every unreached people and place by 2025 (54 months)

## The Person, Not the Method: An Essential Ingredient for Catalyzing a Movement

BY  
**EMANUEL  
PRINZ**  
WITH  
**DAVE  
COLES**

**Dr. Emanuel Prinz** is a movement trainer and consultant to missions organizations and networks, including Bethany International and New Generations. He is the Associate Director of the Bethany Research Institute and Professor of Intercultural Studies at Bethany Global University, and the author of *Movement Catalysts* (2021) and *Exponential Disciple-Making and Church Planting* (2019). His EXPONENTIAL™ and Catalytic Leadership™ movement trainings have been translated into 10 languages so far. You can contact him at [emanuel.prinz@gmx.net](mailto:emanuel.prinz@gmx.net).

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

Over a period of three years, I conducted empirical research<sup>1</sup> among effective movement catalysts to discover the traits and competencies possessed by pioneers effective in catalyzing a movement among a Muslim people group, and which traits they considered to have contributed to their catalyzing of a movement. This resulted in a profile of an effective movement catalyst, including eleven traits and competencies self-reported as exhibited by all participating effective catalysts.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A more in-depth discussion of the research methodology and conclusions can be found in my book *Movement Catalysts: The Profile of the Leader God Uses to Catalyze Movements* and in my chapter "The Profile of an Effective Movement Catalyst," in *Motus Dei*, both forthcoming from William Carey Publishing. This research is ongoing, with an ever-growing sample of participants, and more findings to be published.

<sup>2</sup> The research identified a further list of traits of competencies exhibited consistently by most (defined as ≥80%) effective catalysts. This article, however, concentrates on those exhibited by *all* effective catalysts.

### Leader Traits Verified to Fit 100% of all Catalysts

<b>Hunger for God</b>	Catalysts hunger for depth with God, yearn to love Him more deeply; they seek to hear God's voice and be obedient.
<b>Expectant Faith</b>	Catalysts expect that God will grow a movement among their people group and save many soon, and they have great faith that God will show His power through their lives.
<b>Confidence</b>	Catalysts feel confident in their spiritual gifts and skills, and exhibit a sense of confidence.
<b>Drive for Responsibility</b>	Catalysts feel responsible for the people they serve and for engaging them with the good news; they are motivated by a sense of responsibility.
<b>Dependability</b>	Catalysts are reliable and trustworthy; others can depend on them.
<b>Persistence</b>	Catalysts are tenacious in spite of challenges and amidst difficulties; they don't give up.
<b>Empowering</b>	Catalysts empower and enable local people to be the key players by putting responsibility and authority in their hands from the beginning and by developing their gifts.
<b>Confidence in the Holy Spirit</b>	Catalysts are confident in the Holy Spirit and have faith in Him to accomplish His intended work in the life of all God's children, as they are enabled to obey His commands.
<b>Confidence in the Bible</b>	Catalysts have deep confidence in the Bible to be their CPM guidebook, and deep assurance in its power to accomplish what God desires.
<b>Influencing Beliefs</b>	Catalysts talk often about their most important values and beliefs, consider the moral consequences of decisions with people, and emphasize the importance of living toward the purpose for which one is created.
<b>Inspiring of Vision</b>	Catalysts articulate a compelling vision of the future, talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished to see a growing movement, and express confidence that goals will be achieved.

Most literature on the subject of catalyzing a movement has focused on spiritual traits of the pioneer leader combined with the right methodology. David Garrison emphasizes characteristics of CPMs as well as methodology. The subtitles of his main publications are telling, as both refer to methods in the word “how”: “How God is Redeeming a Lost World” and “How God is Drawing Muslims around the World to Faith in Jesus Christ.” Garrison makes his approach sound comprehensive and absolute when insisting, “If one of these components is missing, you won’t get the results you desire” (292). He ascribes a crucial role to the pioneer leader (255), stating that “God has given Christians vital roles to play in the success or failure of these movements” (26); however, it is beyond the scope of his work to explore their traits or competencies.

**Most literature on the subject of catalyzing a movement has focused on spiritual traits of the pioneer leader combined with the right methodology.**

The Watsons and Jerry Trousdale emphasize right methodology as well. Watsons qualify the significance of the methodological elements of the DMM approach: “This book focuses on the strategic elements you need to get a movement started. If you remove any of these elements, you won’t have a movement, period. You may have some growth, but you won’t experience a movement.” Watson regards the role of the external leader as critical, since he is the one who sparks the process of a movement (2011, 114). The main trait Watson highlights, a good character, is not verified as such by my research, but intersects strongly with Inspiring Personality, a trait verified in my research (exhibited by more than 80% of all catalysts interviewed), as well as some of the other traits: responsibility, dependability, and persistence. The relevance of character needs further study. Most of Watson’s competencies are either verified directly in this research (radical learning) or appear under competencies identified by this research, including the ability to develop potential beyond boundaries, the ability to delegate (empowering), and listening skills (personal consideration). Another competency identified by Watson, the ability to build teams, is very broad but encompasses a number of competencies

identified by this research.

Steve Smith likewise emphasized methodology; he presented a comprehensive, branded package by the name T4T. Smith made no explicit claim that his comprehensive methodology would guarantee a movement. The comprehensiveness of the approach, however, could easily leave the reader with that impression. For example, in a case study of an emerging movement, Smith described how he counseled the catalyst: “It wasn’t a CPM yet, but was getting close. As we listened, it was apparent that some elements of the T4T process were missing. We counseled him to incorporate the lessons from the next chapter.” In a separate publication, the only publication so far addressing exactly the topic of this study, Smith also considered the person of the pioneer leader. Based on multiple case studies of dozens of practitioners, Smith’s summary of the traits and competencies of effective catalysts was that “each of them possesses a healthy combination of a set of characteristics.” Most of those characteristics were verified by the empirical data of this present research.

Among the traits and competencies verified fully are: knowledge of reproduction principles, knowledge of movements, knowledge of what catalyzes movement (all under movement knowledge), lifelong learning, faith, expectant prayer (expectant faith and fervent intercession), and mentoring. Several other traits and competencies suggested by Smith are included within traits verified by this present research, such as knowledge of the Bible (under Bible teaching), tenacity and perseverance (persistence), integrity and spiritual authenticity (inspiring personality), loving God (hunger for God), being led by God, having vision from God, and exercising faith (expectant faith), bold discipling (discipling), ruthless self-evaluation (innovation and radical learning), training (Bible teaching, discipling, and coaching), developing leaders (confidence in nationals, and coaching), and vision casting (inspiring of vision). Only a few traits suggested by Smith are not directly verified to be strongly exhibited by movement catalysts: passionate urgency, single-mindedness, and exercising accountability.

The data of my research suggest that the effective catalyzing of movements is not tied to any particular methodology, though all employed reproductive

movement approaches. Different effective catalysts employ different ministry approaches, both in terms of their movement methodology and in their approach to contextualization. A quarter of the catalysts participating in this study skipped the question about their ministry approach, which points to likely hesitation on their side to put their approach “into a box.” In addition, more than half of those who answered the question used the “Other” option to describe their ministry approach in their own words. Often the description given was a hybrid of two or more of the other approaches. This means that the approach of most effective catalysts in this study is a hybrid of more than one ministry approach, which they have adapted to the uniqueness of their context. The research does not support any claims that one specific ministry approach must be followed precisely to lead to a movement.

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With the exception of the approach of adding Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) to existing Christian Background Believer (CBB) churches, it appears that particularity of methodology does not correlate to success in catalyzing a movement. By definition, the traditional approach (planting a single church) is not conducive to catalyzing a movement. This could explain why the pattern of adding MBBs to existing CBB churches is not utilized by any of the effective catalysts. At the same time, 13% of the catalysts employed the approach of planting a new church comprised of MBBs. This single church then reproduced itself and grew into a movement. The difference in these two approaches is not methodological, but primarily sociocultural. The adding of MBBs to CBB churches involves the bridging of divides, whether sociological, cultural, ethnic, or linguistic. These barriers explain why adding MBBs to existing CBB churches is not an effective approach for catalyzing a CPM, whereas the planting of a new MBB church may be.


Still, only 13% of all movements examined have been catalyzed with such an approach. The overwhelming majority of movements were catalyzed with one of the various movement approaches. Although the approaches used by effective catalysts differ in certain aspects, it is important to observe that all the approaches were reproductive movement approaches. These approaches have certain principles in common, which include cultural contextualization, obedience-oriented discipleship, house churches, reproduction, training of multipliers, and reproducible resources. The overall emphasis in pioneer and apostolic leadership and movement literature has been on right methodology, with some attention to leader traits and competencies of the pioneer leader or leaders, particularly traits of a spiritual nature. However, the findings of this research go beyond the commonly established insights of Christian pioneer leadership. The data clearly suggest that a *particular* methodology is far less significant in catalyzing movements than may have been assumed or publicized. The data of this study clearly establish that certain pioneer leader traits and competencies are strongly associated with effective catalyzing of CPMs. This perspective has been voiced by only a few, most notably Neill Mims and Bill Smith, who formulated what are considered to be among the most significant insights of almost 20 years of research into CPMs: “At the end of the day, it is the man or woman of God and not the method that God blesses.”

Another of the few voices who have expressed this perspective is movement thinker Dave Ferguson, who concluded: “the greater the missional impact, the more obvious the pioneering apostolic leadership becomes.” The person of the pioneer leader(s), not the method he or she employs, plays the greatest role in determining whether or not a movement will result. Bill Smith is again among the few who formulated this accurate conclusion: “If someone says to me, give me the method or give me the curriculum, I know that they have not understood that this [the catalyzing of a movement] is accomplished through persons rather than methods.”

**Although the approaches used by effective catalysts differ in certain aspects, it is important to observe that all the approaches were reproductive movement approaches.**

**The data of my research suggest that the effective catalyzing of movements is not tied to any particular methodology, though all employed reproductive movement approaches.**

The right leader(s) will employ the right methodology. A pioneer leader with traits such as radical learning, intelligence, complex thinking, innovation, and initiative, who then possesses the necessary socio-influential and transformational competencies, has the best potential to identify and implement the most effective methodology for the context in which he or she is operating. However, a person who receives a certain methodology, but lacks the traits and competencies identified in this study, will be unable to effectively apply the methodology. This stands in stark contrast to the conclusions of many publications on movements that center around methods and principles rather than on the person of the catalyst. I hope the clear data of this research will jolt a paradigm shift in the field of catalyzing movements.

A pioneer leader with traits such as radical learning, intelligence, complex thinking, innovation, and initiative, who then possesses the necessary socio-influential and transformational competencies, has the best potential to identify and implement the most effective methodology for the context in which he or she is operating. 

What do YOU think? We invite you to drop a note to [emanuel.prinz@gmx.net](mailto:emanuel.prinz@gmx.net).

*Disagree?* We would like to hear from you, to stimulate dialogue about this topic.

*Agree?* We would like to hear *your* insights on “person over method,” and on the traits of effective movement catalysts.

**A pioneer leader with traits such as radical learning, intelligence, complex thinking, innovation, and initiative, who then possesses the necessary socio-influential and transformational competencies, has the best potential to identify and implement the most effective methodology for the context in which he or she is operating.**





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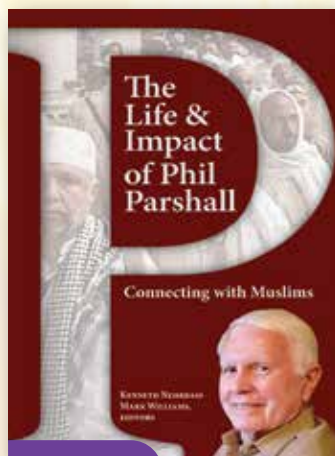
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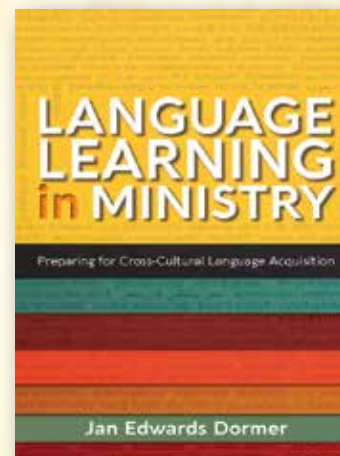
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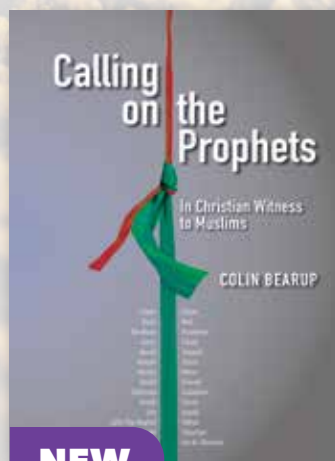
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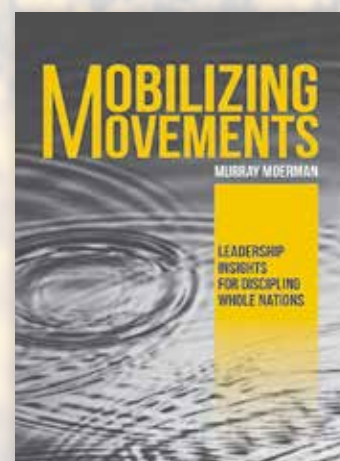
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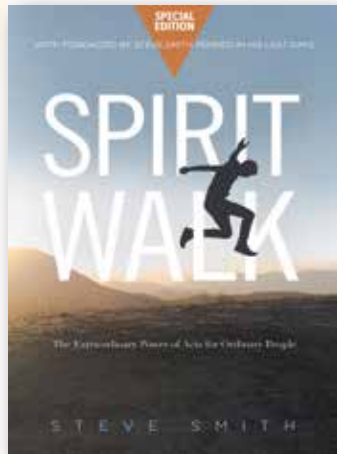
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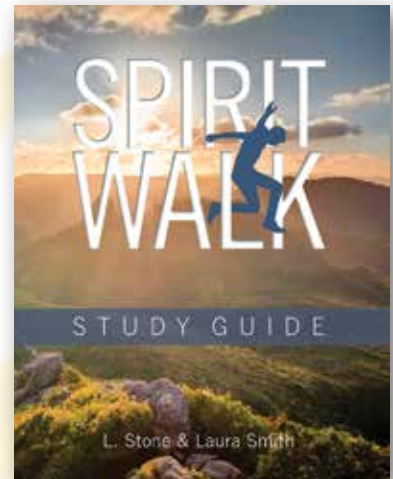
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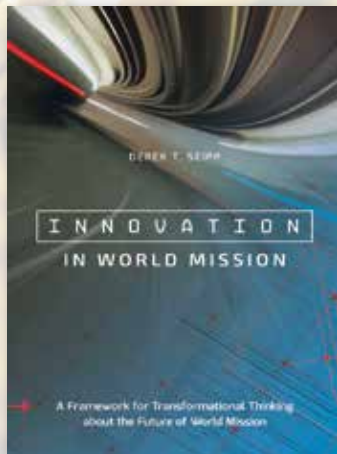
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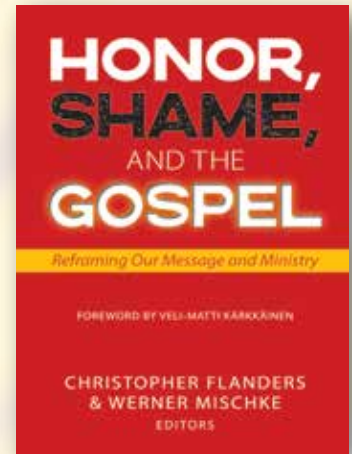
## Honor, Shame, and the Gospel

*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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# HUP

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.

**A** little more than ten years ago, I was rummaging around the library at Fuller Seminary. The seminary had graciously given me “visiting scholar” status, so I could access resources for my dissertation on Ralph D. Winter through the University of Wales. As many PhD researchers do, when I found the specific book I was looking for, I poked around on the shelf nearby to see if anything else under that subject would contribute to my research. You never know what rabbit trails that might lead to—sometimes very fruitful ones. (And more footnotes are always *impressive!*)

One day, in the bottom floor of “the stacks”, I found a thick, thesis-looking book full of the photocopies of typewritten papers under the title *Consultation on the Homogeneous Unit Principle* and moderated by John R.W. Stott. I knew that the Lausanne Movement had produced dozens of what they call *Lausanne Occasional Papers*, and the summary of this 1977 event became the very first paper.<sup>1</sup>

What I didn’t know was that the 10 papers presented as fuel for discussion at that Consultation were in *one* place (I am now compiling these for publication.) And indeed, their “consultative” process was extensive and rich with discussion, suggestions, agreement and (some strong) disagreement. Our archivist, Helen Darsie, found a fascinating, on-going exchange of papers/letters about these issues in our Donald A. McGavran holdings.

The presenters (and dissenters) included McGavran, with a long paper from missiologist Harvie M. Conn. Ralph D. Winter presented a historical

view, and Arthur Glasser a biblical view. C. Rene Padilla—who just went to be with the Lord in mid-May—gave a counter-perspective from the view of Latin America, along with a few others.

As you can guess by now, HUP is an abbreviation for Homogeneous Unit Principle. That principle is, at its core: *that people like to become Christians within their own homogeneous units, without crossing linguistic, class, or race barriers.*

In many ways, that sounds simple and reasonable. But at that time, HUP had already been a controversial topic in mission circles and is an increasingly complex and “charged” issue today. By the 1970s, Donald A. McGavran’s Church Growth theories had been both a source of strategy and fodder for critique—sometimes very negative. Other consultations and seminars had been held by various groups to try to learn, understand and/or point out potential problems—and they published the result.

Some of those who opposed the ideas felt the idea of targeting the gospel to flow within specific groups might lead to the exclusion of other groups—and potentially be unfair racially. Defining “groups” was/is problematic, and while we should still try, groups do change over time. Some argue now, that increasingly, everything is in a “melting pot” and or a “stew” and that culture is becoming “globalized.” Others longed for the way churches should be multi-ethnic—accepting of all cultures and color-blind. Which, in turn, raises issues about what it means to be a “multicultural church.” One major issue is *control*—one group within a local church will naturally

<sup>1</sup> Lausanne now has 66 of what they call: LOP. See: <https://www.lausanne.org/category/lop>.




take leadership based on their personality, position in society, etc. It happens everywhere; we all need leaders. But, it becomes problematic when a major language like English or Spanish or Mandarin or ... is used for the main language of worship and teaching, which colors the outcome.

Further, what does biblical or practical “unity” mean when it comes to missions and church? Some of the issues and dialogue on race in America today were part of the discussion back in 1977.

All of this impacts how we reach non-believers—from reached or unreached groups. How *do* people come to faith? Our models of church should address both (1) what we do with/for those who are already believers, and (2) those who are not—near or far. How do we effectively share with them, or send global servants to them?

With all that in mind, and the fact that McGavran’s ideas are core to many current missions strategies (like CPM, DMM, T4T<sup>2</sup>), we are planning the next ***Ralph D. Winter Lectureship*** on this topic. It will be a seminar with presenters and Q&A on these various issues. That event is expected to be held *online and in person* in Southern California in late February to early March of 2022.

I am also working on publishing the original papers and summaries of the discussion in a book to be released before the event. You can look for announcements of both at [www.frontierventures.org](http://www.frontierventures.org) or on the Frontier Ventures Facebook page. 

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2 In case you are new to *MF*: CPM = Church Planting Movements, DMM = Disciple Making Movements, T4T = Training 4 Trainers.



## Formerly known as the Global Prayer Digest

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

Many of the images in this guide (marked with an asterisk \*) come from the International Mission Board (IMB). We thank the IMB for their exquisite images, taken by workers in the field.

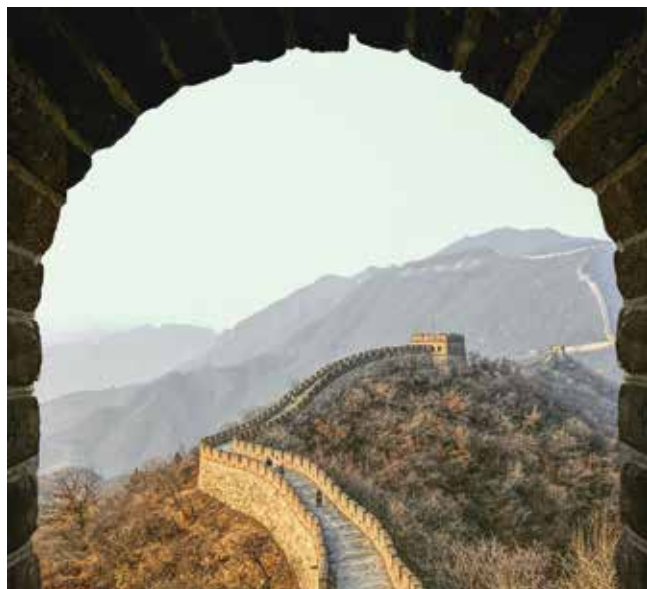
## JULY

### ■ 1 Shengzha Nosu in China

The Shengzha Nosu live in isolated rural areas and often view strangers with suspicion. Chinese believers will need to make an effort to build relationships with them. The large majority of the Shengzha have practiced folk religion and polytheism for hundreds of years, so their faith is in other spirit beings.

Isaiah 12:3 | *With joy you will drink deeply from the fountain of salvation!*

- May many from this people group drink deeply from the fountain of His salvation and mercy!
- Pray the Lord would get His word into the hands of the right people.
- Pray the Lord would send workers to tell them about Jesus.
- Pray that every Shengzha Nosu would have the opportunity to hear the good news.
- Pray that whole Nosu villages would come to Christ.



### ■ 2 Yinuo Nosu in China

The Yinuo's ancestor worship and folk religion are vastly different from biblical Christianity. The Yinuo speak a dialect of the Nosu language that is unintelligible to their neighbors. They live in mountains and forests far from urban areas of China. Therefore, their language and remoteness both provide additional challenges to getting them the gospel.

Isaiah 12:4

*In that wonderful day you will sing:  
“Thank the Lord! Praise His name!  
Tell the nations what He has done.  
Let them know how mighty He is!”*

- May this people group praise Him and tell others of His mighty deeds.
- Pray that workers would be called to this harvest field, and that the necessary resources would become available.
- Pray that the Yinuo would have a church planting movement started among them.
- Pray that the Yinuo Nosu would hear the truth of God's Word, believe it and act upon it.

### ■ 3 Yadu Qiang in China

The Yadu Qiang are a Tibetan Buddhist people who live approximately 800 kilometers east of the Tibetan border in Sichuan Province, China, and they make their living raising sheep and selling apples. Embroidery is a favorite pastime of the women, and women have the final say in family decisions. Their Buddhism is mixed with folk religion and ancestor worship.

Isaiah 14:27

*The Lord of Heaven's Armies has spoken—  
who can change His plans? When His  
hand is raised, who can stop Him?*

- Pray that many from this people group will understand that God is sovereign, and they must obey Him alone.
- Pray that any group of Yadu believers would grow in numbers and spiritual maturity.
- Pray that the Scriptures would become available in the Yadu's language.
- Pray that a movement to Christ would begin and flourish among the Yadu Qiang.

■ 4 Queyu in China

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

Isaiah  
25:9

*In that day the people will proclaim,  
“This is our God! We trusted in Him  
and He saved us! This is the Lord, in whom  
we trusted. Let us rejoice in the salvation  
He brings!”*

- Pray that many from this people group learn to trust in the Lord’s salvation and rejoice in Him.
- Pray that God would bring peace between the Chinese government and the Queyu people.
- Pray that the Lord would call missionaries to this lone area, leading to a movement to Christ.
- Pray that the Queyu people would see the glory of the risen Christ and turn to Him alone.

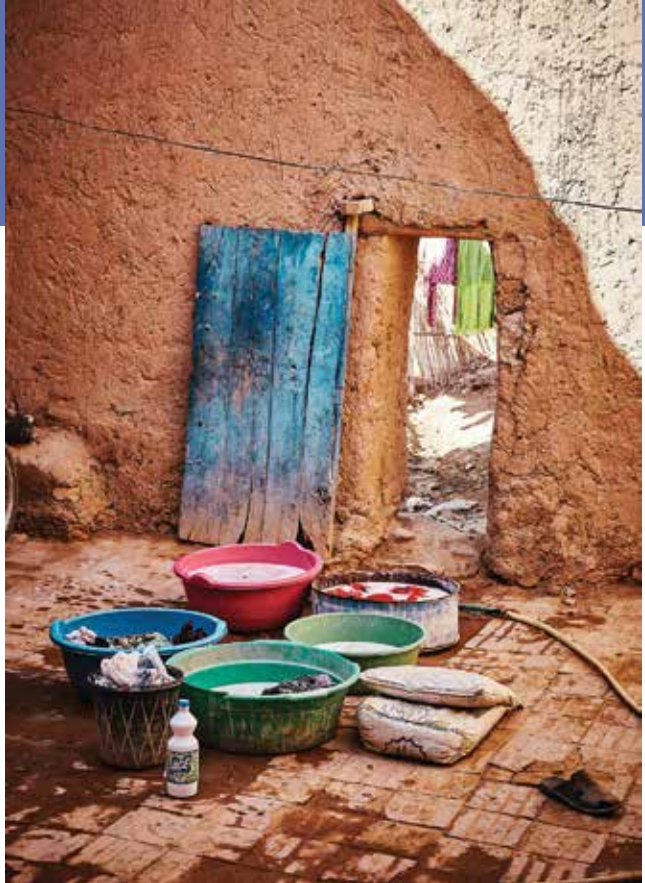
■ 5 Muslim Biswas in Bangladesh

Biswas is both a surname and a title in Bangladesh, and the title is very flattering. It means “reliable” “trustworthy” or “faith.” This honorable title was given to them by Muslim rulers in a time that pre-dates British rule. Many of them were administrators at that time. Today there is a long list of prominent people in Bangladesh with the surname of Biswas.

Isaiah  
26:3

*You will keep in perfect peace all who trust  
in You, all whose thoughts are fixed on You!*

- Pray for many from this people group to find perfect peace in trusting the Lord Almighty.
- Pray for the Lord to orchestrate efforts to reach Biswas families.
- Pray for a massive movement to Christ among the Biswas people that would affect other communities in Bangladesh.
- Pray for the Lord to bring Biswas families to Himself by blessing them abundantly.



■ 6 Muslim Darzi in Bangladesh

In Hindi, Darzi means “tailor.” For hundreds of years, they were highly respected for their craftsmanship throughout their communities in north India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Their shops were where people gathered to read newspapers, share news and socialize. However, global modernization in mass production of clothes has replaced this. Some now work in clothing factories, sell ready-made clothes, and a few are clothing designers. Many younger Darzi have chosen other professions.

Isaiah  
26:8

*Lord, we show our trust in You by obeying  
your laws; our heart’s desire is to glorify  
Your name.*

- Pray that many from this people group will trust the Lord, obey Him, and glorify His name through their actions.
- Pray that God’s servants would lead the Darzi people to His living word and salvation found in Jesus.
- Pray for an unstoppable movement to Christ among the Muslim Darzi people.

UNREACHED OF THE DAY

■ 7 Muslim Dhobi in Bangladesh

The Dhobi name means “wash,” and this identifies their trade of being clothes washers. Despite the painful physical problems they endure in their work, older Dhobis often work hard so that their children can have an education and advance. There are many young Dhobis now working in the government, trade, business, and other professions. Though most Dhobis in India are Hindu, those in Bangladesh are almost always Muslim.

Isaiah 29:16 | *How foolish can you be? He is the Potter, and He is certainly greater than you, the clay! Should the created thing say of the one who made it, “He didn’t make me”? Does a jar ever say, “The potter who made me is stupid”?*

- Pray that many from this people group will soon understand that they belong to God by right of His life-giving creation.
- Pray the Muslim Dhobi would come to know Jesus and heed His teachings.
- Pray for a Holy Spirit-led Disciple Making Movement among the Muslim Dhobis in Bangladesh.



■ 8 Behara in Bangladesh

The Behara people live in rural Bangladesh and are followers of Islam. They have low status. The Bible is available in their language in audio and online formats, so they can encounter and respond to God’s Word. There is always a need for those who will use the local culture’s music and drama forms to present the life of Christ.

Isaiah 40:5 | *Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. The LORD has spoken!”*

- Pray that members of this people group will soon see the glory of the Lord and respond to it.
- Pray for workers to go to the Behara people in Bangladesh.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to sweep through families of this people group, drawing them into His Kingdom.

UNREACHED OF THE DAY





### ■ 9 Muslim Nagarchi in Bangladesh

In the past, when ceremonies and celebrations were being planned in the villages of Bangladesh, it was the Nagarchi who were called upon to serve as drummers. Today, many of them have given up their drums to farm and raise livestock in central Bangladesh. Most of the Nagarchi are Hindu. The Muslim Nagarchi intermix with the Hindus and have even adopted some of their religious practices.

Isaiah 40:8 | *The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever.”*

- Meditate on this verse, and pray that members of this people group embrace it.
- Pray for workers willing to go to this harvest field.
- Ask the Lord to prepare the hearts of the Nagarchi to receive the gospel message and pray for many families to respond to His invitation.

### ■ 10 Muslim Jogi in Bangladesh

When you think of Jogis, you usually think of Hindus and India. However, they also have Muslim communities in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. They are also known as Jogi Faqirs, holy men who are often beggars. Faqirs are often wandering Sufi mystics who teach Islam. Historically, they have been a landless community. Their help in curing diseases and in the removal of evil spirits is sought by both Hindus and Muslims.

Isaiah 40:10 | *Yes, the Sovereign Lord is coming in power. He will rule with a powerful arm. See, He brings His reward with Him as He comes.*

- Pray for many from this people group to claim this verse by embracing the Lord.
- Pray for them to accept the spiritual blessings of Jesus Christ and teach them to others.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among Jogis in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

### ■ 11 Tarafdar in Bangladesh

The Tarafdar people are small in number, but they have left their mark on Bangladesh. One has been a noted historian. Others have been Olympic athletes representing Bangladesh while another chronicled Bangladesh's 1971 war for independence from Pakistan.

Isaiah 40:18-19 | *To whom can you compare God? What image can you find to resemble Him? Can He be compared to an idol formed in a mold, overlaid with gold, and decorated with silver chains?*

- Pray that this people group will soon understand that they can never form an idol that compares with the Lord.
- Pray for the Lord to have His hand of blessings on the Tarafdar community so that they would know they need Him.
- Pray for their elders to welcome Christ's ambassadors and embrace the gospel.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among them in Bangladesh.



### ■ 12 Muslim Badhai in Pakistan

Literacy levels are low among the Badhai as most are unable to afford the cost of education. Modern medicine is available though it is often coupled with traditional practices, especially in remote areas where modern facilities are less available than medicine men. Most Badhais in Pakistan are Muslim, but there are also many Hindus among them. In Pakistan's Sindh Province, both need a gospel witness.

Isaiah  
40:28

*Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of His understanding.*

- Pray that they will soon understand that God is all-powerful and all-knowing.
- Pray for the Lord to pave the way for the Badhai people to have access to better education.
- Pray that workers would be sent to harvest this field and that a Disciple Making Movement would spread like holy fire.

### ■ 13 Muslim Bahna in Pakistan

The Bahna people used to card (process) cotton, but the advancement of technology has led them to abandon that in favor of taking up agriculture, manufacturing and trade. Originally, the Bahna were entirely Hindu, but some of them converted to Islam during the Delhi Sultanate. Many Muslim Bahna left India and relocated to Pakistan, mainly to the Sindh Province.

Isaiah  
40:31

*But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.*

- Make this your prayer for today's people group.
- Pray that access to education would grow for girls and women.
- Pray that the Bahna hear the gospel in impactful ways and have ears to hear God speak to them.
- Pray that Disciple Making Movements would be started in Bahna communities and grow mightily.

### ■ 14 Rathawa in Pakistan

No gospel resources, such as Bibles, recordings, radio programs, or tracts are available in the Rathawi language. Rathawas are generally friendly with outsiders. Their way of honoring guests is by serving them food in their kitchen. This would be a great time for believers to tell stories of Jesus!

Isaiah  
44:3

*For I will pour out water to quench your thirst and to irrigate your parched fields. And I will pour out my Spirit on your descendants, and my blessing on your children.*

- Pray that this blessing will soon reach today's people group.
- Pray for workers to go to the Rathawa people, and for their hearts to be ready to receive their savior.
- Pray for a chain reaction of families reaching families that results in thousands of new believers who share their faith with others among the Rathawa people.

### ■ 15 Muslim Bhangi in Pakistan

The Bhangi, a Scheduled Caste, were traditionally associated with scavenging, sweeping and basket making. The majority are employed by various municipal governments as scavengers, and a few of those living in cities are educated. Others make and sell bamboo goods or work as drummers.

Isaiah  
46:10

*Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish.*

- Thank the Lord that He alone can tell the future, and His plans for today's people group can never be stopped.
- Pray for believers in Pakistan to reach out to this unreached people.
- Pray for a Church Planting Movement among the Bhangi people.
- Pray for God to shed His abundant favor on the Bhangi people in such a way they would know that Jesus Christ provides a better life.

■ 16 Mohana Sindhi in Pakistan

The Mohana Sindhi people call themselves “Mir Bahana,” which means, “Lord of the sea,” as they have traditionally been fishermen. Since visual, audio, and written Bible resources exist in the Sindhi language, it is possible that Mohana Sindhi people will hear the truth of the gospel online or through people who would help them in practical matters of their lives, and consequently build relationships with their families.

Isaiah 52:7 *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the messenger who brings good news, the good news of peace and salvation, the news that the God of Israel reigns!*

- Pray for the Lord to send people with “beautiful feet” to bring good news to today’s people group. Pray for them to have access to God’s Word, study it, and apply it to their lives. Pray for this people group to have a spiritual hunger that would drive them to the sinless Savior.



■ 17 Sumra Sindhi in Pakistan

Traditionally, Sumra Sindhi people were warriors, but at present they are involved in business, agriculture, government and private service.

Isaiah 52:10 *The Lord has demonstrated His holy power before the eyes of all the nations. All the ends of the earth will see the victory of our God.*

- Pray for today’s people group to share in the victory of the Lord by becoming part of His family.
- Pray that Christian businessmen, agriculturalists, and government employees would reach into the lives of Sumra Sindhi people, building relationships and sharing Christ’s abundant life with them.
- Pray that Almighty God would open the hearts of Sumra Sindhi people to hear the good news that full payment of the penalty of sins has been made and is available to be received by whosoever will accept it.

■ 18 Sama Sindhi in Pakistan

During the time of Jesus, the Sama Sindhi were a Hindu and Buddhist people. A few centuries later, they were first introduced to Islam through conquerors. The rural Sama Sindhi live like their ancestors as irrigation farmers and livestock herders. They combine the saint worship of Hinduism with Islam, while they also believe in traditional folk spirits. The urban Sama Sindhi live as physicians, lawyers and teachers and they practice traditional Islam.

Isaiah 54:2 *Enlarge your house; build an addition. Spread out your home and spare no expense!*

- Use this verse to pray for the Lord to expand His house to include today’s people group.
- Ask the Father to prepare Sama Sindhi hearts for a mighty Church Planting Movement that would be a beacon of His light in Pakistan’s Sindh Province.

■ 19 Kazakh in China

Many thousands of oppressed Kazakh people fled both Russia and then China in the past century. Today Kazakhs still live in northwestern China as an official minority group. China’s Kazakhs have strongly resisted Christianity. Also, though they’ve practiced Sunni Islam for centuries, the Kazakhs have put their faith in elements of spiritism, animism and ancestor worship.

Isaiah 55:1 *Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink—even if you have no money! Come, take your choice of wine or milk—it’s all free!*

- Pray that this people group will soon accept God’s offer of free salvation.
- Pray for freedom in Christ from all dark spiritual forces. Pray for God’s intervention to protect Kazakhs in China’s “re-education” camps.
- Pray that the few Kazakh believers would be disciplined, multiplied in number and used to start Disciple Making Movements that bring great blessing to Kazakh communities.





## ■ 20 Kyrgyz in China

The Kyrgyz are a farming people from Kyrgyzstan, but many live in Xinjiang, a province in northwestern China. Because the Kyrgyz respect demonstrations of signs and wonders, believers who call on the name of the Lord for the demonstration of His power among them might be effective. After the Chinese nearly eradicated all Kirgiz Christians in 1933, Christ is now mostly unknown among them.

Isaiah  
55:3

*Come to me with your ears wide open. Listen, and you will find life. I will make an everlasting covenant with you. I will give you all the unfailing love I promised to David.*

- Pray for this people to have wide open ears to the words of the Lord.
- Pray that they would resist the oppressive forces that seek to indoctrinate and destroy them so that they may have opportunity to know Jesus.

## ■ 21 Sarikoli Tajik in China

Sarikoli Tajik families are composed of multi-generational households, with strict roles and traditions. For centuries, they have lived in tribal and clan structures with the tradition of following Shia Islam. Like the Uyghurs and Kyrgyz, they have been victim to the Chinese government's crackdown on ethnic and religious minority groups.

Isaiah  
55:7

*Let the wicked change their ways and banish the very thought of doing wrong. Let them turn to the Lord that He may have mercy on them. Yes, turn to our God, for He will forgive generously.*

- Pray for true and lasting repentance to come to this people group.
- Pray that Sarikoli Tajik hearts would crave their key role in God's redemptive plan.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement.

## ■ 22 Khik (Wakhi) in China

The Wakhi live along China's border with Pakistan. Small in number, they are inclusive, living in extended families and usually marrying within their clan. The Wakhi are Shia Muslims who also practice a wide variety of animistic rituals.

Isaiah  
55:8-9

*My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts, says the Lord. And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.*

- Pray that today's people group will understand that God's ways are far higher than theirs.
- Pray for the Wakhi to have the opportunity to hear the gospel.
- Pray for the Lord to raise up mission workers who are willing to learn the language and go to this remote area of the globe.
- Ask God for a Church Planting Movement to sweep through their families and villages.

## ■ 23 Nghari Tibetans in China

Different yet similar! The inhabitants of the Nghari region are also known as the Chang Tang (Northern Plain) Tibetans. Although they are ethnically Tibetan, they speak a language far removed from other Tibetan varieties. Their lifestyles have changed little over the last thousand years.

Isaiah  
56:3

*"Don't let foreigners who commit themselves to the LORD say, The LORD will never let me be part of His people.' And don't let the eunuchs say, I'm a dried-up tree with no children and no future.'*

- Pray that many from today's people group will put all their hope in the Lord.
- Pray that the 2020s would be the decade where there is a Disciple Making Movement among every Tibetan subgroup, including the Ngharis.
- Pray for a hunger for spiritual truth and a willingness to seek and find answers in Christ.
- Pray for the Lord to raise up His ambassadors to the Nghari Tibetans.





## ■ 24 Uyghur in China

What is the future for China's Uyghurs, a people with a rich and centuries-old Turkic culture severely oppressed by China's government? Their homeland is now a police state that imprisons well over one million Uyghurs in brutal "re-education" camps. Almost completely Sunni Muslim; Uyghurs mix their Islam with folk religion.

Isaiah  
61:1-3a

*The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, for the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.*

- Pray for these blessings for today's people group!
- Pray God would stir Chinese Christians to intercede and reach out to China's suffering Uyghurs.
- Ask that suffering Uyghurs would experience God's comfort from within re-education camps and broken homes.
- Pray for the Lord to send His angels to protect the innocent.

## ■ 25 Northern Uzbeks in China

The word "Uzbek" is most likely derived from two Turkic words to form the phrase "genuine man." The Uzbeks' Islamic faith permeates much of their lives. When the Chinese government ordered that all children be educated at Chinese schools, the Uzbeks refused to send their children to schools that taught atheism.

Isaiah  
61:9

*Their descendants will be recognized and honored among the nations. Everyone will realize that they are a people the LORD has blessed."*

- Pray that those who live near today's people group will want their spiritual blessings after they submit to the Lord Almighty.
- Pray that the Uzbeks turn away from dogmatic Islam and open their hearts to the true prophet, priest and king, the one who desires nothing but a repentant and contrite heart.
- Pray that their hearts would be softened and for a movement to Christ this decade.

## ■ 26 Persian in Iran

Persia—the name evokes ancient memories mostly from the Bible. The children of Israel were taken captive and exiled in Persia or modern-day Iran. Tehran, the capital, is home to many ethnic groups, and the Persians are one such group. The Persians are very family oriented. Modern Persian women highly value their appearance, and many wear designer fashions.

Isaiah  
61:10

*I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God! For He has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding or a bride with her jewels.*

- Pray for the garment of salvation to come to this people group.
- Pray for the evangelical movement in Iran to continue to be blessed by multiplying house church movements.
- Pray for entire families to come under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and understand that Jesus Christ died for them so that they can live for Him.

## ■ 27 Hazara in Iran

People of Mongolian descent are often associated with the image of Mongolian hordes, riding and raiding across an area, killing all in their path. They were traditionally shepherds, but through subsequent generations, some became farmers, and currently many are in professional careers. Unfortunately, there is race discrimination in Iran, and the Hazaras are sometimes victims of it. Virtually all Hazaras are Shia Muslim like the Persian majority.

Isaiah  
62:3

*The LORD will hold you in His hand for all to see—a splendid crown in the hand of God.*

- Pray for this blessing to come to today's people group.
- Pray that spiritual discernment and spiritual hunger among the Hazaras in Tehran would lead them to begin a movement to Christ.





### ■ 28 Gulf-spoken Arabs in Iran

Gulf Arabs live in the desert regions of Iran, herding their goats and sheep, traveling by camel from one oasis area to another. These nomadic people are very proud of their lifestyle and feel like it is a step down to farm or have any other job.

Isaiah 66:2 *My hands have made both heaven and earth; they and everything in them are mine. I, the LORD, have spoken! "I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at my word."*

- Pray for the Lord to give humility and a fear of Him to this people group that will lead to them being blessed beyond measure.
- Pray for God to send dreams and revelations of Himself to the nomadic Gulf Arabs so that their hearts would be ready to accept the good news.
- Pray for God to call special people to this challenge to reach these people with the good news.
- Pray that Tehran would be the home of a Disciple Making Movement for Arabs.

### ■ 29 Gujarati in Iran

Wherever they are, whether it is their native India or Iran, Gujaratis have maintained their own culture. They are resourceful businessmen. Muslim Gujarati families usually arrange marriages as a way to strengthen alliances between families. Business-minded believers will probably be the best ones to befriend Gujarati businessmen and introduce them to the Savior.

Isaiah 66:22–23 *"As surely as my new heavens and earth will remain, so will you always be my people, with a name that will never disappear," says the LORD. All humanity will come to worship me from week to week and from month to month.*

- Pray that soon all mankind will bow in humble submission to the Lord Almighty.
- Pray for God to open the door of opportunity for Christian women to get to know Gujarati women, invite them to their homes and show them the way to His abundant life.
- Pray for radio broadcasts for Gujarati-speaking women.

### ■ 30 Parsee in Iran

Zoroaster was a Parsee, said to be born between 1,200-1,500 BC in northeast Iran. He rejected the polytheistic worship of his culture and believed in worshipping only the creator God (Ahura Mazda), and he believed that Angra Mainyu (devil) caused people to commit evil deeds. He believed that when people died, they would go to heaven or hell. They keep a fire burning in their temples as a symbol of Ahura Mazda's wisdom, brightness and power. The Magi and Persian kings like Cyrus and Darius were probably believers in Ahura Mazda.

Jeremiah 1:5 *"I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations."*

- Pray for the Lord to thrust out many prophets from every nation to every nation in the 2020s.
- Pray for a powerful movement to Christ among Iran's Parsees this decade.

### ■ 31 Judeo-Persian Jews in Iran

Jewish people have been in Iran since the days of Queen Esther. According to the chief rabbi of the Jewish community in Iran, Garami, the Iranian government is currently allowing the Jewish people of Iran to worship in peace. The rabbi also stressed that Jews are safe in Iran. Their schools, estimated 35 synagogues, cultural centers, kosher stores and restaurants are found primarily in Tehran and other big cities such as Isfahan and Shiraz.

Jeremiah 1:9-10 *Then the Lord reached out His hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."*

- Pray for Christ's ambassadors to be careful to speak only what God tells them to say when they go to the nations.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among Iran's Jewish population, leading them to the spiritual blessings only offered by Jesus Christ.
- Pray for a willingness to seek and find their Messiah in the Torah.





## AUGUST

### ■ 1 Southern Pashtun in Iran

The Sunni Muslim Pashtun were the traditional rulers of Afghanistan for over 250 years, from founding of the country in 1747 to 1973. Since the overthrow of the Afghan king, the Soviet invasion in the 1970s, and the overthrow of the communists in the 1980s, Afghanistan has faced constant conflict. Since that time some Pashtun men have sneaked into Iran to escape poverty and the constant fighting. Younger Pashtun men try to go directly to Tehran to find work in construction, where they are more accepted. Many send money back to Afghanistan to help their families.

Jeremiah 12:16 *And if these nations truly learn the ways of my people, and if they learn to swear by my name, saying, 'As surely as the LORD lives' (just as they taught my people to swear by the name of Baal), then they will be given a place among my people.*

- Pray for today's people to become well established in their devotion to the Lord alone.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among Pashtuns in Iran that would spread to Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- Pray that Pashtuns in Iran would feel a spiritual need and allow it to be met by the only Savior.
- Pray that Pashtun believers allow the light of Christ to bring their families to Him.

### ■ 2 Western Baloch in Iran

The Baloch people live in several countries. Although most live in Pakistan, many also live over the border in Iran, and they are nominally Sunni Muslims. The Western Baloch are evenly divided between those who live the lives of rural farmers/herdsmen and those who live in urban centers, where many of their young men migrate to find work. Most are poor with a high infant mortality rate.

Jeremiah 14:20 *LORD, we confess our wickedness and that of our ancestors, too. We all have sinned against You.*

- Pray that soon leaders among this people group will repent of their sins and lead others to do the same.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger among the Western Baloch that would lead them to the risen Savior.
- Pray that urban Baloch youth would open themselves to the gospel and that believers would deliberately go with the purpose of establishing Christ's presence among them.

### ■ 3 Bakhtiari in Iran

There are many reasons why the Bakhtiari people have not responded to the gospel. They are geographically isolated by rugged terrain. Clan divisions keep them socially isolated, so gospel efforts might need to be made on a clan by clan basis. There are many gospel tools in a language the Bakhtiari people can understand.

Jeremiah 16:21 *The LORD says, "Now I will show them my power; now I will show them my might. At last they will know and understand that I am the LORD."*

- Pray that today's people group will understand from the heart that God is all powerful, and He can give or withhold blessings.
- Pray that the church would intercede for these people and would plan to reach them via oil workers and women's commercial enterprises, clan by clan.
- Pray that women would become believers who teach the gospel to their children.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Bakhtiari this decade.

### ■ 4 Central Kurds in Iraq

Iran's Sorani-speaking Kurds have famous ancestors: the Medes! In Iraq, the Kurds have been much more open to the gospel than those in Iran. Iran's Sorani-speaking Kurds have few, if any, opportunities to hear about the sin-free, risen Savior. As it stands, they associate the gospel with the West; it can be associated with Darius the Mede or perhaps the Wise Men. The most effective ambassadors for Christ may be non-Westerners. There are several gospel tools in Sorani: TV, radio and Scripture portions.

Jeremiah 17:7 *"But blessed are those who trust in the LORD and have made the LORD their hope and confidence."*

- Pray that today's people group will put all their trust and confidence in the Lord only.
- Pray that the Kurdish church would be increasingly evangelistic in ways that are meaningful to Sorani-speaking Kurds.
- Pray that they would welcome missionaries.
- Pray that they would become increasingly dissatisfied with Islam and open up to the ways of Jesus Christ.

■ 5 Urdu in Saudi Arabia

Urdu speakers who live and work in Saudi Arabia are not exactly a people group in the usual sense. They are collection of peoples from many countries who share the common language of Urdu. Some Urdu language users work at the highest level of Saudi society. Others are day laborers who do not read. All come to Saudi Arabia looking for economic opportunities. Radio broadcasts in Urdu can share the news about Jesus. Believers who are working in Saudi Arabia can very discreetly tell the Urdu speakers about Jesus in small social settings.

Jeremiah 17:14 | *O LORD, if you heal me, I will be truly healed; if You save me, I will be truly saved. My praises are for You alone!*

- Pray for this people group to seek and find the Lord’s healing touch.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Urdu speaking peoples.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger that would drive them towards the only Savior.

■ 6 Northern Kurds in Turkey

Deciding to follow Christ would bring serious consequences to any Kurdish person. They are Sunni Muslim. Kurdish believers can take the gospel to their people in Turkey.

Jeremiah 29:12 | *For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.*

- Pray that this blessing will reach today’s people group soon.
- There is a small number of Kurmanji speaking Kurds who follow Christ. Pray that they find each other and receive solid Bible teaching, so they can grow spiritually.
- Pray for a peaceful and just end to the violence in Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, where many Kurds live.
- Pray that Kurdish refugees would have their spiritual and physical needs met.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Kurds of Turkey in this decade.



■ 7 Alawite in Turkey

You may have never heard the word “Alawite” before, but they have power in some parts of the Middle East. The Alawite sect is considered an offshoot of Shia Islam. Thousands of Alawites have fled the turmoil in Syria and now live as refugees in Turkey. The Alawites in Turkey hope that they can someday return to Syria.

Jeremiah 29:13 | *If you look for Me wholeheartedly, you will find Me.*

- Pray that today’s people group will seek the Lord will all their hearts and find Him to be merciful, loving and powerful.
- Ask the Lord to send medical and educational teams of believers to the Alawite refugees.
- Pray the Alawites in Turkey would be receptive to the good news of Jesus.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Alawites in Turkey.

■ 8 Hazara in Afghanistan

Can you name a Muslim people who have been persecuted by other Muslims within their own country? The Shia Hazara of Afghanistan have been the recipients of attacks by Afghan Sunni Muslims for centuries. At one time the Hazaras formed half the population of the nation whereas today they make up only about one tenth. If a Hazara person becomes a follower of Christ, their community will see them as a traitor and treat them as such.

Jeremiah 31:33 | *“But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days,” says the LORD. “I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

- Pray for today’s people group to become the Lord’s people!
- Ask the Lord to give each Hazara the opportunity to hear a clear presentation of the gospel.
- Pray for peace in Afghanistan and that Hazara parents would be able to provide for their children.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Hazaras this decade.

### ■ 9 Bade in Nigeria

In a country with a king, he is crowned when he assumes the throne. But what about the supreme leader of the Bade people known as the emir in Nigeria? He is turbaned! The Bade people are mostly farmers who practice some other occupation during the dry season. They live mostly in Nigeria's northern Yobe and Jigawa states, which are subject to the terrors of Boko Haram. These people live with terrible uncertainty; they depend on the weather, and they live in an area subject to terrorist attacks.

Jeremiah 51:19 | *He is the Creator of everything that exists, including His people, His own special possession. The LORD of Heaven's Armies is His name!*

- Pray for today's people group to soon become part of the Lord's inheritance. Pray that they would respond to the certain future that God promises.
- May He give them faith to entrust their present lives to Him. Pray for a movement to Christ among the Bade people.

### ■ 10 Kyanga in Nigeria

There are four subgroups of Kyanga, the people who can be identified by their different facial scars. Many of them are bilingual, speaking their own tongue, Kyanga, along with the dominant Hausa language. In the last 70 years, Islam has become the main religious affiliation of the Kyanga people, though animism lies beneath the surface of their form of Islam.

Lamentations 3:21-24 | *Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is His faithfulness; His mercies begin afresh each morning. I say to myself, "The Lord is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in Him!"*

- Pray that soon members of today's people group will embrace the love and compassion of the Lord.
- Pray that they become part of His portion.
- Pray that the Lord would send workers into the harvest field to help build His Church and begin a church planting movement among the Kyanga people.
- Pray that the Lord convicts the souls of the Kyanga Imams (elders/teachers) so that they embrace the Savior and encourage others to do the same.

### ■ 11 Wandala in Nigeria

The Wandala get some of their income from trading arts and crafts with other peoples, but they receive most of their income through farming. They are a conservative male dominated society, residing in northern Cameroon and Nigeria. Polygamy is common, with the first wife being the "head" wife over the others.

Ezekiel 34:23 | *And I will set over them one shepherd, my servant David. He will feed them and be a shepherd to them.*

- Pray for today's people group to submit to the one true shepherd, Jesus Christ.
- Pray that the Lord would lift the veil of deception and that they see their need for the free gift of salvation in Christ.
- Pray that the Lord would move the hearts of local elders so that they may influence those they lead.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Wandala people this decade.

### ■ 12 Duwai in Nigeria

How would it feel to be part of the Duwai people? They are a small ethnolinguistic group in northeast Nigeria. They have been Muslim since the 11th century, though their Islam is mixed with African traditional religions. They dwell in harsh, hot conditions, with some residing in remote places. The Duwai language contains no Christian resources--no Bible portions, JESUS Film, or gospel recordings. There are no known Duwai believers. Nigerian missionary efforts have been rejected.

Ezekiel 36:25-27 | *Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.*

- Pray for this people group to find spiritual cleansing in Jesus Christ.
- Pray that the God of the impossible would prepare Duwai hearts to receive Christ.
- Pray that anointed witnesses would continue to reach out to Duwai families and community leaders.
- Pray for a harvest of souls and disciples, leading to a Disciple Making Movement to transform and bless Nigeria's Duwai people.



### ■ 13 Sokoto Fulani in Niger

The Sokoto Fulani are a subgroup of the greater Fulani tribe. The Fulani believe that to be a Fulani is to be a Muslim. Many Fulani are revered teachers of Islam, who get much respect for their Islamic pedigree. Polluted water is a problem for the Sokoto Fulani, who suffer from malaria and other water-carried diseases.

Daniel 2:47 | *The king said to Daniel, “Truly, your God is the greatest of gods, the Lord over kings, a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this secret.”*

- Pray that leaders among this people group will understand that God alone can reveal truth to them.
- Pray that they will cease to look to any other. Pray for workers with the skills to help them have clean, potable water.
- Pray that this would be the decade when the Sokoto Fulani have an unstoppable movement to Christ.

### ■ 14 Muslim Yao in Malawi

Though they originated in Mozambique, the majority of Yao people now live in Malawi. The Yao people migrated in the 1800s due to famines and tribal divisions and befriended their new neighbors. These neighbors, the Swahili Arabs, drew the Yao into the trade of ivory and slaves for guns and cloth. Through this trade agreement, the Yao became one of the most powerful tribes in southeastern Africa. Perhaps if the Yao were reached in their own language, Ciyawo, they might respond. They also have significant medical challenges, so medical and educational outreach might have a significant impact.

Daniel 3:28 | *Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent His angel to rescue His servants who trusted in Him. They defied the king’s command and were willing to die rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.”*

- Pray that leaders of this people group will be amazed at the works of God as this Babylonian king.
- Pray that they will worship God alone.
- Pray that their cultural walls would be lowered and that they would know the true love of God.
- Pray for invested workers to spring up among them in Malawi.

### ■ 15 Muslim Yao in Mozambique

Think of our planet, Earth. Zoom in on the continent of Africa. Next, the country of Mozambique and finally, the small village of Chiconono. This is the geographic center of the Yao people, once one of the richest and most powerful in Southern Africa, thanks to a lucrative trade with the Arabs. In addition to trade, the Yao people obtained the religion of Islam from the Arabs.

Daniel 4:37 | *“Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and glorify and honor the King of heaven. All his acts are just and true, and He is able to humble the proud.”*

- Pray for leaders of this people group to repent before the Lord Almighty like this king.
- Pray that Yao hearts would be opened to the gospel and that they would discover the power of the true God.
- Pray for loving, patient and respectful workers to show the love of God, leading them into a vast Disciple Making Movement in Mozambique.

### ■ 16 Somali in Ethiopia

The Somalis are scattered across the Horn of Africa, including Ethiopia. They mostly live in the SRS (Somali Regional State), which borders their homeland. The SRS contrasts greatly from other Ethiopian states. There are deep grievances over uncounted atrocities that continue between Ethiopians and Somalis.

Daniel 7:14 | *He was given authority, honor, and sovereignty over all the nations of the world, so that people of every race and nation and language would obey Him. His rule is eternal—it will never end. His kingdom will never be destroyed.*

- Pray that many from today’s people group will understand and respond to the fact that Jesus Christ has an eternal kingdom.
- Pray for them to worship their eternal King of kings! A mere handful of Christian Somalis live in the SRS.
- Pray that they would allow Christ to show His forgiveness for oppressors through them, and that they would lead a movement for Him in the SRS and beyond.
- Pray for loving and culturally sensitive workers to be thrust out to the Somalis.
- Pray for spiritual openness that would lead to a Disciple Making Movement for Somalis in Ethiopia and Somalia.



■ 17 Rashaida in Eritrea

The Rashaida are a Bedouin people, who populate either side of the Red Sea and came from a major tribe in mainland Arabia about 150 years ago. They are a nomadic people who live in tents made of goatskin, and they are herdsman, raising primarily goats and sheep. The gospel message needs to come to them orally, using stories from Scripture, videos, recordings and similar means.

Hosea 1:10 *Yet the time will come when Israel's people will be like the sands of the seashore—too many to count! Then, at the place where they were told, 'You are not my people,' it will be said, 'You are children of the living God.'*

- Pray that this people group soon become children of the living God.
- Pray Rashaida families would be able to live peaceful lives.
- Pray for stability and prosperity in Eritrea.
- Pray for bold and loving workers to go to the Rashaida people to build His Church in Eritrea and beyond.

■ 18 Bengali-speaking South Asians in UK

Most Bengali speakers in the UK have been somewhat absorbed culturally in the UK. Some immigrated there to escape the harsh lifestyles of Bangladesh while others have come in search of better educational or economic opportunities. Yet most retain their traditional Islamic religion as a cultural anchor. They feel that they have sacrificed their languages and cultures. Thus, they really do not want to lose their religion as well.

Hosea 5:15 *Then I (God) will return to my place until they admit their guilt and turn to me. For as soon as trouble comes, they will earnestly search for me.*

- Pray that the troubles of this people group cause them to seek the Lord and find Him.
- Pray for openness and spiritual awakening, leading to genuine responses to the Savior.
- Pray that this would be the decade when there is a movement to Christ among the Muslim Bengalis in the UK.

■ 19 Gujarati in United Kingdom

Gujaratis in the UK have taken on western dress, speak the English language and strive for the Western level of success. Yet, most have retained their traditional religion, Hinduism. Gujaratis feel connected to their mother country, India, and stay in contact with their relatives there.

Joel 2:12 *That is why the Lord says, "Turn to me now, while there is time. Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning."*

- Pray that this people group turns to the Lord and repents of their sins.
- Pray for the small remnant of true believers among Gujaratis to be discipled and to lead others to the saving gospel.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger among Gujarati Hindus that would lead them to the only Savior.
- Pray for people who have the right background to go to them.
- Pray that the UK would be an incubator for a Gujarati movement to Christ.

■ 20 Malaysian Malay in United Kingdom

The strongest characteristic of Malay identity that remains consistent regardless of their location is their adherence to the Islamic faith. Being a Muslim is a central part of the Malay identity. The Malay can be reached in Great Britain, where there is freedom of religion. The Malay are often gregarious and friendly.

Joel 2:28 *Then, after doing all those things, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions.*

- Pray that this people group receives the gift of the Holy Spirit as they turn to the Lord.
- Pray that this would be the decade when there is a spiritual breakthrough among the Malay Muslims in the UK.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to penetrate the wall of religion that keeps them from accepting the Savior and give them a desire for Jesus Christ.
- Pray for loving and persevering workers to go to them. It is often very difficult to be allowed into their social networks.





### ■ 21 Northern Kurds in Germany

In the early 1950s, Germany had a labor shortage, and they allowed temporary “guest workers” from Turkey to enter. Among the peoples from Turkey, there were Kurmanji-speaking Kurds, otherwise known as the Northern Kurds. Although some Northern Kurds farm, most live in German cities. As many Kurds are urbanized, Christ’s ambassadors can become schoolteachers and health workers in Kurdish neighborhoods. This can be a platform for reaching these unreached Kurds.

Amos  
4:13

*For the Lord is the one who shaped the mountains, stirs up the winds, and reveal His thoughts to mankind. He turns the light of dawn into darkness and treads on the heights of the earth. The Lord God of Heaven’s Armies is His name!*

- Pray that this people group seeks and finds the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.
- Pray that God’s Word become available to those who are seeking Him.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit would stir the hearts of Kurmanji-speaking Kurds in Germany so that the Lord can show them the limitations of man-made traditions and religious customs.
- Pray that God would convict their hearts of the true prophet, priest, and King, leading to a movement to Christ. Pray for more workers to reach out for Christ.

### ■ 22 Zaza-Alevi in Germany

Do you know what it’s like to not fit in? The Zaza-Alevi people in Germany do. They consider themselves Muslims but have retained some ancient beliefs, giving them the label “heretic” by Muslims. They consider themselves to be Kurdish, but their language is different from any Kurds. Having migrated from Turkey, they are not considered German, setting them apart from the German majority.

Amos  
5:24

*Instead, I (God) want to see a mighty flood of justice, an endless river of righteous living.*

- Pray that God’s justice and righteousness prevail in the society of this people group.
- Pray that God would reveal Christ as the only one to turn to in their sorrowfulness over their sin.



### ■ 23 Turk in Germany

The majority of Turks live in Turkey, but several million live in Germany and have adapted to Western culture, pursuing professional careers such as engineering, medicine and law. They began to establish themselves there soon after WWII, so that period of time when immigrants are open to new ideas is long gone. But God can still do miracles! Turks don’t want to lose what remains of their culture and religion in this secularized land. This can cause them to automatically reject the gospel.

Amos  
8:11

*The time is surely coming, says the Sovereign Lord, when I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread or water but of hearing the words of the Lord.*

- Pray that the Bible becomes available to this people group.
- Pray they listen to and obey the words of the Lord.
- Pray that the Lord would show the Muslim Turks the need for a sin-forgiving Savior.
- Pray for spiritual openness among the Turks in Germany.
- Pray for a spiritual awakening that would lead to a Disciple Making Movement.

### ■ 24 Arabic-speaking Algerians in France

In Algeria, there is a gray line between the more powerful Arab population and the less powerful indigenous Berber peoples. Originally, North Africa was dominated by the Berber peoples who were once Christians. As centuries went by and with several invasions of Muslim Arabs, the Berbers were “Arabized,” and some mixed with and married the Arabs, causing a blend of cultures. The two groups get even more confusing when they migrate to France, where they live and work side by side.





Micah  
6:8

*No, O people, the Lord has told you what is good, and this is what He requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.*

- Pray that this people group learns to walk humbly with the Lord.
- Pray for a people movement to Jesus Christ among the Algerian Berbers both in Algeria and in Europe.
- Pray for God to soften the hearts of Algerian Muslims, so they would know that they can never be right with God except by the work of a holy and sinless Savior.

## ■ 25 Arabic-speaking Moroccans in France

Moroccan Arabs living in France have lives that are very different from the ones they had in Morocco. There is greater freedom for women to leave the home and even work outside of the home. Since they have been exposed to western culture on a grand scale, their traditional culture and way of life have undergone many changes. Political unity has always been a dream among Arabs, but today the greatest tie among them is still the Arabic language.

Micah  
7:18

*Where is another God like you, who pardons the guilt of the remnant, overlooking the sins of His special people? You will not stay angry with your people forever, because you delight in showing unfailing love.*

- Pray that this people begin to experience the unfailing love of God and come to the knowledge of Christ.
- Pray for the Lord to call people led by the Holy Spirit to share the love of Christ with Moroccan Arabs in France.
- Pray for God to strengthen, encourage and protect the small number of Arabs who have decided to follow Jesus in France.
- Pray that France would be the incubator for a Disciple Making Movement that would spread to Morocco and beyond.

## ■ 26 Kabyle Berbers in France

The word "Berber" is a derivative of the word that the Romans gave the Kabyle Berbers, meaning "barbarian." The Kabyle Berbers mostly inhabit the rugged mountainous area of northern Africa. They are very family oriented, so their lives center around family traditions and activities. When job opportunities dwindled in their North African homeland, many immigrated to France.

Nahum  
1:7

*The Lord is good, a strong refuge when trouble comes. He is close to those who trust in Him.*

- Pray that this people group takes refuge in the Lord.
- Pray for Berber women to be open to invitations from Christian women to join them in fellowship and hospitality.
- Pray for the children to be invited to Christian events where they can hear the gospel.



## ■ 27 Southern Shilha Berbers in France

Shilha Berbers identify Europeans and Christianity as a polar opposite of their Berber Islamic identity. They are torn between blending in with the French or self-isolating to protect their Muslim Berber identity. If they chose Christ over the Islamic religious system, that would present another cultural conflict.

Habakkuk  
2:4

*Look at the proud! They trust in themselves, and their lives are crooked. But the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God.*

- Pray that this people group become faithful to God and not trust in themselves.
- Pray for a people movement to Christ among the Shilha Berbers in France in the 21st century.
- Pray for Christian women in France to seek out the immigrant women and start a prayer ministry for them that would culminate in opportunities for hospitality and sharing the Savior.

■ 28 Shawiya Berbers in France

In Paris, about one out of three cafes are owned by Berbers from northern Algeria. In addition, the majority of Paris taxi drivers and many small grocery stores are owned by Berbers. Most of France's Berbers, including the Shawiya subgroup, live in Paris. Believers need to take every opportunity to buy at Berber grocery stores and eat at Berber owned cafes to earn the right to engage Berbers with the knowledge of the only Savior. People need to bring them Christ, not Christianity.

Habakkuk 3:18 | *Yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!*

- Pray this people group learns to rejoice in the Lord and His salvation.
- Pray that believers would have the love and perseverance to reach out to Shawiya Berbers as Christ's ambassadors.
- May Shawiya Berbers understand and embrace the abundant life offered by the loving Lord.

■ 29 Comorians in France

Comoro is made up of four major islands and small islets located off of the eastern coast of Africa. Only the island of Mayotte remains in French control; the others received independence from France in 1975. Thousands of suffering Comorians have risked their lives by crossing the Mozambique Channel in boats to reach Mayotte, where there is less poverty. Some who reach Mayotte have migrated to France, but those who reach France live in poverty. France is a very secular environment, and that mindset could be affecting Comorians. Comorians in France are either Muslim or forsaking religion altogether.

Haggai 1:7 | *This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says: Look at what's happening to you!*

- Pray that this people group consider their ways and turn to the Lord.
- Pray the Comorians would be freed from their physical and spiritual hardships.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Comorians in France this decade.



■ 30 Soninke in France

The Soninke people of West Africa were one of the first immigrant communities in France. Most Soninke men seek employment in hard labor jobs such as construction. Often single men live together in houses known as "foyers." Soninke people in France work hard so their children can have a higher education and have the chance of reaching professional status. Soninke are strong Muslims. They rarely marry those outside their ethnic community. Fear of being rejected by their families and community keeps Soninke people from accepting Christ.

Zechariah 2:11 | *Many nations will join themselves to the Lord on that day, and they, too, will be my people. I will live among you, and you will know that the Lord of Heaven's Armies sent me to you.*

- Pray that this people group would be among the many nations that soon join themselves to the Lord.
- Pray that the Soninkes in Africa, France and beyond would be open to Christ's answers for their lives and respond with love and devotion to Him.

■ 31 Thai in France

"Mai ben rai" is often heard on the lips of Central Thai Buddhists. Roughly translated it means, "That's not an issue." The phrase expresses a deeply held Thai belief that things are not worth getting agitated over because that would cause one to leave the "middle path" of calmness as taught in Buddhism. This attitude also keeps them from giving serious thought to the claims of Christ. Yet God is moving in France among the Thai. There are believers from OMF International who are reaching the Thai diaspora in Europe through friendship evangelism which can lead to Bible studies and Disciple Making Movements.

Zechariah 14:9 | *And the Lord will be king over all the earth. On that day there will be one Lord—His name alone will be worshiped.*

- Pray that this people group would learn to worship the Lord and king of all the earth.
- Pray for spiritual openness and a desire for true holiness among the Thai people in France.

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#### **CONNECT**

**Connect** is first and foremost a virtual space to connect. **Connect** is a place that introduces individuals to the variety of components that make up the Mission world and provides a platform to interact and hopefully collaborate with one another.

#### **COMMUNICATE**

Through **Connect** we are able to encourage communication on a number of levels, share ideas, and champion a cause. This is the perfect space to remain connected to friends and colleagues serving in mission around the world.

#### **COLLABORATE**

Our ultimate goal is that as people connect and communicate it will lead to increased collaboration between ministries, agencies, networks and individuals. Through **Connect** you are able to champion a cause, raise awareness, share needs, create projects, plan outreaches, events, etc.

Register for Connect at <https://connect.ggcn.org>. Every registration request is checked for security purposes to make sure it is a legitimate, Great Commission participant. More information: <https://www.ggcn.org/networking/> or email [info@ggcn.org](mailto:info@ggcn.org).