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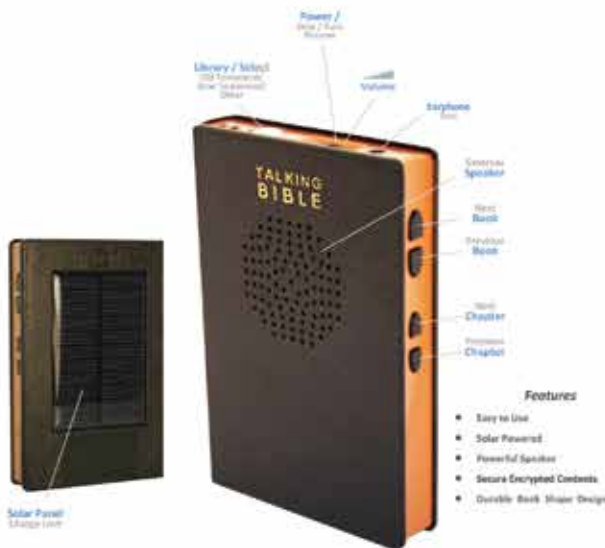
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## God's Mission Is a Battle for Hearts and Minds

BY RICK WOOD

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**The mission of God is a battle for the hearts and minds of billions of people, both inside and outside the Church. All truth is God's truth and we must conform our beliefs, values and thinking to His truth.**

They are all around us, as pervasive as the air we breathe. They bombard us relentlessly day and night from every direction seeking to take us captive. The unaware are helpless to avoid their grasp. They are the lies, evil philosophies and poisonous worldviews that seek to tear our hearts and minds away from the God who loves us and sent His Son to die for us. These lies of Satan seek to corrupt a true and biblical understanding of God and how we are to relate to Him.

As seen in the article by Jeff Myers starting on page 19, these false worldviews have invaded our churches and corrupted the hearts and minds of millions of supposedly faithful followers of Jesus. The statistics on page 20 paint a bleak and grim picture of compromise and apostasy. Another survey by George Barna completed several years ago, which I have often quoted, discovered that only 19% of self-proclaimed born-again believers in Jesus actually held to very basic sound doctrine such as the authority of the Bible, the deity of Christ and His substitutionary death on the cross for our sins. That means that 81% do not hold to the most basic doctrines of the Christian faith. It is no wonder we are having so much trouble making progress in reaching the unreached peoples. We haven't even reached the people in our churches yet.

And what happens if we send these people out as mission workers to make disciples? Horrors! We are not talking about trying to attain some perfect goal of 100% adherence to sound doctrine, as we will always have some wayward souls in the Church. But better than 50% is not too much to ask.

The mission of God is a battle for the hearts and minds of billions of people, both inside and outside the Church. All truth is God's truth and we must conform our beliefs, values and thinking to His truth. How we think about God and ourselves affects everything else in the world since our thinking affects our actions. The battles we face in the physical world such as poverty, disease, war, human trafficking, and on and on, are at their roots a battle for the mind. This is why God calls us to renew our minds and take every thought captive to Christ. Bad thinking leads to bad outcomes both personally and globally. All the crises we face in the world are, in reality, a spiritual/worldview crisis. Thus, our job as Jesus followers is to identify the unbiblical beliefs, lies and false worldviews in our own lives and the lives of others and to confront them with the truth of God's word. To say the least, this is a monumental task. On just a personal level, it is a life-long journey to identify the lies we have believed and to replace these lies with the truth of God's Word.

In order to confront and defeat the lies and false worldviews in ourselves

and others, we must understand:

1. How our worldview developed,
2. What are the major worldviews vying for our allegiance, and,
3. How do we go about replacing the lies of the false worldviews with God's truth through effective discipleship? Unless we understand how to disciple people toward lasting biblical change in their lives, then we are in grave danger of simply plastering Christian knowledge on top of a false worldview that is largely unchanged. The effects of this can be disastrous. We can see this in many parts of the world where large majorities of people claim to be Christians but their behavior does not reflect a truly transformed life. The Rwandan genocide in 1994 is but one example of a largely "Christian" country not reflecting Christ-like character.

### Renovating Your "House of Knowledge"

The wonderful article by Debbie Wood starting on page 8, gets to the heart of this problem. Based on the latest brain science, she describes how our worldview develops and how our "House of Knowledge" gets

built, block by block. Unfortunately, many of these blocks that make up our worldview are faulty and based on lies. So, as we come to Christ, each of us must do the hard work of renovating our House of Knowledge to replace those faulty blocks with blocks of truth. Situations like the Rwandan genocide take place when the faulty blocks are not replaced and the truth of the gospel is just stored in the attic and ignored. This article gets to the heart of how we change our worldview and disciple others so they are equipped to change their worldview as well.

The implications of this article are massive for the ministry of the Church. The foundational fact of human nature is that truth cannot just be heard as in a sermon. It must be wrestled with and internalized in order to make any difference. Passive listening is not enough. Whenever truth encounters deeply embedded lies in our minds, it creates a type of cognitive dissonance that can produce real physical distress. As the Church, we must provide educational opportunities in small discipleship groups that encourage this “wrestling match” to take place on a regular basis. We all have a bunch of embedded lies that need to be ripped out and replaced with God’s truth. Simply sitting in church and listening to a sermon once a week will not suffice. We are up against a culture with a high-powered media blasting lies at us like a machine gun, 24/7. A once-a-week sermon with passive listeners cannot compete with this. The Church has to adapt or we will get more of the compromise and apostasy that we see in the Church today.

All of this limits what we can do in reaching the unreached peoples.


How can we effectively mobilize the Church to action on behalf of the unreached peoples if 81% of the people in the Church do not even believe the foundational truths of the Bible? A radical change in the way we do church is required if the mission of the Church is to survive the onslaught of false worldviews from the surrounding culture.

### **Disciple Making Movements Are the Answer**

At the heart of every Disciple Making Movement (DMM) is a philosophy of education and transformation that is perfectly suited for how people were created to learn and to replace bad information with the truth. The discipleship process in DMMs is centered upon active involvement, not passive listening as in most churches. Disciples are taught how to study the Scriptures for themselves and to feed themselves spiritually. The focus in DMMs is not on gaining head knowledge, storing more stuff in the attic of their House of Knowledge, but rather on application and obedience to what they are learning from Scripture. The process encourages the resolution of internal conflicts between deeply embedded blocks of lies and the truth of God’s Word. These conflicts are not glossed over, as in most Christian education, but brought out into the open to be confronted and resolved with the help of the Holy Spirit. In DMMs the disciple is taught to listen to the Holy Spirit and to obey what God’s word and the Spirit says. If the disciple has a faulty, unbiblical worldview, then that will come to the surface when confronted with the truths of God’s Word. The kind of statistics we see in Jeff Myers’ article on page 20 are the result of the lack

of an effective discipleship process that encourages people to confront and alter the defective blocks in their worldview. As said before, passive listening is not enough for this essential confrontation process to take place. Each of us must confront the lies in our worldview and replace those lies with the truth. Then we must help others to do the same. The future of God’s mission on Earth will hinge on whether we have the courage to choose a more effective path of discipleship.

### **Support the Work of Mission Frontiers**

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

# Think You Have a B



# You Might B

# Biblical Worldview?



Be Surprised.

# Reconstructing a “House of Knowledge”

BY **DEBBIE WOOD**

**Debbie Wood** has taught internationally for more than 20 years. She has an MS in Education from Hull University with emphasis in cross-cultural and online learning. She is on the faculty of iTEE Global's online university as both facilitator and curriculum writer. She lives with husband Tom and also cooperates with God in growing gardens and grandchildren. Contact her at [debbiew@iteeg.org](mailto:debbiew@iteeg.org).

*It was after midnight when she finally heard the gate open. Flora Mwikali dragged herself wearily from the comfort of her cot and started toward the light from the lounge. The matron, Mummy, was already there. Suddenly the guard called, “They are too afraid. You must come, Ma’am.” As Flora peered into the van, she could see the eyes of two children gleaming like small white crescents. The woman officer was trying to coax them, but they cringed and trembled, straining away. They were so small, Flora thought. Maybe age five or six? Or maybe they were just malnourished, like so many others before them. She already had welcomed over 60 such small faces as the two she could suddenly smell on the night breeze. She motioned for the guard to make his rounds. With no men looking at them, like wounded animals the children clambered down and into the lighted room.*

*“This one we found sleeping buried up to her neck in the roadside repair sand,” the officer summarized as she handed Flora the paperwork. “It kept her from being troubled all night. This other one in the market dustbin, eating garbage after everyone went home.” The girls looked down as Flora read the unfeeling report “...checked at the hospital.” The officer went on. “No infections, but they have been... damaged.” She shook her head sadly as she accepted the signed paper. After she was gone, Flora knelt down, examining their small faces, not letting herself pull away from their stench. “Do you want to tell about yourselves?” The girls remained silent. “Here you will be safe. You will have sisters to play with, and can go to school. Would you like that?” She thought she detected a slight nod, and they had stopped trembling and were listening now. “This is a towel. Mummy here will help you bathe. All the girls here at New Scent are clean. She will*





*help you dress in new clothes of your very own. I will make you food and prepare your bed. Tomorrow you can rest for as long as you want. Then, other girls would like to meet you.”*

*She knew that they did not understand some of her words. Most girls had never touched a towel or had a bath in their short lives. As she watched them walk to the shower house with Mummy, she wondered again, why did they just keep coming? In Kenya, where nearly 80% claimed Christ, how could men violate childish bodies with impunity? Why were the girls then treated like the garbage they often hid in?*

*These girls would soon find new dignity in Christ. They would learn to pray with the others and experience God providing food (without exacting pain). Someone would deliver a sack of meal or a bag of rice to the gate. But like manna, there was rarely surplus. Flora thought of the last church elder to whom she had shared her difficulty feeding 60 children. “If you would just take in ordinary orphans, then our church could help,” he had said, “but these are so dirtified...” his lip curled with the word. His disgust matched countless rejections over the seven years since God brought the first molested child to her doorstep.*

*“I have experienced equal measures of love and hate from Your people, Lord. What’s wrong?” Flora prayed as she heated the mush. “The leaders know Your Word. Why do they not love and value children you say are made in Your image?”*

**In Proverbs 9:1, the writer describes Lady Wisdom building a house. In a similar way, each person builds an inner house of everything believed to be true.**

Experiences like Flora’s are not rare. Christian workers in every culture bruise themselves on implacable boulders hidden like deadly reefs in leaders’ worldviews. They wonder, why is the perspective of the Church and its leaders so contrary to a clear teaching of Scripture? Why isn’t the Scripture affecting these hidden stones?

The answer lies in assumptions founded in each individual’s “House of Knowledge,” a helpful visualization of the human mind and heart (which I am constantly renovating) to illustrate learning and teaching.

## What is the House of Knowledge?

In Proverbs 9:1, The writer describes Lady Wisdom building a house. In a similar way, each person builds an inner house of everything believed to be true. This House of Knowledge (HOK) is a helpful (but admittedly imperfect) way of picturing the structure of your mind, everything you believe, understand, or judge about everything you have encountered—your own “wisdom.” The blocks that make up your HOK are organized by topics of all sorts, from geography, the names and appearance of your family and friends, ways of appropriate behavior in your culture, to beliefs about yourself and your worth. They are not discrete, but clusters of information, with cross-referenced connections threaded to each other.

The heart reigns at the center of the HOK. In biblical thought, the heart is not seen primarily as the location of emotions, as in Western thought. It is much more than that. The heart is the center of will, choice, personality, subconscious. It refers to who you are deep inside and regulates how you choose, respond, or initiate. Proverbs 4:23 says to “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.”

## How does the House of Knowledge Start? With Caregivers

A baby is born knowing nothing, right? No, at birth, the baby has already learned comfort, hunger, pain, fear and the sound of the family’s voices from inside the womb. These impressions are the first stones supporting his/her tiny house of limited knowledge. But when the baby is jettisoned into the world at birth, it is like arriving on an alien planet. Life is going on, and she is urgently trying to make sense of this new world and how she fits into it. For this, the Lord has instilled in babies several essential skills and senses. She immediately goes to work recording impressions, and seeking to connect them with other impressions, then to extract meaning from the data. She notes who attends to her needs and what her caregiver’s reactions tell her about her own value. Within a few short weeks, social smiles bounce back and forth between the baby and the parents, or neglect produces insecurity. As the impressions grow, the house structure expands and the world comes into focus.

The parents aren’t the only ones giving the child input about the nature of life. Brothers and sisters, aunts and

cousins and other caregivers are just a few of the people who give the baby data for the quest. Because we live in a world where sin, Satan and the world system are distorted and seeking to distort, some of the blocks the child builds into the house are also distorted. Sisters and brothers may say “I wish you’d never been born.” The child cannot reject these early impressions, any more than she can reject the name his parents call her. It is a one-way absorption. For many years of development, the foundation stones will embed so deeply under the soil of the maturing individual’s “house,” that they will rarely, if ever, be considered again. Language, culture, experimentation and impressions about her own body all form new blocks.



**Because we live in a world where sin, Satan and the world system are distorted and seeking to distort, some of the blocks the child builds into the house are also distorted.**

### **How does the House Grow? The Elevator, Greater Complexity, and Judgments**

Each person’s House of Knowledge is a totally private place, humanly speaking. As a Christian discipler, you do not know what is really inside someone else’s house. It may even have been a long time since you explored the lower reaches of your own HOK. Your only access to your learner’s house is the “elevator shaft” that we can imagine extending from outside down through the core of the house. This elevator ferries information bundles down into the house. As data arrives, the mind instantly works

to decode the new bundle, combing existing storerooms of blocks for something with similar features—somewhat like a domino player examines a new tile for a matching dot pattern. There are only a few seconds available for this process. If there is no match, the data disappears back up the shaft. For example, if I see a Japanese Kanji character, it takes only a split second for me to realize I do not know enough to decode it.

**As data arrives, the mind instantly works to decode the new bundle, combing existing storerooms of blocks for something with similar features—somewhat like a domino player examines a new tile for a matching dot pattern.**

If new data finds some commonality with an existing block, the mind goes to work interpreting the new knowledge based on the previously stored data. If congruent, the new information attaches to the old. The upgraded block goes back into long-term memory, which grows that much bigger and more complex. So, the child’s blocks develop greater complexity. For instance, the “bird” block now includes species, “crow, sparrow, seagull” as well as bird noises, bird physiology and bird habits. This complexity gives that much more opportunities to find matches whenever new information



arrives in the elevator. Greater expertise in any topic and wider experience types means faster and easier absorption of new “bundles.”

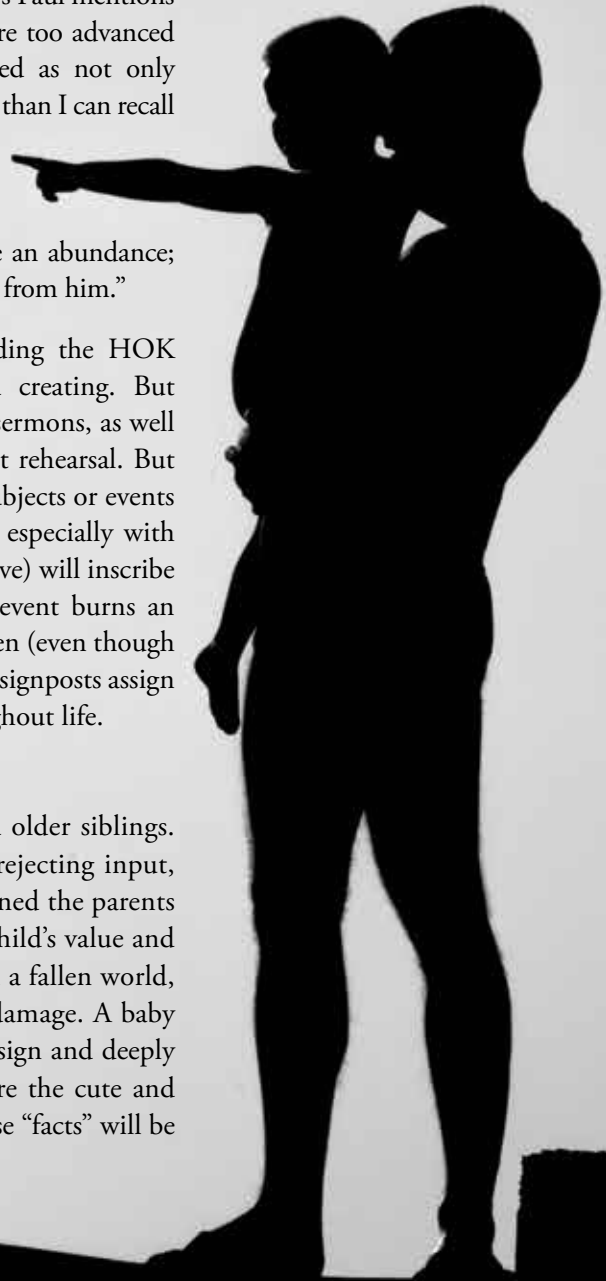
Conversely, failures to learn rudimentary principles or make key observations cause new bundles to be misunderstood. Like the tongues-speakers Paul mentions in 1 Cor 14:11, if concepts arrive in unknown vocabulary, or are too advanced for the child’s current development, the new data is discarded as not only unintelligible, but are actually *unable* to be remembered any more than I can recall my unintelligible Kanji. Jesus actually describes a similar principle in Matt. 11:13 when speaking about the contrast between His disciples’ understanding and the confused crowds.

“For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.”

The school-age child experiences disciplined ways of expanding the HOK through listening, writing, reading, testing, rehearsing and creating. But mental paths to locate specific facts from textbooks, tests, and sermons, as well as memories about specific experiences, will weed over without rehearsal. But signposted judgments such as “good” or “keep out” on many subjects or events will remain to inform future bundles. Emotional experiences, especially with significant people exhibiting strong emotions (positive or negative) will inscribe the most deep, influential judgments. However, a traumatic event burns an access path so vividly that the event data itself cannot be forgotten (even though in PTSD or dissociative disorders, it may be sequestered). These signposts assign meaning to the data and will continue to exert influence throughout life.

### Good Processes Can Produce Bad Results

A child comes equipped with a *disposition to trust* adults and older siblings. A child is not naturally skeptical, not good at discerning or rejecting input, as easily as they might spit out bitter food. Because God designed the parents to represent God to the child, the parents’ verdict about the child’s value and the way the world works is absorbed without question. But in a fallen world, this makes them vulnerable to deceit and lasting emotional damage. A baby can’t say “You should not treat me as worthless! I am God’s design and deeply loved!” If a mother says “Your brother is the smart one, you’re the cute and pretty one,” or father hisses, “Your birth brought bad luck,” these “facts” will be deeply believed.



**The compulsion to imitate, while being a key equipment for early learning, is another dangerous skill in a fallen world. It’s cute when a baby wears Daddy’s big shoes, but not cute when he imitates his curse words.**

The compulsion to *imitate*, while being a key equipment for early learning, is another dangerous skill in a fallen world. It's cute when a baby wears Daddy's big shoes, but not cute when he imitates his curse words.

Whenever a parent's actions differ from his instructions, the child, in the long run, will typically imitate. "Do what I say, not what I do" is useless. This makes sense because humans were created as God's image-bearers, designed to replicate His image to their children. Offspring become natural image-bearers of parents, both physically from genetics and caught from behavior. The problem of course, is that once again, children have only poor replicas of God to imitate! Yet Paul invited the infantile Corinthians to imitate him as *He modeled Christ* (1 Cor. 11:1; 4:16). This exhortation should keep us as teachers and parents humbly walking in the fruit of the Spirit, so that God can image Christ through us. Then those we seek to disciple can safely imitate our walk.

## The Right to Reign

Through the process of maturing, a child begins to exercise an ability God instilled in all humans—the right to reign (Gen. 1:26). This includes a right to reject as well as accept. The child might say "I don't like red curry but I do like bananas." The cluster about bananas gets signposted with others as "foods I like" and the curry information gets judged "foods I don't like." The child learns to exercise an ability to say "No!" as well as to comply, to complain as well as feel satisfied.

Rather than accepting everything, the child learns to compare old and new information, remodeling or replacing deficient blocks. The heart instinctively knows it has this right. While this function can be just as flawed as the others in a fallen world, this ability to discern and choose is crucial to protecting the learner's HOK from false and dangerous bundles.



One of my students, a pastor's daughter, shared about an encounter in her church while she was still preschool-aged. As she blithely walked down a corridor, an elder suddenly blocked her way. "Why are you wearing black clothing?" he hissed. "Are you *the devil's* child? *God* does not approve of your black dress!" Surprising for her age, Jennifer did not collapse in fear or tears. Instead, she squared her shoulders and responded indignantly, "No, I belong to Jesus. My God cares about what is in my heart, *not* what I am wearing!"

We can see from, not only her truthful words, but her ability to contradict a powerful adult at a young age, that her parents had laid a formidable block of biblical truth in her young heart that protected her from a deep wound (Ps. 57:4; Eph. 6:16). She was shaken by the encounter (and still remembers it vividly today, decades later) but she successfully jettisoned the lie arriving on her elevator and reigned over the attack.

When a new bundle's comparison to existing blocks produces not a "no match" (like my Kanji) but instead "understandable, but different conclusions," this challenges the brain to work harder. In a young brain, the challenge of sorting out truth from error and chiseling new pieces and old until they fit into a congruent block is an exciting part of discovering the reign. An adolescent from a Christian home may therefore unpack a bundle from a secular worldview, compare it to his HOK blocks based on Scripture, and, instead of rejecting the new information, may swap it all out. Youth from unbelieving homes will hear the gospel and do the same. Both adolescents may horrify their parents who thought they had carefully built their child's HOK.

## The Adult Brain: Efficient and Automated

But that kind of wholesale swap is unlikely in later adulthood. Now the HOK is a mansion, a museum of vast experiences, information and approved wisdom. But the house that was once eagerly amassing, exploring and testing new information is now settled, even cemented. Values signposts, and the experiences which imprinted them, are now solidified.

The mature learner's approach to any new information arriving on the elevator has often turned from eagerness to complacency or negativity. The HOK considers itself basically *finished*. So, its new goal is to treasure and protect its hoard. New congruent information may be welcomed



but the mind may not go to the trouble of storing it. When a new arriving bundle *conflicts* with existing blocks, instead of experiencing the thrill of adventure, the adult brain can experience anxiety, discomfort, even pain! The greater the uncertainty or disruption, the worse the discomfort. Being forced to wrestle between biblical truths and cultural understandings can cause a crisis not unlike an uncomfortable earthquake. How can I alter or discard this deep block, one which gives me my identity? What blocks are attached or supported by that cultural block? On the other hand, how can I reject this compelling Scripture bundle? An adult brain experiences this quaking as a *threat*. In fact, brain researchers found that any challenge to a held belief, even a political opinion, causes the same part of the brain to react as it does from *physical* threat. The brain wants to eliminate the conflict quickly. By adulthood it has several well-honed tools handy to defend the HOK.

One toolset to eliminate threats includes biases, rules and principles. These guide decisions *categorically* without thinking deeply about relative merits. Children start creating these rules immediately. Researchers found babies prefer people who look similar and distrust those who look different. By the time we are adults, we easily make snap judgments (“don’t trust people who have beards”), anticipate outcomes (“if I fall, it will hurt”), and follow routines (“I always undress before bed”) without really evaluating relative merits.

**One toolset to eliminate threats includes biases, rules and principles. These guide decisions categorically without thinking deeply about relative merits.**

These tools serve us well in many cases, but fail us in others. They can cause us to sin or act foolishly. “This messenger came from that group I don’t trust, so I won’t believe it.” We need to realize when we are operating using automated patterns and consider when it might be important. Biases also make us vulnerable to deceit. Research has shown, for instance, that when someone trusts us, we automatically reciprocate trust. We can be deceived by an unscrupulous scam artist who asks for our help. Similarly, once we decide to trust and respect someone, our positive bias causes us to stop evaluating their words and actions. This is how Barnabas followed Peter into hypocrisy in Gal. 2:13 before Paul startled them both into evaluating their response to the Judaizers.

A second toolset that adults use to avoid earthquakes is by avoiding detail. So, instead of paying close attention to a sermon, for instance, adults absorb only the gist of the message, or the entertaining illustration. They don’t even dig into their existing storerooms. They might say they “enjoyed the sermon,” nodding at the familiar, and perhaps tweaking a congruent block with an insignificant upgrade. But, when tested, they remember little of what the pastor actually taught from Scripture. In a few days, the “gist memory” has disappeared.

A third way adults deal with conflicting bundles is by placing new information in *the attic*. The *attic* of the HOK is high up, isolated from cultural values in the foundation. All Christian information can be conveniently delivered here, safe from cultural, family or business values that may conflict. New bundles here are interpreted and connected *only to other attic blocks*. This handy space allows one to simultaneously hold opposing blocks that cannot both be true. Because they are at opposite ends of the house, they do not provoke an earthquake.

For instance, a person might receive a sermon on the topic of the dignity of each person with a big smile and a hearty “Amen!” on Sunday. He knows John 3:16 by heart, and when pressed, he would declare that of course God loves little children. But if he has only loaded Scripture into his “attic,” down deep the cultural truth titled “your value proceeds from the honorableness of your family” reigns unopposed. Not *every* child has equal value. Certainly a child who has to bury herself each night, and unbury her dirty part in order to obtain food, can only bring shame to the church’s association with her. “If you touch filth, you become filthy” is what his grandfather said.

Flora can be directed to save orphans, still redeemable, not permanently “dirtified” as these girls surely are.

The problem of sequestered worldviews is not limited to non-Western ones. In Western society today, objective commandments have been replaced with a higher dictum to “look within.” Follow your heart is the only source of truth. Despite the fact that Scripture insists that “The one who trusts in his own heart is a fool” (Prov. 28:26), or “The heart is deceitful above all things,” (Jer. 17:9), Western parents rarely even notice this mantra programmed like gospel into young brains from the mouths of every Disney hero and heroine, Olympic athlete, and pop song. Now when people hear preaching or reading that conflicts with their (fallen) heart-impression of rightness or wrongness, they jettison Scripture, not their own judgment.

### So what does this mean for Christians involved in discipleship?

As those who believe that God’s Word holds the only antidote to a faulty HOK, how do we as Christian disciplers help people to make the deep changes and replacements needed? One impact of understanding the HOK function is that learning shifts from primarily a teacher giving information, to the HOK Homeowner doing *something* with bundles. The best data lectured or preached in the most compelling way will not alter anything alone. Only a learner can do the hard interior HOK work. The teacher must ask the Holy Spirit how to create earthquakes, even when blocks are cemented in place.

The teacher’s study or information is therefore only a fraction of lesson preparation. One primary role of a teacher is to design for the learner a minimum of four steps:

1. Identify pertinent existing blocks in their House of Knowledge (often through remembering a story).
2. Comprehend the new information correctly.
3. Evaluate, analyze, apply to something, judge, and/or create using the new information. For instance, learners might contrast the data with common assumptions or other areas of Scripture; then apply to various situations; then create a new role play to illustrate the concept to others.
4. Make a *choice*. Identify the changes this new understanding will make when the learner returns to “normal life.”

While facilitated small groups typically accommodate these potentially earthquake-producing steps, one Indian pastor who attended a workshop reported he was using this four-step design during worship, bracketing his sermons with interactive challenges. He shared with delight that his congregation was learning, not just listening. He has decided to assign even more challenging learning tasks to the elders so that Scripture can change them deeply. I pray for this congregation to do more than just grow bigger.

This four-step teaching/learning process is not unique to me or to iTEE Global, but came originally from the life experience and teaching of Dr. Jane Vella, an adult educator working in Africa. In my own experience teaching cross-culturally as well as graduate studies in the field of adult education, I believe they best apply the House of Knowledge principles to actual lesson preparation. The four steps work equally well for learners who have high or low educational backgrounds and in all sorts of cultures. For our teacher training workshops, we use easily translatable labels as “Look Back”, “Look Here”, “Look Deeper”, and “Look Forward” and help disciplers learn to create learning tasks in each category.

#### Organizations mentioned:

New Scent Centre: <https://newscentcentreintl.org/> or contact Flora Mwikali [kanyole@gmail.com](mailto:kanyole@gmail.com).


iTEE Global: [www.iteeg.org](http://www.iteeg.org)

#### Further reading on learning principles/theories:

Cognitive Load [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive\\_load](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_load)

Zone of Proximal Development [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zone\\_of\\_proximal\\_development](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zone_of_proximal_development)

Teaching Adults (Sometimes called Andragogy): <https://web.archive.org/web/20171215125941/http://communitycolleges.wy.edu/Data/Sites/1/commissionFiles/abe/training/abe-ntt/mod-6-articles/ntt---module-6---fs-11-teal-center-adult-learning-theory-fact-sheet-air-logo-rev12-06-11.pdf>

Vella, Jane. *On Teaching and Learning: Putting the Principles and Practices of Dialogue Education into Action*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 2008 (ISBN: 978-0-7879-8699-5). (Vella biography at: <https://www.globallearningpartners.com/founder/>) 

# How Do Our Worldviews Develop and Why Should We Care What People Believe?

BY **JEFF MYERS**  
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**Jeff Myers** is an authority on Christian worldview and apologetics who teaches Christians how to understand what they believe, why they believe it and how to defend it against fatal worldviews. Over the last 20 years, Jeff Myers has become one of America's most respected authorities on Christian worldview, apologetics, and youth leadership development. He's the author of several books and the president of Summit Ministries. Dr. Myers lives in Colorado with his family.

What we understand about God and the world affects what we believe about everything else, including what kinds of arguments we find persuasive and how we justify our intended actions. That's why the apostle Paul said in Romans 12:2, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." To understand what God wants from us, we must identify the world's patterns, refuse to conform to them, and be transformed to embrace a God-pleasing pattern of living.

We call a pattern of ideas a **worldview**. A worldview answers such fundamental questions as, "*Why are we here? What is the meaning and purpose of life? Is there a difference between right and wrong? Is there a God?*" We all develop ideas in our attempt to answer these questions, and our ideas naturally give rise to a system of belief that becomes the basis for our decisions and actions. Our worldview is like a map. It helps us know where we are, where we need to go and the best route to get there.

Our worldview does not merely reflect what we think the world *is* like; it directs what we think the world *should be* like. In other words, our worldview not only *describes* reality; it *prescribes* how we should act and respond to every aspect of life. Because our ideas *do* determine how we behave, the bottom line is that our ideas *do* have consequences.

## I think, therefore I believe...

This doesn't mean that everyone is aware of his or her deeply held ideas. If we were to ask a person on the street about her philosophy of life, we would probably get a blank stare. But if we asked how life began, she would probably offer some sort of

answer, even if the answer was not completely coherent. Still, her belief would impact the way she lives her life. It's also often the case that people are unaware of where their deeply held beliefs come from. If we were to continue our street conversation by asking *why* this woman believes what she claims to believe, she might shrug and reply, "I don't know; I just believe it." Often people pick up their beliefs like they catch colds—by being around other people! And since ideas are everywhere—on television, in books and magazines, at the movies, and in conversation with friends and family—it's easy to pick them up without considering whether they're worth believing.

**We call a pattern of ideas a *worldview*. A worldview answers such fundamental questions as, "*Why are we here? What is the meaning and purpose of life? Is there a difference between right and wrong? Is there a God?*"**

**Our worldview does not merely reflect what we think the world *is* like; it directs what we think the world *should be* like.**

Regardless of where they come from, the ideas we embrace about the nature of reality lead to a set of core beliefs, which in turn form convictions about how we should live meaningfully. This beefs up our definition of *worldview*. A *worldview* is a “pattern of ideas,” but it’s also “a pattern of beliefs, convictions, and habits that help us make sense of God, the world, and our relationship to God and the world.”

Of course, some Christians don’t act Christian. There are also Muslims and Secularists whose lifestyles are inconsistent with what they believe. The Christian idea of the sinful nature predicts this. Human *actions* fall short of human *aspirations*. For example, if a person embraces the idea of sexuality as an expression of love between a married man and woman, he or she will probably believe in abstaining from sexual activity outside of marriage,

which reflects a value of sexual purity and a conviction to safeguard it. This does not mean, however, that the person will never indulge in pornography in a moment of weakness. Such indulgence does not invalidate the person’s ideas, beliefs, convictions and habits, but it will produce guilt because the person knows pornography is harmful. On the other hand, a person with no existing beliefs about love and marriage will still feel guilty but may not understand why. People who continue to indulge in pornography may end up in a habitual pattern shaped by the culture’s permissive stance rather than what God wants.

**Ideas have consequences. They form our beliefs, shape our convictions, and solidify into habits.**

There are hundreds of different worldviews. Is it possible to know which of them, if any, is actually true? If you look in the religion section of a bookstore, you’ll see books not only on Christianity and Islam, of course, but also on Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, Vedantism, Jainism, Shintoism and many other religions. Each **religion** attempts to explain what the world is like and how we should live.





You'll also notice books on Secularism and atheism in the religion section. This might seem odd, but when you think about it, even atheists have a set of beliefs about the cause, nature and purpose of the universe. They're religious.<sup>1</sup> Even people who don't care about any of this are religious; their religion says the ultimate questions don't matter. All worldviews are religious.

If everyone is religious we would expect their beliefs to lead to certain actions. C. S. Lewis put it this way: "We are now getting to the point at which different beliefs about the universe lead to different behavior.... Religion involves a series of statements about facts, which must be either true or false. If they are true, one set of conclusions will follow about the right sailing of the human fleet[;] if they are false, quite another set."<sup>2</sup>

**Regardless of where they come from, the ideas we embrace about the nature of reality lead to a set of core beliefs, which in turn form convictions about how we should live meaningfully.**

Here's where we are so far. All people try to make sense of the rules of the world by developing ideas. These ideas flow in patterns, which we call worldviews. People's worldviews lead them to value certain things, which leads to particular convictions governing their behavior. These convictions solidify into habits that affect the way people live.

### Why Should We Care What People Believe?

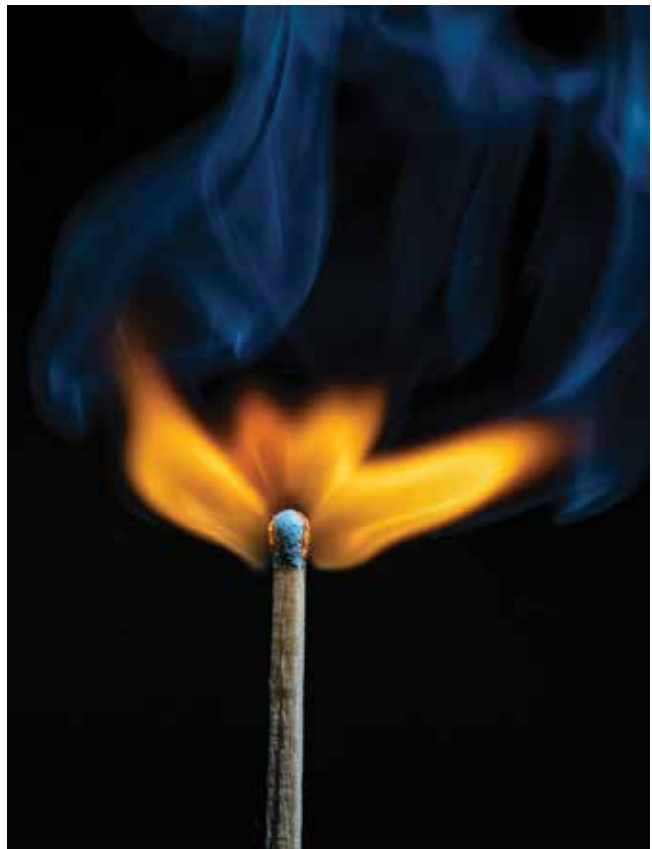
As people try to figure out the rules and patterns of the world, they diagnose what is wrong with the world and suggest prescriptions. As in medicine, a wrong diagnosis could lead to mistreating a disease or leave a serious illness untreated. If everyone lived in isolated caves, the consequences of our actions wouldn't affect others.

<sup>1</sup> John Dewey, the father of modern education, helped organize a group of philosophies into what he hoped would be a new worldview that replaced Christianity. He called it *Secular Humanism*. The word *secular* means "that which pertains to worldly things rather than religious things." And yet Dewey was forthright about the fact that his new philosophy was, in fact, religious: "Here are all of the elements for a religious faith.... Such a faith has always been implicitly the common faith of mankind." John Dewey, *A Common Faith* (1934; repr., New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1962), 87.

<sup>2</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 58.

But we aren't isolated. We live in families, communities, cities and countries. The consequences of bad beliefs can cause serious pain. Some ideas in history have led to death for millions. Nazism systematically exterminated approximately 21 million people, not counting the tens of millions who died in battles initiated by the Nazi regime.<sup>3</sup> Communist regimes slaughtered well over 100 million people in the 20th century. As we will see in the chapter on Marxism in this issue, the slaughter continues to this day.

Every one of these deaths was in the service of an idea. Ideas have consequences, sometimes unspeakably tragic ones. Like a wildfire, these ideas began with a single flame and rapidly spread before a stunned and unprepared populace, engulfing millions. People thought Adolf Hitler was a pompous fool early in his career. Who could have predicted he would actually amass enough power to slaughter millions? Similarly, who could have imagined that a radical writer named Karl Marx, a man deeply unpopular even with his friends, would be capable of unleashing an idea—communism—that would destroy more people than any other idea in history?

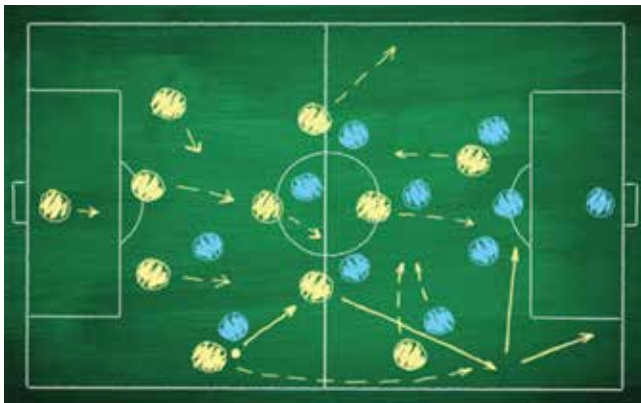


<sup>3</sup> R. J. Rummel, "Democide: Nazi Genocide and Mass Murder" (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1992), chap. 1.

**As people try to figure out the rules and patterns of the world, they diagnose what is wrong with the world and suggest prescriptions. As in medicine, a wrong diagnosis could lead to mistreating a disease or leave a serious illness untreated.**

Is it possible to understand ideas and their consequences? More important, is it possible to identify bad ideas in time to stop them before they can lay waste to the lives, hopes, and dreams of countless people? Fortunately, the answer is yes. To grasp the world of ideas, we don't need to know everything about everything. In the following pages, we'll take an in-depth look at the pattern of ideas, beliefs, convictions, and habits that makes up a Christian worldview. We'll suggest that understanding Christianity as a worldview will help us make sense of the world. Understanding other worldviews—other patterns—will confirm the essential truths of Christianity.

Here's a sports analogy: Let's say you play against a team that has 60 completely different plays. It would be hard to prepare for such a complex strategy. But if you know the team actually has six basic plays, each with 10 variations, then by figuring out the six plays, you can make better guesses about each variation and know how to counteract it.



In this issue of *Mission Frontiers*, we'll discover the six plays and the 10 variations that worldview "teams" are running these days. Based on this information, we'll form a mental model from which we can make more accurate guesses about how people all over the world see things.

**✝ Christianity**


**☾ Islam**

**⚖ Secularism**

**⚡ Marxism**

**🧘 New Spirituality**

**🚫 Postmodernism**

We will examine six dominant worldviews: Christianity, Islam, Secularism, Marxism, New Spirituality, and Postmodernism. Each of these six worldviews claims to present the truth. Then we'll examine each worldview as expressed in 10 key academic disciplines to see whether they are, in fact, true. 



# The Five False Worldviews That Ensnare Your Church

BY **JEFF MYERS**

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**Jeff Myers** is an authority on Christian worldview and apologetics who teaches Christians how to understand what they believe, why they believe it and how to defend it against fatal worldviews. Over the last 20 years, Jeff Myers has become one of America's most respected authorities on Christian worldview, apologetics, and youth leadership development. He's the author of several books and the president of Summit Ministries. Dr. Myers lives in Colorado with his family.

In professional tennis matches, the ball moves so quickly that players have to swing at it before their conscious minds have time to process what's happening. I asked a friend who played against many world champions how winning tennis players mastered this skill. He explained that through thousands of hours of practice they learn to recognize subtle signs given off by their opponents and then fine-tune their reflexes to respond.

The same is true in today's battle of ideas. Culture rapidly fires fake worldviews at us that are contrary to God's Word. If we don't know how to recognize these worldviews or respond quickly enough, we risk being taken captive by hollow and deceptive philosophies (Col. 2:8).

According to new research commissioned by Summit Ministries and conducted by the Barna Group, Christians today are losing this battle of ideas. But they don't have to. Through a four-step process, we can alert believers to five fake worldviews that target them, and help them regain spiritual vitality.

## How to Spot Bad Ideas Before They Catch Us Unaware

A worldview is our view of God, humanity and the world. A biblical worldview shows us what God is really like and where to turn for true answers to our big life questions.

But fake worldviews trick us into looking for answers in all the wrong places. They're everywhere—on television, in books and magazines, at the movies and in conversations with friends and family. We absorb them like we catch colds. We don't even know we're sick until it's too late.

Through surveys done over the last 20 years, researchers at the Barna Group have studied the worldview of church-going Christians. They've discovered that fewer than one in five of them has a worldview based on the Bible.

At Summit, we wondered, "Where do Christians get their worldview, if not from the Bible?" Here are a few of the most common fake worldviews that creep into the minds of Christians today.

## Five Fake Worldviews That Entice Christians

Fake worldviews ruin people's lives, leading them to wrong values and harmful practices. In the research Summit commissioned with Barna, we asked questions about the influence of the five fake worldviews I wrote about in my *Understanding the Times Worldview Library*:

**Secularism**—the belief that the material world is all there is, and that God is irrelevant to what is important

**Marxism**—the belief that the current system must be overthrown because it exploits the poor to benefit the rich

**Postmodernism**—the belief that we should be suspicious of anyone who claims to know the truth, because none of us have access to it

**New Spirituality**—the belief that reality is spiritual, not material, and that what you do in this life will come back to you, whether good or evil

**Islam**—the belief that humans are in rebellion against Allah and must be made to submit through the practices revealed to the Prophet Muhammad

At Summit, we picked these five worldviews because of their enduring influence and because they summarize the basic religious commitments of probably 95 percent of the population in the West.

### So what do Christians believe? We found that:

- 61 percent of practicing Christians agree with ideas rooted in new spirituality
- 54 percent resonate with postmodern views
- 38 percent are sympathetic to some Islamic teachings
- 36 percent accept ideas associated with Marxism
- 29 percent believe ideas based on secularism

We surveyed people from different Christian traditions and ethnicities who live in every region of America, in both rural and urban communities. Fake worldviews are influential everywhere. What lessons can we learn from this?

## Two Lessons for the Future of the Church

**Lesson One:** Today's Christians suffer from a "Multiple Worldview Disorder." Just as some people have multiple personalities living inside their brains, believers tend to mix and match their ideas. Often they hold contradictory beliefs.

**We surveyed people from different Christian traditions and ethnicities who live in every region of America, in both rural and urban communities. Fake worldviews are influential everywhere.**

For example, one-fifth of church-going Christians said there is no one "true religion, that many religions can lead to eternal life." Of those who strongly agreed with this statement, two-thirds also strongly agreed with the statement that "faith in Jesus is the only way to God." Both ideas can't be true. It's a Multiple Worldview Disorder.

**Lesson Two:** Post-Christian America is a reality. Using age 45 as a dividing line, we found a stark difference in worldview between Millennials and Gen-Xers on the one hand, and Baby Boomers and Elders on the other. On some questions, younger Christians were up to eight times more likely to accept fake worldviews.

For years Christian thought-leaders have warned us that we're on the brink of a post-Christian era. This study seems to show that we're toppling over the edge right now.

## How to Stop Unbiblical Ideas and Fake Worldviews

In my book *The Secret Battle of Ideas about God*, I show how to combat fake worldviews by thinking of them as viruses that trick us into living lives that are contrary to the teachings of the Bible.

The virus analogy helps because when faced with potentially catastrophic outbreaks, doctors have learned how to take four decisive steps to curb a virus' growing impact. I call these steps the four I's—Identify, Isolate, Inform and Invest.

The four I's work with idea viruses, too. We can teach believers how to:

- Identify bad ideas generated by fake worldviews
- Isolate the features of bad ideas that are most likely to take us captive
- Inform others of how to find love, healing, purpose, peace and hope through Jesus
- Invest in those who've been sickened by bad ideas so they can emerge stronger than ever

The goal of the Barna-Summit survey is not to condemn people or put them in boxes. Rather, it is to understand the patterns of the world so we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2). We are all at risk, but we can know the truth, and the truth will set us free (John 8:32).

**Using age 45 as a dividing line, we found a stark difference in worldview between Millennials and Gen-Xers on the one hand, and Baby Boomers and Elders on the other.**

### The Five Major False Worldviews by Jeff Myers

As we noted earlier, a *worldview* is “a pattern of ideas, beliefs, convictions, and habits that help us make sense of God, the world, and our relationship to God and the world.” If you know a worldview’s assumptions, you can more accurately guess what its adherents believe and why.

There may be hundreds of worldviews operating today. Even some that are well-known, such as Judaism, have relatively few (around 13 million) followers worldwide. But many bizarre and even humorous worldviews have attracted followers. As the London *Telegraph* reported, 176,632 people in a 2012 national census of England and Wales considered their religious affiliation to be the “Jedi Knights.”<sup>1</sup> Another 6,242 said they worshipped heavy-metal music.<sup>2</sup> Obviously we can’t cover every worldview that has attracted followers, so we’re going to look at the five major false worldviews that make up the vast majority of the world’s population outside the Christian realm and are evangelistic (inviting everyone else to join them).

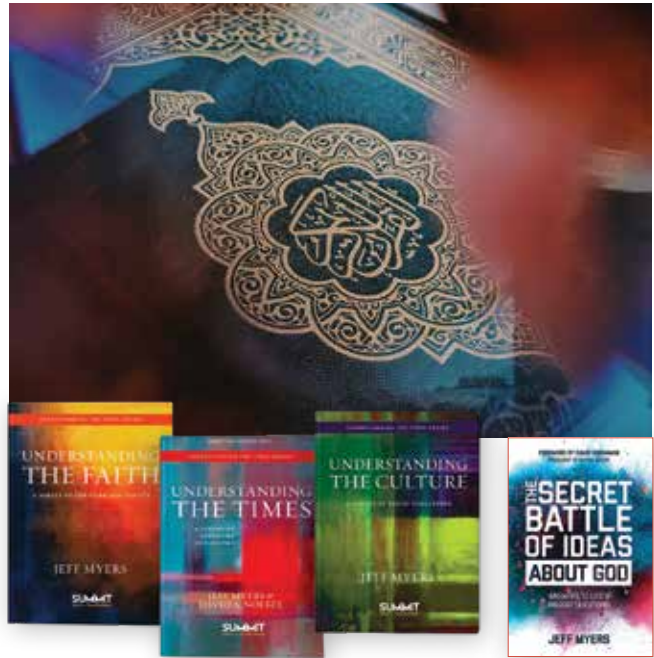
## Islam

Islam began September 24 in AD 622, when 70 *muhajirun* pledged loyalty to an Arabian trader from Mecca who had fled to Medina and began receiving special revelations from Allah. The trader’s name: Muhammad. His submission to God gave his religion its name; *Islam* means “submission.” Those who submit to Allah and his

prophet Muhammad are called Muslims. Islam is based on a creed prayed aloud five times a day: “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet.”

Muslims believe that their holy book, the Quran, is God’s full and final revelation. The Quran specifies five things a person must do to become a Muslim: (1) repeat “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet” (2) pray the salat (ritual prayer)<sup>3</sup> five times a day (3) fast during the month of Ramadan (4) give one-fortieth of one’s income to the needy; and (5) if able, make a pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>4</sup>

According to Serge Trifkovic, “Islam is not a ‘mere’ religion; it is a complete way of life, an all-embracing social, political and legal system that breeds a worldview peculiar to itself.”<sup>5</sup> Islam has grown rapidly in the last few decades; 1.6 billion people in the world now claim to be adherents.



<sup>3</sup> The call to prayer, the shahada, is an integral part of the salat: “*Allahu Akbar; Ashadu anna la ilaha illa Allah; Ashadu anna Muhammadan rasul Allah; Haiya ‘ala al-salat; Haiya ‘ala al-falah; Al-salat khayrun min al-nawm; Allahu Akbar; La ilaha illa Allah.*” The English translation is “God is most great; I bear witness there is no God but God; I bear witness Muhammad is the prophet of God; Come to prayer; Come to well-being; Prayer is better than sleep; God is most great; There is no God but God.” See more at “Salat: Muslim Prayer,” ReligionFacts.com, November 10, 2015, accessed March 26, 2016, [www.religionfacts.com/islam/practices/salat-prayer.htm#sthash.U8xtC709.dpuf](http://www.religionfacts.com/islam/practices/salat-prayer.htm#sthash.U8xtC709.dpuf).

<sup>4</sup> Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 368–69.

<sup>5</sup> Serge Trifkovic, *The Sword of the Prophet* (Boston: Regina Orthodox, 2002), 55.

<sup>1</sup> Cited in Henry Taylor, “‘Jedi’ Religion Most Popular Alternative Faith,” *Telegraph*, December 11, 2012, [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/9737886/Jedi-religion-most-popular-alternative-faith.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/9737886/Jedi-religion-most-popular-alternative-faith.html).

<sup>2</sup> Taylor, “Alternative Faith.”



## New Spirituality

What we term New Spirituality is perhaps the most difficult worldview to precisely define. You don't have to sign, recite or proclaim anything in particular to join, nor must you attend a church. While unofficial in its dogma, the New Age culture contains an extensive set of beliefs that, once understood, predict what people with those beliefs will value and how they will act.

New Spirituality is a free-flowing combination of Eastern religions, paganism, and pseudoscience that pops up in odd places. Some of the bestselling books of all time—by authors such as Deepak Chopra, Rhonda Byrne, Marilyn Ferguson, and Shakti Gawain—describe a world spiritual in nature but not governed by a personal, all-powerful God. Rather, the spirituality in the world is “consciousness,” an energy in which we all participate and can even learn to control. Talk-show host Oprah Winfrey has admitted to holding many of these beliefs.

We will study New Spirituality not because it is deeply philosophical or consistent but because some of its associated beliefs—karma, Gaia, being “one” with the environment, reincarnation, meditation, holistic health and so forth—are a daily part of life for millions of Americans and have influenced such academic areas as psychology and medicine.



## Secularism

The primary identifying characteristic of Secularism is its *nonbelief* in other worldviews.

Secularism comes from the Latin word *saecularis*, roughly meaning “of men,” “of this world,” or “of this time.” Secularists believe humans are the center of reality. They disdain the influence of those who believe in ideas of gods, an afterlife, or anything beyond what we can sense. The primary identifying characteristic of Secularism is its *nonbelief* in other worldviews. Ironically, though, Secularists do generally have an agreed-upon set of beliefs about the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe. So even though they view their beliefs as the *opposite* of religion, they are actually quite religious.

Interestingly, in the 20th century, several fairly well-known philosophers such as John Dewey and Julian Huxley, and later Paul Kurtz and Corliss Lamont, combined the term *secular* (“we are for the world”) and the term *humanism* (“we are for humans”) and developed a philosophy of Secular Humanism. Their manifesto, published in 1933 and updated in 1973 and 2000, led thousands of like-minded individuals to form a club called the American Humanist Association (AHA), whose motto is “Good without a god.” With no apparent sense of irony, the AHA operates as a tax-exempt organization based on the IRS section 501(c)(3) *religious* nonprofit exemption. Though its founders have passed away, the AHA still recruits members. Their dues support a publishing company and a monthly publication.

Secularism is an umbrella term for a set of beliefs that the vast majority of academics today accept unquestioningly. We use the term *Secularism* as a prediction, not a label: if someone accepts a Secularist viewpoint on such disciplines as theology, philosophy and ethics, we can predict fairly accurately what they believe about biology, psychology and so forth.

## Marxism

Some religious worldviews develop over hundreds or thousands of years, but others are made up whole cloth in a very short period of time. Such is the case with Marxism and its offshoots Leninism, Maoism, Trotskyism, Fabian socialism, and the various socialist organizations that operate in the United States and around the world. Marxism was invented by Karl Marx, a scholar determined to demonstrate that ownership of private property, the basis for capitalism, was the root of the world's evils.

**Despite its clearly atheistic philosophy, Marxism has also made many inroads into the church.**

To Marx, history could be defined as a struggle between the haves (the owners) and the have-nots (the workers). If only the workers would rise up to overthrow the owners, they could form a workers' paradise in which all wrongs are righted, all possessions are shared and all injustices are brought to an end. The utopian state at the end of this long and bloody struggle is called *communism*. People who strive to bring about this state are called *communists*, and their bible is *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx's most famous and enduring work. Other such manifestos are still in print today, including the teachings of Chinese communist leader Mao Tse-tung and a book published by Harvard University Press called *Empire*.

Some say it's pointless to include Marxism as a dominant worldview in this article, but we disagree. Despite the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which dominated what is now called Russia, around 20 percent of the world's population still lives under the rule of communists. The largest communist country in the world today is China. In spite of its growing industry, China's communist rulers are still very much in control. And when we also consider countries operating on the principles Marx taught but not using the label *communist*, we are talking about a *majority* of the world's population living every day with the consequences of Marx's philosophies. Despite its clearly atheistic philosophy, Marxism has also made many inroads into the church. Some evangelicals involved in the so-called Christian Left have embraced key tenets of Marxism.

## Postmodernism<sup>6</sup>

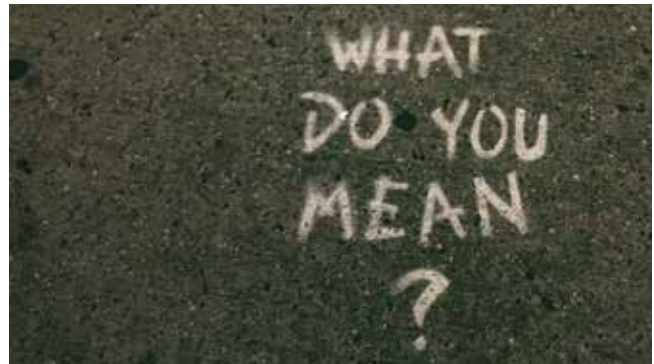
People talk about postmodern art, postmodern architecture and even postmodern ways of doing church, and yet they don't realize that Postmodernism is a well-thought-out and deep philosophical worldview. The father of Postmodernism, German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, had many disciples including Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Martin Heidegger, Jean-François


Lyotard and Richard Rorty. All are now dead, but their teachings strongly influence higher education to this day.

In short, we can say Postmodernism began as a reaction against modernism, the idea that science and human reason can solve humankind's most pressing problems. While science can be used for great good, Postmodernists understand it to be hopelessly corrupted by the quest for power. It was scientific "progress," for example, that enabled the creation of weapons of mass destruction.

According to Postmodernists, the modern story of science and technology is one of many attempts to formulate what's called a *metanarrative*, or grand story of reality that claims universally valid, "God's-eye"-view, pristine knowledge of the world. Postmodernists say metanarratives become so compelling that people stop questioning them, and it's precisely then that they become destructive and oppressive. Postmodernists are generally suspicious of all modern metanarratives because they are so often used as tools of oppression. Many Postmodernists engage in a process of examining exactly what causes people to fall under the spell of various metanarratives. This is called *deconstruction*. The way deconstruction works on metanarratives is similar to someone revealing how a magic trick is done: in the revealing, people stop being deceived. Postmodernists believe "deconstructing" dominant metanarratives causes them to lose their stranglehold on people's minds.

Postmodernists have been carried away by their own ideas, calling *everything* into question—even the idea that we can know reality itself!



So there you have it. **Islam, New Spirituality, Secularism, Marxism, and Postmodernism.** By understanding these five worldviews, we'll see how people come to grips with the rules of the world and form patterns they hope will answer life's ultimate questions. 

<sup>6</sup> Since we will be speaking of Postmodernism as an identifiable pattern of ideas, we will capitalize all references to the term as a worldview.

# How to Stop the Bad Ideas That Plague Us

## Lessons Learned from the Front Lines of Disease Control

BY **JEFF MYERS**

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**Jeff Myers** is an authority on Christian worldview and apologetics who teaches Christians how to understand what they believe, why they believe it and how to defend it against fatal worldviews. Over the last 20 years, Jeff Myers has become one of America's most respected authorities on Christian worldview, apologetics, and youth leadership development. He's the author of several books and the president of Summit Ministries. Dr. Myers lives in Colorado with his family.

We live in a time of war.  
There are no soldiers in this battle.  
There are no landing craft, no bombers  
flying in formation, no artillery emplacements.  
Yet attacks occur every minute of every day.



The battle we're in is a battle of ideas. To be spiritually and mentally strong, we need a healthy worldview that inoculates us against the bad ideas we pick up from the culture around us. In my new book, *The Secret Battle of Ideas About God*, I show how we can win against bad ideas by thinking of them as viruses and by paying attention to the steps doctors take to stop deadly diseases.

### Bad Ideas are Like Viruses

The battles we face are more like germ warfare than like military warfare, because bad ideas are like viruses. A virus is an organism with genetic material coated by a protein. Genetic material is common and ordinarily not harmful. Proteins are necessary for the body to do its work. Separately, they're harmless. When combined, however, they can be deadly.

*Secret Battle* reveals the four steps doctors take to battle against viral outbreaks and shows how these same four steps

can immunize us against bad ideas and replace them with good ideas about love, healing, purpose, peace and hope.

### Four Steps to Stopping Bad Ideas: What We Can Learn from the Battle against Disease

A recent *Time* article frightfully revealed how scientists are scrambling to prevent the next viral outbreak that could kill millions. In the article, Bill Gates says that highly infectious disease is humanity's greatest threat.

Gates is right. Sort of. Deadly diseases have killed millions in the past. But bad ideas can be deadlier. The ideas of Nazism and Marxism resulted in the deaths of hundreds of millions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both ideas started in books—in Adolph Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*.

When faced with potentially catastrophic viral outbreaks, doctors have learned not to sit back and hope for the best. Rather, they take decisive action, using four specific steps to curb a virus's growing impact. I call this the 4 I's—Identify, Isolate, Inform, and Invest.



**When faced with potentially catastrophic viral outbreaks, doctors have learned not to sit back and hope for the best. Rather, they take decisive action, using four specific steps to curb a virus's growing impact.**

### **First, doctors identify the virus' characteristics.**

Doctors can identify viruses by the symptoms they cause: aches and pains, fever and so forth. We can identify the symptoms of bad ideas, too. Among Christians, for example, a terrible "virus" is striking the young. One measure of the virus' reach is how many drop out of church. Up to 75 percent of students who were significantly involved in church in high school no longer attend church as 20-somethings, and only 35 percent return and attend regularly (defined as at least twice a month).

Many think higher education is the problem. It's not. Those who don't attend college after high school are even more likely than college-goers to stop attending church.

As I've worked with tens of thousands of young people, I've seen how easily their minds are taken captive by worldviews such as secularism, which says that God is irrelevant; by postmodernism, which says that the search for truth is fruitless; and by New Spirituality, which teaches that everything is one and that we are all gods.

A recent study by the Barna Group, commissioned by my organization, shows that such worldviews don't just infect the young. We found that among church-going Christians,

- 61% agree with ideas rooted in New Spirituality.
- 54% resonate with postmodernist views.
- 38% are sympathetic to some Muslim teachings.
- 36% accept ideas associated with Marxism.
- 29% believe ideas based on secularism.

The battle of ideas affects us all. We need to identify ideas that stand against Christ so we can take every thought captive in obedience to Him (2 Cor. 10:5).



### **Second, doctors isolate the virus' impact by tracing where it has been and who is at risk.**

Idea viruses hitch rides on someone or something that otherwise seems completely harmless. Just as viruses trick the body because they're coated with proteins, something the body finds beneficial, bad ideas are lies coated in bits of truth. For example:

- "The physical world is all we can see" (Therefore, anything spiritual is merely a creation of the human imagination.)
- "Some rich people are greedy" (Therefore, we are justified in confiscating wealth.)
- "Often, religious people lie" (Therefore, no religious message should be believed.)
- "Forces are at work beyond what we can see" (Therefore, God must be a force, not a person.)

Bad ideas masquerade as something good—or at least harmless. Otherwise, they wouldn't spread. Bad ideas can seem good at first because they give us a feeling of power. We need to be able to isolate what makes them deadly so we're not caught off guard.

### **Third, scientists inform people of how to stop the virus.**

William McGuire, a psychology professor in the 1950s, specialized in showing people how to resist bad ideas. He suggested that you don't just tell people the truth; you also inform them of the lies that stand against the truth. You give them a little of the disease so they can build an immunity to it. It's called inoculation. Inoculation worked against deadly viruses such as polio and smallpox. McGuire thought it might also help people resist bad ideas.

**In the battle of ideas, we should have compassion on those who've been misled, *loving* them into the truth more than *arguing* them into it.**



To test his theory, McGuire prepared arguments in favor of widely rejected claims, such as “Brushing your teeth is bad for you.” He then organized test groups with varying degrees of preparation to resist those messages.

As you might expect, better-prepared participants were less likely to be caught off guard. But one disturbing finding emerged: just reinforcing what people already knew seemed to make them more susceptible to bad ideas.

The point is that we can't just pretend bad ideas don't exist and hope no one will believe them. It seems counterintuitive, but with so many bad ideas threatening to infect us, we need to know what makes bad ideas bad so we are not as vulnerable to them.

#### **Fourth, scientists invest in those who are sick by helping them survive and recover.**

The final thing you can do to stop bad ideas is help people survive once they've been attacked. With deadly viruses, doctors treat patients with medication to combat infection and with massive doses of fluids and electrolytes to keep

their bodies from going into shock. Prompt intervention buys time for the body to fight for itself, increasing the chance of survival.

In the battle of ideas, we should have compassion on those who've been misled, *loving* them into the truth more than *arguing* them into it. People who have been taken captive by idea viruses won't be stuck in them forever if we're willing to ask questions to get them thinking and to help them develop a hunger for the truth.

#### **Jesus is the Cure**

Jesus is the way, truth, and life (John 14:6). In *Secret Battle*, I show that Jesus offers the way to truly think like He thinks, feel what He feels, and live like He did as we go about finding love, healing hurt, discovering meaning, pursuing peace and living with hope.

Because of Jesus, fake worldviews cannot destroy us. His love is unconditional. He has triumphed over evil for our sake. He calls us and gives us a reason to live. He points the way to forgiveness and peace with our enemies. He enables us to live every day knowing that his unmatched power brings hope, both in this life and in the life to come.

**Because of Jesus, fake worldviews cannot destroy us. His love is unconditional. He has triumphed over evil for our sake.**



Yes, we are in a secret battle of ideas, but the outcome is assured. Jesus has won. 

# Thoughtlessness: Far More Dangerous Than We Realize

Evil wins when otherwise good people fail to think clearly enough to stand up for what is right.

BY **JEFF MYERS**

Summit Ministries  
www.summit.org

**Jeff Myers** is an authority on Christian worldview and apologetics who teaches Christians how to understand what they believe, why they believe it and how to defend it against fatal worldviews. Over the last 20 years, Jeff Myers has become one of America's most respected authorities on Christian worldview, apologetics, and youth leadership development. He's the author of several books and the president of Summit Ministries. Dr. Myers lives in Colorado with his family.

One of my friends calls them “pastorisms”: catchy statements that leave everyone saying, “Ooh, that’s profound.” Soon such pronouncements become memes that are widely shared and treated as self-evidently true.

I contend that fascination with clichés makes us thoughtless, and thoughtlessness is dangerous—as illustrated by a disturbing example from history.

## A Thoughtless Monster

Adolf Eichmann was the architect of the Holocaust. His planning skills made easy work of transporting millions of people to concentration camps. After World War II, Eichmann fled to Argentina and remained in hiding for a decade and a half until he was discovered and brought to trial in Jerusalem.

The *New Yorker* sent political theorist Hannah Arendt to cover the proceedings.<sup>1</sup> When she saw Eichmann in person, Arendt found herself eerily disturbed. Eichmann didn't seem like a monster. He was, Arendt realized, "terrifyingly normal."

Speaking in his own defense, Eichmann came across as a boring, trivial person who communicated in clichés and didn't seem to have any thoughts of his own. For example, Eichmann described transporting Jews to the gas chambers as offering them "special treatment" that resulted in a "change of residence."

Eichmann spouted clichés to the very end. At the gallows, he emphasized that he did not believe in life after death, but then announced, "After a short while, gentlemen, we shall all meet again. Such is the fate of all men." Not even the reality of impending death could jolt Eichmann out of mindlessness.

As Arendt described it, Adolph Eichmann became one of history's most evil men not because he was brilliant, but because he found himself incapable of thinking meaningfully about his wicked actions.

Thoughtlessness is dangerous. Evil wins when otherwise good people fail to think clearly enough to stand up for what is right.

Since World War II, the world has wondered how a handful of evil Nazis and Communists could have slaughtered a hundred million people and held billions more in misery. Arendt's explanation offered half a century ago is chillingly prophetic:

In an ever-changing, incomprehensible world the masses had reached the point where they would, at the same time, believe everything and nothing, think that everything was possible and that nothing was true.

To Arendt, everyday people don't so much endorse evil as they allow themselves to be run over by it because of their own moral confusion.

## Thoughtlessness in the Church

Christians are just as vulnerable to thoughtlessness as anyone else. As I wrote my book *Unquestioned Answers*, I realized that our core problem is not unanswered

<sup>1</sup> For more about Arendt's view of Eichmann and the trial, see her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin, 1977).

questions, but unquestioned answers—clichés we believe that keep our faith at a shallow level.

In other words, we use short-cuts so we don't have to think deeply about our faith. Thoughtlessness is the enemy of the Church, the gospel and Christ.

The Bible calls us to have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). This doesn't mean we need to be brilliant to love Jesus. But it does call us to embrace four thoughtful disciplines:

### *Know Scripture.*

To know truth and be thoughtful with truth, we must know our Bibles. This requires time and study. Don't merely look for individual Bible verses that touch your heart. Become deeply familiar with the whole flow of Scripture and learn how to interpret it well.

### *Think about the connection between Scripture and culture.*

Don't think about the Bible as an Aesop's Fables for Christians. Focus on how the Scripture reveals the very nature and character of God and orient yourself to see everything in today's world from His perspective.


### *Don't believe something just because it's phrased in a witty or powerful way.*

Stating something cleverly does not make it true. Don't accept punchy slogans at face value. Ask, "How do we know that is really true?" Thinking deeply about truth helps us think more deeply about everything else.

### *Be people of curiosity as well as conviction.*

Be willing to dialogue with people you disagree with. Instead of defaulting to clichés like, "Let's agree to disagree" or "You have your truth and I have mine," mull over what the other person is saying and be an advocate for truth and meaningful reflection.



Evil wins when our thinking is confused. Don't settle for unquestioned answers. Dig for the truth about God, and as a result, about everything else. 

# Can you imagine?

BY **BEN KEISER**

**Ben Keiser** is a writer, teacher, and student of theology, whose chief interests include biblical theology of heaven and earth, C. S. Lewis, and early Christianity in the first three centuries. Ben has a Master of Arts in Theological Studies from Liberty University. He resides in Colorado where you can often find him hiking in the mountains.

John Lennon's song, *Imagine*, is one of the enduring classics from the 1970s. Lennon was a member of the Beatles and an avid political activist. "Imagine" is an anthem of secularism and remains extremely popular to this day. In fact, it practically sums up the secular worldview in three minutes.

## Living for Today

*Imagine there's no heaven  
It's easy if you try  
No hell below us  
Above us only sky  
Imagine all the people living for today*

According to Jacques Berlinerblau, professor and director of the program for Jewish civilization at Georgetown University, "The secularists are here-and-now people. They live for this world, not the next."<sup>1</sup> Secularism is all about this world. In fact, this world is all there is—no heaven, no hell. Lennon asks us to imagine what the world would be like if we didn't have ideas like heaven and hell. According to Secularists, there would be a lot fewer wars and less hatred and if we all just lived for today, there could finally be peace.

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Berlinerblau, *How to Be Secular: A Call to Arms for Religious Freedom* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, 2012), 180 as quoted in Jeff Myers and David Noebel, *Understanding the Times: A Survey of Competing Worldviews*, 5th ed. (Manitou Springs, CO: Summit Ministries, 2015), 77.

**God's world is not an evil place, it is a broken place that God is going to restore.**

While Christians disagree with this view, we can admit that some Christians have been “so heavenly minded that they were no earthly good.” As Christians, we cannot deny the doctrines of heaven and hell, but we often get confused in how we think about those concepts.<sup>2</sup> We imagine heaven as the final destination where we will escape from the evil world. But Genesis 1-2 tells us that God created a good world of order and beauty. He created humans to live in relationship with him and set them about the task of bringing more of his goodness and beauty into the world. God's world is not an evil place, it is a broken place that God is going to restore.

Revelation 21-22 is a vision of heaven and earth finally uniting. God isn't going to discard the world; He's going to redeem and remake it. Our final hope is not in the clouds, but here in God's restored world, when heaven and earth are unified as the kingdom of God.

<sup>2</sup> Since Lennon's song is about a utopian vision, which is a kind of heaven, we will focus only on our ideas about heaven in this article. For an interesting discussion of Hell, see Tim Keller's *The Reason for God* and Jeff Myer's *Understanding the Faith*.

## Living Life in Peace

*Imagine there's no countries*

*It isn't hard to do*

*Nothing to kill or die for*

*And no religion too*

*Imagine all the people living life in peace*

Secularism ultimately envisions a kind of utopia where humans, working together without the interference of God or religion, can create a world of peace and harmony. Lennon's vision sounds wonderful, but it is a denial of the sin nature in human beings. Since the fall in Genesis 3, all people have inherited a sin nature (Rom. 5:12), which means that left to our own devices we will look to our own interests.

**The heaven we imagine (Scripture speaks of) will be God's kingdom is finally here, the world is living together in his just rule.**

According to Francis Schaeffer, when Adam and Eve sinned, four separations occurred. Man was separated from God, from himself, from his neighbor, and from creation.<sup>3</sup> The Bible and the history of the world affirm that we cannot repair these rifts on our own. The doctrine of sin isn't just about humans being imperfect beings who make mistakes; rather, it is about rebels going against their Creator, incapable of doing what is good on their own.

Part of Jesus' mission on earth was to initiate the kingdom of God, bringing peace and healing those separations caused by the fall. Though the kingdom of God will not be fully initiated until Christ returns, we can anticipate his arrival by working through the power of the Holy Spirit as Christ's ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20) to a lost and dying world.


<sup>3</sup> Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (1972) in *The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer A Christian Worldview: Volume 2 - A Christian View of the Bible as Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), 69-70.

## Sharing All the World

*Imagine no possessions  
I wonder if you can  
No need for greed or hunger  
A brotherhood of man  
Imagine all the people sharing all the world*

For Lennon and secularists, utopia will be people doing what feels good in a world with no religious rules or regulations, everyone living in peace and sharing everything. And we will get there only when we shed religion, personal possessions and outdated morality. If we are going to get to utopia, we all have to do it together. According to secularist Sam Harris, part of the problem with religion is that religious people identify "with a subset of humanity rather than with humanity as a whole."<sup>4</sup>

In reality however, Lennon, Harris, and other secularists have identified themselves with their own subset. Secularism is as much a religion as Christianity is. But Christianity (contra Harris and Lennon) is for the world. The heaven we imagine (and the one that Scripture speaks of) will be one in which God's kingdom is finally established and all the world is living together in harmony under his just rule.

However, we won't get there on our own merits. To be part of that kingdom we must be reconciled to God through his son, Jesus. When that relationship is restored, we are loosed upon the world to anticipate God's kingdom by bringing his justice and peace into our homes, communities, and indeed, the whole world. 

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.beliefnet.com/faiths/secular-philosophies/why-religion-must-end-interview-with-sam-harris.aspx>.

...GINE

# The Purpose of Acts and the Mode of Church Planting Movements

BY CRAIG OTT

**Craig Ott**, PhD, is professor of mission and intercultural studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he also directs the PhD program in intercultural studies. He formerly served for twenty-one years in Germany as a church planter and educator and has taught or consulted in over forty countries. His numerous published works include *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (2011, coauthored with Gene Wilson) and *The Church on Mission: A Biblical Vision for Transformation among All People* (2019).

The following is an excerpt from the chapter, “The Word of the Lord Spread through the Whole Region’: The Book of Acts and Church Planting Movements” in the new book, *Motus Dei: The Movement of God to Disciple the Nations*, available at [missionbooks.org](http://missionbooks.org).

The repeated mention in Acts of the growth of the church underscores that God was fulfilling the messianic promise of bringing salvation, light, and blessing to the nations.<sup>1</sup> Luke is relatively unconcerned with specific methods or strategies and focuses more on the agency of the Holy Spirit in the progress of the gospel. Much of the narrative of Acts includes the dual elements of (1) travel narratives describing how the gospel was preached and embraced beyond Israel, and (2) the spread of the gospel despite various forms of opposition, particularly opposition by Jewish leaders. In this story, Paul becomes the paradigmatic apostle to the Gentiles and lightning rod for Jewish opposition. Acts, being the second of Luke’s two-volume treatise, continues themes from the gospel of Luke. One of the themes is Jesus’ welcoming of the marginalized, a motif which then finds greater fulfillment in Acts as the Spirit moves to include the Gentiles in the church. Another theme continuing from Luke’s gospel is the growth of the kingdom as realized in the growth of the church.

## Mode over Methods in Acts

By taking a more principled approach to the dynamics of Acts rather than looking for specific missionary methods, contemporary mission practice and strategy is freed from

a rigid attempt to merely imitate what happened in Acts. We need not subject every innovation in mission to some kind of litmus test: “Do we find that in the Bible?” If Luke wanted to write a handbook on evangelism and church-planting, he would have written something quite different than what he gave us in Acts. He left out too many critical details if that had been his intent. Luke focuses on the agency of the Holy Spirit, not human agency. That is no doubt good. Had he written such a methods primer, we would have attempted to slavishly follow it, and it would also have left us little freedom to contextualize our methods to various cultural and religious contexts.

Thus, biblical mission is less a matter of imitating what we find in Acts and more about continuing the story in the salvation-historical trajectory of Acts in the power of the Spirit. To attempt to merely mimic the ministry of the apostles would be to miss the extent to which they contextualized their method and message to the specific audiences they were reaching (Fleming 2005). Furthermore, much of Acts reports nonrepeatable salvation-historical developments unique to the birth of the church as the New Covenant people.

We should also note that Paul was at home in both the Hellenistic and Jewish cultural worlds.<sup>2</sup> Thus the cultural gaps he had to bridge were small compared to the gap between, say, North America and Namibia, or Singapore

1 On the fulfillment motif in Acts, see Bock 1998; Peterson 2009, 29–32; Jipp 2018, 31–50.

2 Regarding Paul having grown up in Tarsus, Calvin Roetzel comments, “Thus as a young man his feet were firmly planted in two different worlds: the Hellenistic world with its rich cultural heritage, and the world of the people of Israel with its Scriptures, traditions, and law. So firmly comfortable in both was he that he was an ideal person for translating a gospel that was fundamentally Jewish for the Hellenistic environment of his converts” (2009, 475).




and Suriname. It is also easy to forget that although Paul made frequent use of the Old Testament, he did not possess the New Testament as he was evangelizing and planting churches. The world in which we live today is obviously vastly different from the world of the first century. This opens up to us possibilities for the advancement of the gospel unimaginable in the first century: modern technology, travel, communications, and globalization. Therefore, when seeking to apply lessons from Acts to contemporary mission practice, we look less for specific methods to imitate and more for the spiritual dynamics and underlying principles that guided first-century mission—the mode, so to speak, more than the methods.

### Church Planting Movements in Acts?

One additional concern must be addressed before moving forward. Critics of CPM strategies have argued that CPMs do not exist in the Bible (e.g., Wu 2014). It may well be that we have no explicit New Testament description of a movement that would meet the definition of a CPM resulting in hundreds or thousands of churches with tens of thousands of believers within a few years.<sup>3</sup> It might be thus protested that this inquiry asks something that Acts doesn't intend to answer. However, we need not find an exact description of a CPM in the New Testament in order to learn from the dynamics of rapidly growing, expansive movements that *are* described in Acts.

Numerous passages describe remarkable numerical growth of the church and the spread of the word (2:47; 5:13–14; 6:1, 7; 9:31; 11:21, 24, 26; 12:24; 13:49; 14:21; 16:5; 19:10, 20). The growth is emphasized with descriptors such as “daily” (2:47; 16:5), “rapidly,” a “large number” (6:7), “flourishing” (12:24), “in power” (19:20) and increase in “great” numbers (11:21, 24, 26; 14:1). Benjamin Wilson comments in this regard, “The growth summaries are replete with constructions which in one way or another stress both the frequency and the extent of the numerical increase of the Christian movement.” Furthermore, “Most often the [growth] summaries are presented in the imperfect tense, creating the impression of ongoing quantitative increase” (2017, 320). Geographic descriptions of “all” (9:31; 19:10) or “whole” (13:49) regions being reached not only underscore that the number of disciples increased, but also strongly imply that churches were being formed in the various localities.

<sup>3</sup> Most examples of CPMs cited by Garrison (2004), Trousdale (2012), Smith and Kai (2011), and others have these kinds of numbers and usually talk of movements experiencing at least four generations of churches planting churches over a short time period.

This kind of remarkable growth and spread of the gospel can only be explained in that disciples were being reproduced, evangelists and leaders were being reproduced and ultimately churches were being reproduced. Central to CPM strategy is the idea of church multiplication. I have argued at length elsewhere that the concept of multiplication is not only present in the Acts narrative, but important to it (Ott 2019, 103–21). The language of “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen. 1:22) is a repeated concept in the Old Testament relating to God's people (e.g., Jer. 23:3)<sup>4</sup> and woven into the eschatological vision of filling the earth with God's glory (e.g., Isa. 11:9). Jesus builds upon this idea in the kingdom parables. Growth of the kingdom in Luke's Gospel finds fulfillment in the growth of the church in Luke's second volume, Acts (Reinhardt 1995; Rosner 1998). Timothy is exhorted to develop leaders who will reproduce new leaders to multiple generations (cf. 2 Tim. 2:2). Passages such as 1 Thessalonians 1:8 and Romans 15:19–23<sup>5</sup> further strengthen the view that churches once planted could be expected to evangelize their region and reproduce. We need not prove that this spiritual reproduction was mathematically exponential (2 becoming 4, becoming 8, 16, 32, etc.) to use the language of multiplication in a more general sense to describe what we see in Acts. The English Standard Version translates forms of the Greek *plēthunō* as “multiplied” in 6:7, 7:17, 9:31, and 12:24.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, it is not misguided to inquire into the dynamics of church growth and multiplication in Acts. Acts provides a sound biblical-theological lens through which we can reflect upon contemporary CPMs. 

<sup>4</sup> Wilson writes, “The usage of αὐξάνω and/or πληθύνω in several of the growth summaries of Acts may ring to some degree with notes of eschatological fulfillment, signifying that God's promise of growth to his people is finding its fulfillment in the progress of the Christian movement” (2017, 322).

<sup>5</sup> Douglas J. Moo (1996, 895–96) cites John Knox's understanding of this text: “[Paul] could say that he had completed the preaching of the gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum only because this statement would have meant for him that the message had been proclaimed and the church planted in each of the nations north and west across Asia Minor and the Greek peninsula—‘proclaimed’ widely enough and ‘planted’ firmly enough to assure that the name of Christ would soon be heard throughout its borders.”

<sup>6</sup> In favor of “multiply,” see Kodell 1974; Reinhardt 1995, 52–54; and Wilson 2007.

# 24:14 Goal



Movement engagements in every unreached people and place by 2025 (50 months)

## Launching Movements among Muslims:

Case Studies of Best Practices—Antioch Family of Churches

BY **WILLIAM J. DUBOIS**

**William J. Dubois**, a pen-name, works in highly sensitive areas in which the gospel is spreading powerfully. He and his wife have spent the last 25+ years training new believers from the harvest to grow in their leadership capacity and multiply house churches among unreached people. Email [Info@AntiochChurches.com](mailto:Info@AntiochChurches.com) for more information.

Edited from a presentation for Global Assembly of Pastors for Finishing the Task

I'm the co-leader of the Antioch Family of Churches, a global alliance of indigenous Church Planting Movements. For the last 30 years, we have focused on building the leadership capacity of first-generation Christians who live in closed countries and helping them learn to multiply house churches. In this article I will focus on launching movements among Muslim peoples.

For the first 20 years of our work, many of our efforts were filled with missteps, mistakes and failures. However, it was through a personal crisis in my own life that we learned to make adjustments that would lead to breakthroughs. In 2004, I was helping underground house church leaders from Iran learn and understand 2 Timothy. After this training was completed, I was poisoned by an Al-Qaeda operative and nearly died. A lot of people were praying for me, and after two and a half months of doctors and hospital visits trying to determine what had happened, I was miraculously healed. I'm very grateful for that!

But the power of the story came later—years later, as a matter of fact. I was co-hosting a Church Planting Movement training for leaders from Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan, and at the beginning of our time together we were introducing ourselves. I found out that one of our church-planters there was the man who had commissioned my poisoning!

At that moment I began to understand that multiplying movements requires much more than cross-cultural language and culture ability. The power of incarnation begins with learning about the soul of people, and in this case, developing a deep understanding of those who were radicalized for evil. The Lord put me on a journey to begin to understand the heart of what it would take to start movements among Muslims.

Today that same Antioch Family of Churches has 1,225 movement engagements in 748 languages in 157 countries. There are 2.3 million house churches with 42

**The Lord put me on a journey to begin to understand the heart of what it would take to start movements among Muslims.**



million adults. What God has started, in and among us, began with our brokenness, our missteps and our misunderstandings. But after the Lord graciously allowed us to learn some powerful tools and effective principles, exponential breakthrough has taken place.

We focus on three priorities. The first one is rescuing people from slavery into sonship. That slavery may be human trafficking, but it's always the slavery of sin. And it's a life filled with discrimination, pain and heartache. But when these people enter into a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, they become sons and daughters of the living God, and co-heirs. So our relationship, even with new believers, is not hierarchical. It's like a family because we're asking them to be baptized into Jesus, and then into the Church, and then into the world. We never ask anyone to join our culture before they find our Savior. We make sure they meet our Savior first. Then together we discover what church would look like in their own culture. So, the first priority is to rescue from slavery into sonship.

The second one is to empower people to bring others to Christ. You may have heard the term "seeking out a man of peace." In our model, we seek out a man or woman of *influence*. We call it the Cornelius Model, from Acts 10. We ask the Lord to show us people who have incredible influence in their village or their community or their country. By bringing the gospel to them, they in turn have the ability to spread that good news to all the people in their social network. Then, just like the Apostle Paul asked Titus

to establish elders in every church, we ask these Corneliuses to help raise up leaders and establish elders in every house church. Our ministry then, is from church to church: not organization to church, but a local church partnering with another indigenous house church to ask God what needs to be done and then work on it together.

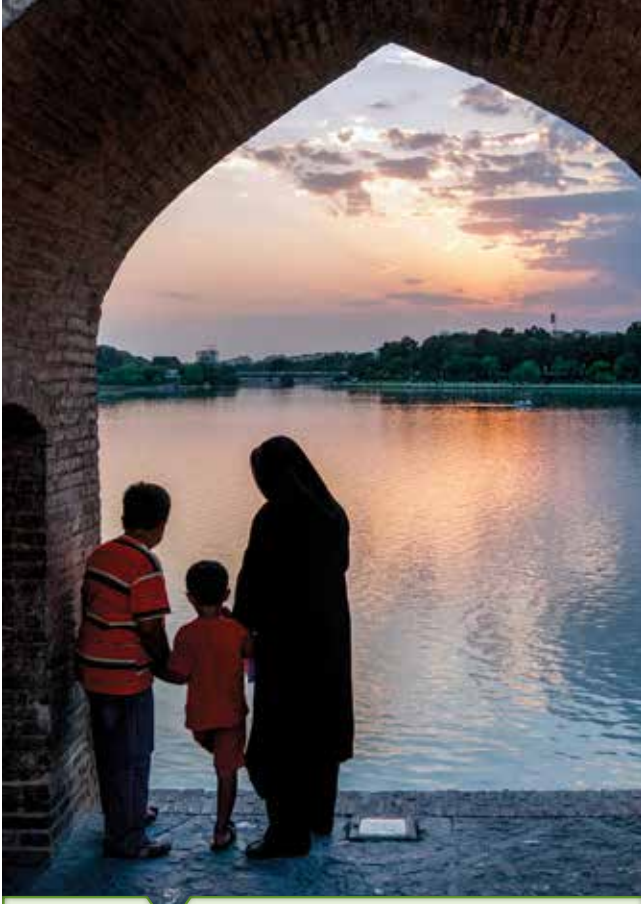
Then comes our third priority, which is *multiply*. 2 Timothy 2:2 says that the things we have heard from reliable people, we are to pass on to those who can share it with others. It's three-generation multiplication. We've found that if we focus on growing generations of leaders, we can multiply movements. Our leadership training is based on obedience, not knowledge. I'll give you an example. Several years ago, we opened up a new ministry in a major city, and we found someone interested in spiritual things. One of our workers began having a conversation with this person, and soon there were questions about Jesus. But before explaining the depth of the kingdom, we asked that person to go find five friends.

The goal was not to bring these five friends together into a house church meeting, but rather, have each one of them be mentored by this "Cornelius." These five would begin immediately sharing with five of their friends, and those five friends would find five of their own friends. So from the very beginning, multiplication was embedded into the whole ministry.

**We've found that if we focus on growing generations of leaders, we can multiply movements.**

With these three things—rescue, empower and multiply—we discovered that we can learn so much from people who are just coming to Christ. So instead of us teaching them with declarative statements, we begin by asking powerful questions. Here are the three questions that we ask. We ask, "*Who is spiritually hungry? When are they spiritually seeking? And where are they spiritually attentive?*" We try to find the cultural and spiritual rhythms of those to which we are ministering.

For instance, Easter weekend isn't going to be a high holy day for a Muslim because they don't know Jesus yet. We found, actually, that Ramadan is the most important calendar moment when we can share the good news with Muslims. Why? Because that's the month when they're



**We try to find the cultural and spiritual rhythms of those to which we are ministering.**

seeking God. Granted, it's not the same God. They're not seeking after Jesus the Son of God; they're just trying to find a way to earn enough credit that God might accept them. So instead of introducing them to our holidays first, we've decided to come alongside them, understand their spiritual rhythms, and pray for those who are spiritually hungry. We find where they're hungry and what they're attentive to. Then through spiritual conversations, we can find a Cornelius. We ask him to find his friends and the multiplication process begins.

We have equipped our leaders with a translation of Scriptures or key verses. We often provide them Wi-Fi boxes, so that with the push of a button they can spread the JESUS Film or portions of the New Testament, at least in trade languages. If the people group is unengaged, we provide our teams mobile backpacks, so that if they're in villages they can show the JESUS Film to as many as 300 people. And we give them a lot of training in how to start spiritual conversations with people—so that people *want* to know the God who can rescue them, empower them and multiply their influence. They can meet God, Jesus, who can forgive them of their sins.

In the midst of all of this, we found that if we come together and pray, if we build teams to intercede, there's tremendous opportunity in these moments. There's one special day, toward the end of Ramadan (the 27th day), called the Night of Power. On that single night, many Muslims all over the world believe that their prayers carry a thousand times the weight of other days. And on that night, they ask God for a revelation of who he is. They ask God for forgiveness of their sins, and they ask for dreams and visions. So we send our people in to mingle with those seeking a God they don't know, so we can share about the God that we *do* know.

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020, more than one billion Muslims gathered together in homes to fast and pray. For the first time since 622AD, the mosques were closed because of the coronavirus. They prayed on this "Night of Power" for a special revelation from "Allah" and for forgiveness of their sins. At the same time, more than 38 million Jesus followers from 157 nations—all former Muslims—lifted their voices in prayer asking the one true and living God to reveal Himself through signs, wonders, dreams and visions to the Muslims around the world. They prayed that for the first time, through the power of the Holy Spirit, Muslims would understand the mercy, love and forgiveness found only in Jesus Christ. And on this "One Miracle Night" God heard those prayers.

When we agree together in prayer and go to the throne room of heaven, we ask Jesus to intercede on our behalf—so we're going to have spiritual conversations at the right time in the right place. We can expect miraculous things to happen. This year, during the month of Ramadan, we sent teams from village to village, asking the Lord to give us open doors and open hearts. One team went to a country and visited a village where no one received them. No one showed hospitality; no one even opened their door.

By the end of the day, the team was very discouraged. They went outside the village and all sat under a tree and built a campfire so they would be warm for the night. They began to pray and ask the Lord what to do, asking for a way to have a breakthrough in this village. As the night went on they fell asleep. Soon they were awakened and one of the leaders saw a blazing fire coming their way. It turned out to be 274 people with fire torches in their hands, walking toward them. The team was initially filled with fear until one of them said, "Hey, we prayed that

we'd have an opportunity to go to this village and share Jesus. Now the village is coming to us!"

Just before they met these people, one of the 274 men stepped forward and said, "We don't know who you are, we don't know where you're from, and we didn't open our homes to you when you were in our village today. But tonight, every single one of us has had the exact same dream. And in that dream an angel appeared to us and said, *"These people who came to your village are the ones who have the truth. You should go and ask them, and follow what they say."*

That was the moment: spiritual conversations with the right people, at the right time, in the right place occurred. And before the night was over, 274 leaders of homes all made professions of faith and left their religion to walk in *relationship* with Jesus. That's the power of prayer and having spiritual conversations in the right place.

**When we agree together in prayer and go to the throne room of heaven, we ask Jesus to intercede on our behalf—so we're going to have spiritual conversations at the right time in the right place. We can expect miraculous things to happen.**




I want to leave you with a story about launching movements among Muslim peoples. It comes not from the idea that the worker or the missionary is the one who's supposed to do this. It's about equipping and building a leader, a Cornelius, who will multiply the work. Several months ago, leaders came to me and said, "You know, we haven't been able to reach certain villages and there's no way to get to them using regular means. So we prayed, and we feel the Holy Spirit has asked us to set aside teams

of people who will go across the desert and make sure that all of the unengaged people, all of those who are unreached and untouched, would hear the Good News."

You and I have an opportunity to launch movements among Muslim peoples. It begins when we train local people who are living nearby and are near-culture. We find a Cornelius, we invest in that person, and he helps us understand how to mobilize his friends to tell their friends. It can be as far away as the deserts of the Middle East on camels. If we empower local churches to take on the responsibilities God has given them instead of us being at the front, we become the Barnabas who supports these apostles and people who are sending. I would say that our responsibility is to equip people with training and tools and to build trust. They appoint leaders and they send church-planters to multiply other people who will then share the Good News.

In summary, I think we can look at launching movements among Muslim peoples in this way. First, a book of Acts culture can produce a book of Acts breakthrough. Second, we launch movements among Muslim peoples by adjusting our conversations, so the conversations are spiritually led with the right people, at the right time, in the right place.

We ask people to be baptized into Jesus, then help them discover what their church looks like, rather than asking people to find their way in the culture of our church. We need to also ask God for a Cornelius, a man or a woman of influence, who will use their influence to multiply the kingdom among the relationships they already have. I want to encourage you as you consider launching movements among Muslim peoples, to look for tools, to find quality training and to build trust. Come together as one church, connecting with the nearby and near-culture church, so that together you can go to unengaged, unreached peoples, and see a Cornelius multiply the kingdom in partnership with you. 

**You and I have an opportunity to launch movements among Muslim peoples. It begins when we train local people who are living nearby and are near-culture.**

# Pondering The Question

BY KEVIN HIGGINS

**Kevin Higgins** is General Director of Frontier Ventures (FV). 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.

*“Do you have a biblical worldview?”* That is the question posed and discussed in this edition of *Mission Frontiers*. My purpose here is to reflect a bit about the question itself, and then to suggest its connection to the frontiers of mission.

## Worldview

I did some digging around and among the many definitions of worldview one might find I will use one I found on the website of Summit Ministries. I select that one because Summit’s mission is to help Christians shape their worldview.

The site includes this definition, **“According to Dr. Jeff Myers, a worldview is ‘a pattern of ideas, beliefs, convictions, and habits that help us make sense of God, the world, and our relationship to God and the world.’”** So keeping that in mind, let me turn to the question this edition poses.

## The Question

I appreciate a subtle point about how the question is framed. Notice the use of an indefinite article! The question is not “do you have *the* biblical world view,” but rather, “do you have *a* biblical worldview?”

I imagine many of us would approach this topic with the assumption that there is a single “biblical worldview,” and if asked my opinion about that my response would have to be, “yes and no.”

## No, not a single biblical worldview

The Bible was of course inspired and written and collected over many generations and God’s communication was always taking place within the frameworks of the contexts and cultural worldviews of the recipients. This means that in a very real sense, many worldviews could be assembled from the biblical sources.

One example: as the helpful definition from Summit points out, a worldview will include elements that help us make sense of God, and of God’s relationship to us (and vice versa). Christians have read the Bible for generations and come to differing conclusions on many topics, including something as potentially ground-shifting as the topic of God’s sovereignty and the extent of human free will.

That is a worldview issue, and the fact that Christians differ sincerely and deeply suggests that there may be differences of nuance and detail in the Scriptures themselves.

## Yes, a single biblical worldview

When we ask if there is a single biblical world view, we are asking: is there a single, right way to see the world, and people, etc? And my reply is, yes. The single right worldview, or way of seeing the world is God’s worldview, or God’s way of seeing the world.

God has given revelation about this. We have inspired Scripture, we have human beings made in the image of God, we have the “book” of nature and wisdom, and we ultimately have Jesus, the lens by which we see all the rest, including all of what is in the Bible, wisdom, nature, etc. You might say, we have the answer key.


So, there is a worldview, a right one: God’s. It is a worldview we seek to understand, find, embrace, and use to see everything else with. But it is *God’s* and all of our attempts to see it and embrace it are going to be in need of constant adjustment because we will all read the Bible based on our lenses of time and place and culture. That includes the ways we will each apply the answer key, Jesus.

## This is where the frontiers come in...

I am guessing that some will assume this is where I talk about how important it is for workers in the frontiers to have a biblical worldview so they can pass it along to others. True enough, but that will not be my point here—I want to flip the coin around.

I suggest, based on my own experience as a worker in the frontiers, that part of the process of adjusting *my* biblical worldview, making it more aligned to God’s, has been the way brothers and sisters in UPGs discover aspects of Jesus and the Scriptures that I would miss had I not been in relationship with these saints.

Thus, at the frontiers of mission, biblical worldviews will meet, be changed, and together be adjusted to something closer to God’s view of the world and how we all relate.

Do I have a biblical worldview? Yes. And God willing, tomorrow it will be closer to God’s! 



**Christian mission—at least as it has traditionally been interpreted and performed—is under attack not only from without but also from within its own ranks.**

# Apostolic Imagination:

## Recovering a Biblical Vision for Mission

BY **J. D. PAYNE**

**J. D. Payne** is professor of Christian Ministry at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama and author of the forthcoming *Apostolic Imagination: Recovering a Biblical Vision for the Church's Mission Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022). He may be contacted at [jd.payne@samford.edu](mailto:jd.payne@samford.edu).

David J. Bosch noted the “Christian mission—at least as it has traditionally been interpreted and performed—is under attack not only from without but also from within its own ranks.” The present “crisis” was just one of many throughout Church history that created a need for a new paradigm of mission.<sup>1</sup> Three decades following the publication of Bosch’s magnum opus, evangelicals remain in a state of transition and confusion when it comes to the Church’s global task. A new paradigm has not fully arrived. Recent books reveal questions that remind us of the continuation of this liminal state. David Hesselgrave’s, *Paradigms in Conflict: 15 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today*, noted the existence of

contemporary tensions.<sup>2</sup> *Pressure Points: Twelve Global Issues Shaping the Face of the Church* addressed some of the significant questions asked at Cape Town 2010 affecting global practice.<sup>3</sup> Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell’s *The Changing Face of World Missions* noted many contemporary issues global workers experience in their labors during this transition period.<sup>4</sup> Paul Borthwick’s *Western Christians in Global Mission* attempted to answer the question about the role

2 David J. Hesselgrave *Paradigms in Conflict: 15 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Keith E. Eitel, ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2018).

3 J. D. Payne, *Pressure Points: Twelve Global Issues Shaping the Face of the Church* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2013).

4 Michael Pocock, Gailyn Van Rheenen, and Douglas McConnell, *The Changing Face of World Missions: Engaging Contemporary Issues and Trends* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005).

1 David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 2, 4.

of the West in kingdom advancement.<sup>5</sup> Denny Spitters and Matthew Ellison's brief but provocative work, *When Everything is Missions*, argued that much of what evangelicals are calling missions is not missions.<sup>6</sup> Bosch's crisis remains.

**If missions is rooted in the apostolic nature and actions of God and His Church, then we must consider the apostolic mindset behind such actions. How does God view the world in light of His mission?**

### Apostolic Imagination: A Starting Point for Rethinking Contemporary Mission

What is a possible way to navigate this liminal state and position the Church for future evangelical mission? If *missions* is rooted in the apostolic nature and actions of God and His Church, then we must consider the apostolic mindset behind such actions. How does God view the world in light of His mission? What is His expectation for the Church before the Parousia? How might the first-century apostles have contextualized their efforts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? The apostolic imagination is concerned with questions such as these and should serve as a guide to conceptualizing global disciple-making efforts.

My forthcoming book, *Apostolic Imagination: Recovering a Biblical Vision for the Church's Mission Today*, addresses several areas of evangelical work that need examination and revision.<sup>7</sup> Language, purpose, missionary identity and function, strategy, locations of operations, resources, sending structures, partnerships and the role of the West are some of the important issues addressed. In this article, I attempt to share some thoughts in view of an apostolic imagination.

**What was missions yesterday is not missions today, and may be radically different tomorrow.**

5 Paul Borthwick, *Western Christians in Global Mission: What's the Role of the North American Church* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012).

6 Denny Spitters and Matthew Ellison, *When Everything is Missions* (n.p.: Bottomline Media, 2017).

7 *Apostolic Imagination: Recovering a Biblical Vision for the Church's Mission Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022).



### Rethinking Language

Whenever the Church lacks robust exegetical support for her theology and terms, then extrabiblical nomenclature can result in concepts with a variety of meanings.<sup>8</sup> The Church uses the modern language of mission, but is often inconsistent with her definitions. The breakdown in the language of mission has resulted in a breakdown in communication.

Prior to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, *mission*, from Latin, was a reference to the work of the Trinity.<sup>9</sup> The language of *mission* and *missions*, applied to Christians, first finds itself in the 16<sup>th</sup> century with Ignatius of Loyola and the notion of the Jesuits being sent into the world, and eventually embraced elements of colonial and military conquests.<sup>10</sup>

However, the language of sending existed long before the Renaissance. The use of *apostolos* and *pempo* fills the New Testament to address matters related to God's mission in the world. When terms are extrabiblical, it is difficult to assign an agreed upon meaning.<sup>11</sup> The result is that the definitions for *mission*, *missions* and *missionaries* will not remain constant but change based on contemporary realities and readers' perspectives. *What was missions yesterday is not missions today, and may be radically different tomorrow.*



### Rethinking Purpose

Missions is about practicing medicine, digging wells, publishing literature, planting churches, putting a roof on a building, educating missionary children, advocating

8 Michael W. Stroope, *Transcending Mission: The Eclipse of a Modern Tradition* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), xiii.

9 Bosch, 1.

10 André Seumois, *Théologie Missionnaire: Délimitation de la Fonction Missionnaire de L'Eglise* (Rome: Bureau de Presse O.M.I., 1973), 9.

11 Even with biblical words, scholars frequently disagree over definitions.



for social justice, and taking two-week summer trips. The Church engages in missions even when the gospel is never shared. Culturally preferred definitions have hijacked the biblical purpose behind global activity.

Apostolic purpose is now optional when it comes to the Great Commission. While apostolic purpose is rooted in the local church (Acts 13:1-3), it extends into a realm where the Church does not exist (Rom. 15:20). Missions is multifaceted, but apostolic purpose is singular. Throughout history, ministry rightly became multifaceted after churches were established. However, the Church repurposed her apostolic task as the language of mission segued into the language of established ministry and pastoral hegemony.



## Rethinking Identity

Though it is popular to teach every Christian is a missionary, such causes confusion when one attempts to look for such servants in the Bible that correspond to desired contemporary expressions. I once read a social media post on a Sunday morning whereby the author told church members to look around their worship areas for people sitting alone. After finding such people, the followers were told to go meet those individuals because “we are all missionaries today!” Alan R. Johnson writes of the problematic nature of an identity crisis: “If there is indeed no difference between what I should be doing in my own local church in my own sociocultural setting and somewhere else, there is no compelling reason to cross geographic and cultural boundaries at all.”<sup>12</sup>

**Though it is popular to teach every Christian is a missionary, such causes confusion when one attempts to look for such servants in the Bible that correspond to desired contemporary expressions.**

<sup>12</sup> Alan R. Johnson, *Apostolic Function in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Missions* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2013), 52.



## Rethinking Function

As theologians in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were forced to respond to the volume and success of the Church’s global activity, they turned toward the Scriptures with the modern language of mission in hand and argued that the *missio Dei* was much broader than the redemption of the elect.<sup>13</sup> By implication, the Church’s *missions* needed to become more diverse and multifaceted. Traditional mission terminology was expanded to reflect the multiple actions of God throughout the Scriptures. While this development was beneficial to understanding *missio Dei*, it became problematic in that every missional function became equivalent. Apostolic priority was discarded. Now, the Church has created an equal opportunity world of global activity that did not exist in the first century (Acts 6:1-7).



## Rethinking Strategy

Jesus made the promise that “this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:14). Regardless, of one’s eschatology and definition of *nations*, the fact is the end has not arrived and much work remains. Strategic thinking is a matter of wise stewardship and the apostolic imagination.

If research is correct, that approximately 7,000 people groups remain unreached including 3,200 unengaged unreached people groups, then the wise kingdom steward is to be strategic with all resources in view of this global crisis.<sup>14</sup> There is no room to be haphazard with global actions.

<sup>13</sup> For a survey of the theological developments between 1910 and 1952 see Wilhelm Andersen, *Towards a Theology of Mission*, International Missionary Council Research Pamphlet No. 2 (London: SCM Press, 1955).

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.imb.org/research-reports/>; accessed November 20, 2019.

Jesus preached to towns because people residing in those locations were in need of redemption (Luke 4:43). Paul's ambition was "to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named" (Rom. 15:20). Once a healthy ecclesiastic foundation was established "from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum" (Rom. 15:19), he desired to transition to Spain (Rom. 15:24) where unbelievers were found. The apostolic imagination is concerned with lostness and sanctification. It is concerned about the gospel speeding ahead and being honored (2 Thess. 3:1) and new churches receiving the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).



## Rethinking Resources

At the turn of the century, David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson noted an abysmal 0.1% of all financial resources were directed toward disciple-making efforts in the most unevangelized countries.<sup>15</sup> R. W. Lewis wrote for every 30 missionaries who go to the reached people groups of the world, approximately one missionary goes to the unreached.<sup>16</sup> According to her research, this means an estimated 95 percent of all missionaries are serving among active Christians who are reaching out to nominal or near-culture unbelievers of their own people group.<sup>17</sup>

This allocation of resources is unacceptable. The present reality is far from the apostolic imagination that recognizes the urgency of leveraging resources to extend the gospel to all nations.

<sup>15</sup> David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Trends AD 30-AD 2200: Interpreting the Annual Christian Megacensus* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2001), 661.

<sup>16</sup> R. W. Lewis, "Clarifying the Remaining Frontier Mission Task," *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 35 #4 (October-December, 2018): 159.

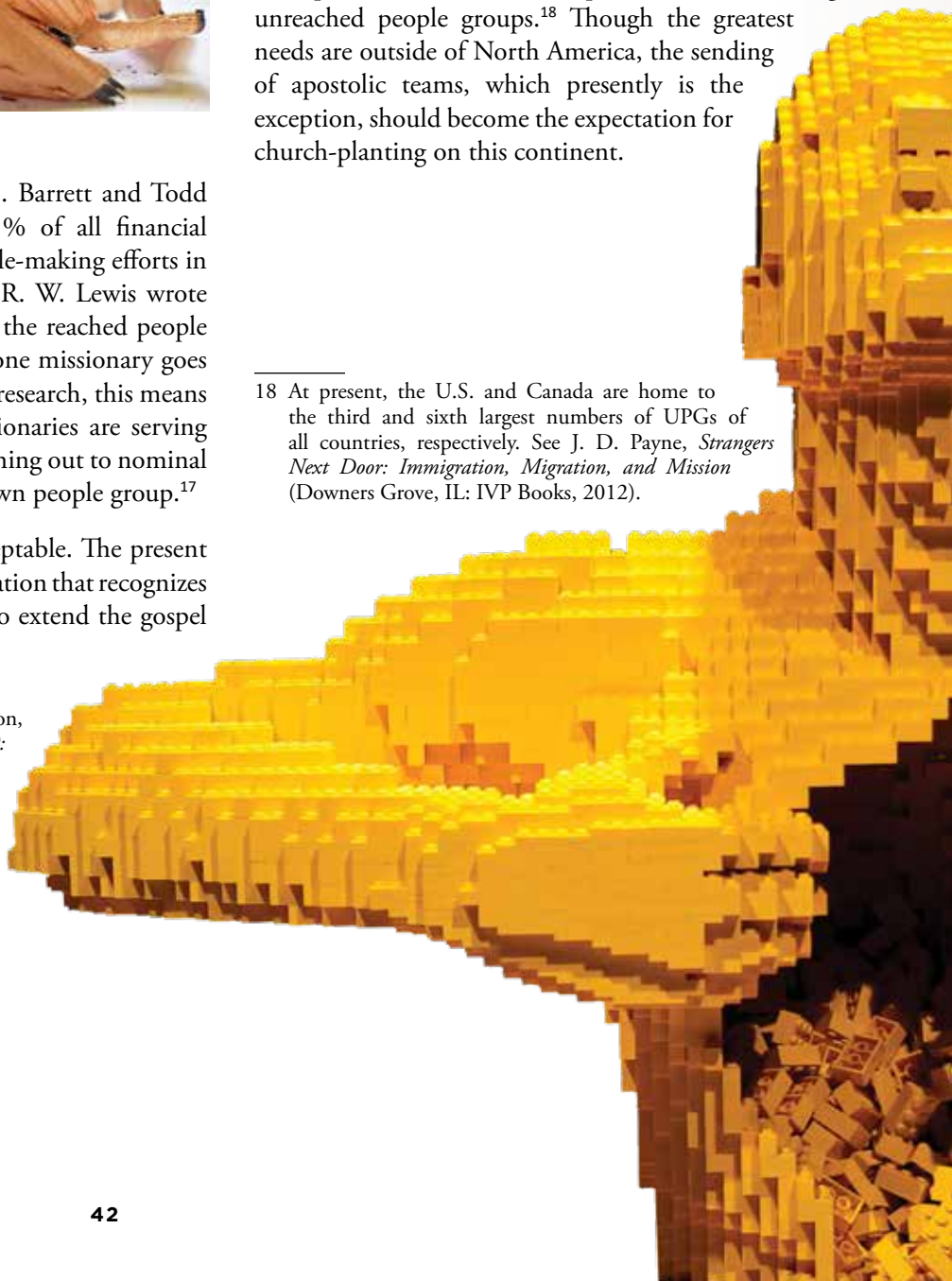
<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.



## Rethinking North America

Churches and agencies view North America through pastoral lenses. This reality has resulted in many viewing the North American context as reached and not in need of apostolic labors. While some groups use the words "mission field" to rally Christians for locations in the United States and Canada, what is generally meant is additional established churches and pastors are needed, *not* apostolic teams sent to plant churches among unreached people groups.<sup>18</sup> Though the greatest needs are outside of North America, the sending of apostolic teams, which presently is the exception, should become the expectation for church-planting on this continent.

<sup>18</sup> At present, the U.S. and Canada are home to the third and sixth largest numbers of UPGs of all countries, respectively. See J. D. Payne, *Strangers Next Door: Immigration, Migration, and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012).





## Rethinking Partnerships


The matter of partnerships is both biblical and critical for global work (Phil. 1:5; Rom. 15:24). Kingdom citizens are being sent from Western and Majority World contexts to other Western and Majority World contexts. The apostolic imagination recognizes the need for kingdom collaboration and seeks to develop healthy partnerships.

The Western Church should not think that just because a dark history exists that he should simply pass the baton to Majority World churches and check out of Great Commission activity. The commands of Christ apply to His Church wherever she is found—regardless of her past! The Lord has provided a great deal of experience, resources, and wisdom to older churches that are to be humbly shared through relationships.

There is much the West can learn from Majority World churches. Strengthening such relationships offers great potential for taking the gospel farther and deeper into Majority World settings. In the West where many unreached peoples have migrated, as well as many Christians, opportunities abound for churches to collaborate, as equals, with brothers and sisters in apostolic labors for reaching the nations across the street.



## Conclusion

The global work of the Church needs to be evaluated with an apostolic imagination. This process of rethinking is a matter of wise kingdom stewardship. Developing and applying an apostolic imagination will enable the Church to understand her present realities and make necessary adjustments. This conceptualization is not a novelty. The apostolic imagination is an ancient gift that remains to be opened in many evangelical circles. 

**Apostolic Imagination—  
rethinking from the inside, out.**



EDITORIAL

# What Shapes Our Views

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**s we seek to extend God's fame among the nations, we must seriously consider (1) what has shaped *us*, (2) how that informs how we interpret the Scriptures and (3) how we share truth with others.

I was raised in a family defined as "traditional" in the sense that my mother and father were both in the home, along with two brothers and one sister. We all shaped each other. We grew up going to church—I don't remember a time that I didn't. That shaped my views of everything (almost). Growing up in the suburbs of Silicon Valley, there were many of my friends who almost never darkened the doors of a church, and probably thought I was strange.

When I was entering high school, my family switched to a new church that was just starting. It emphasized Bible teaching, fellowship and accountability. I was mentored and drawn into ministry—from service to discipling and teaching, learning, applying and, hopefully, growing more. I was also being increasingly drawn into full-time ministry. I began to consider seminary as a way to learn more about studying and understanding the Word in depth. For me, it led me on a path of continual learning.

I am sure I'm missing many things still. As I learn, I increasingly see how much there is to learn. More often now, I seek the Spirit to help me to see myself and the Word more clearly. And there are things to "unlearn!"

All that to say that when we come to the Bible, we have been (and are) influenced by many *people*—from family to friends to mentors as well as many *experiences*. Those who’ve experienced other languages and cultures have broader experiences.

Naturally, that worldview shapes our *paradigm* for how we understand the Scriptures and what we expect and believe the Bible to teach. Much of the time, we don’t even think about either our worldview or the paradigm with which we come to the Bible. Perhaps an illustration or two will help.

Ralph Winter used to teach how a central underlying theme of the Scriptures is that we are here to take God’s message to all peoples. He would say that missions was not based *on* the Bible, but that the missions was the basis *of* the Bible. He would illustrate how an average Western evangelical might come to the Bible like a refrigerator. When we read it, we are looking to be fed (a good thing) perhaps a snack. On Sunday, the pastor takes something from a different shelf of the fridge (Bible), a Sunday School teacher another, and so on.

That approach, if overstated, can keep us from seeing the whole story and purpose of the Bible. And, means we come with a self-centered perspective, always looking for something for *us* because we see the Bible as mainly meeting *our* needs. At other times, we come to the Bible as a sort of theological dictionary or a reference book of moral principles.<sup>1</sup> It’s an answer book.

**Naturally, that worldview shapes our *paradigm* for how we understand the Scriptures and what we expect and believe the Bible to teach.**

The amazing thing about the Bible is that it is full of all kinds of things and you can get moral direction from it. It is full of theology (a word which means the “study of God”). But it is not mainly a reference or answer book. When we come to it for our needs, we also tend to use

it as a way to prove we are right and other views are wrong. We use it to confirm our bias. That can happen both inside and outside the Church (with people from other religious traditions).


Chris Tomlin’s popular song “Our God” has biblical truth in it: that there is none like Him ... none is greater, stronger, higher than any other.... which is all true. But the danger is that as believers, we can sound like a child saying, “my daddy is bigger or stronger than your daddy.” Or my “religion” is better or right, and yours is all wrong.

**Chris Tomlin’s popular song “Our God” has biblical truth in it: that there is none like Him ... none is greater, stronger, higher than any other.... which is all true.**

Certainly God is supreme and powerful beyond our imaginations and there are passages in the Scripture that describe that. But notice that when God tells us *clearly* what He is like—what His name means—He doesn’t mention power or position. He does not need to do so. Instead, in Exodus 34:6-7 (the most quoted passage within the whole Bible) He uses words and phrases like:

“...merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...” (ESV)

And right after God proclaims His love and mercy and grace and forgiveness to an audience of *one*—Moses bows in worship!

As we worship Him let’s present ourselves as learners, seeking to spread the name of a loving and gracious God. 

<sup>1</sup> Hear more on this in this episode of the Bible Project Podcast: <https://bibleproject.com/podcast/how-do-you-read-bible/>



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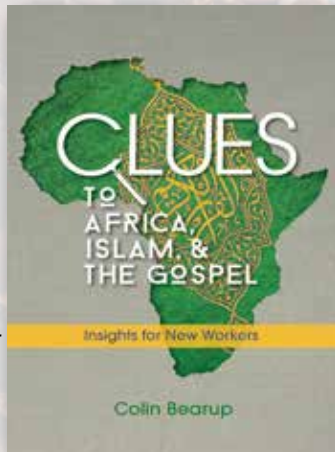
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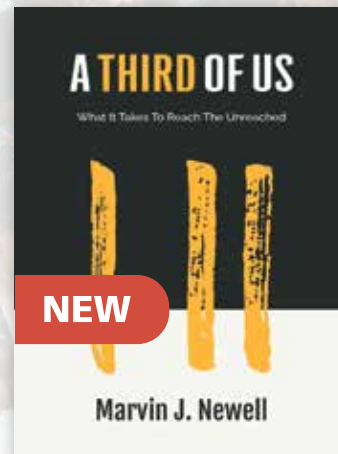
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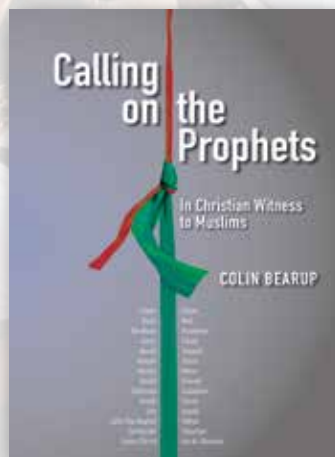
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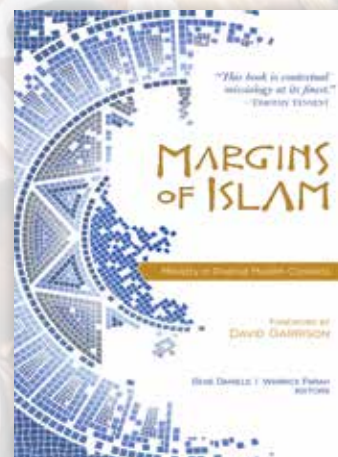
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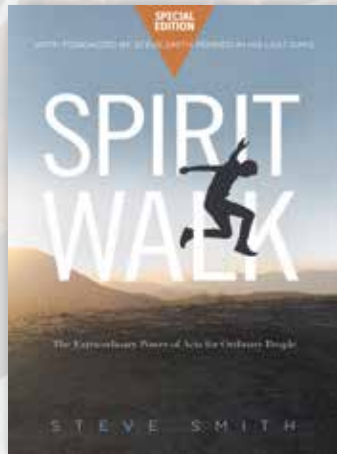
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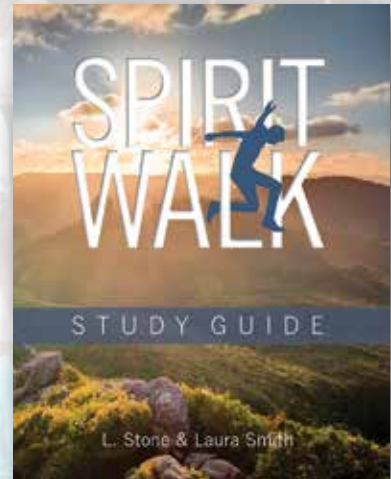
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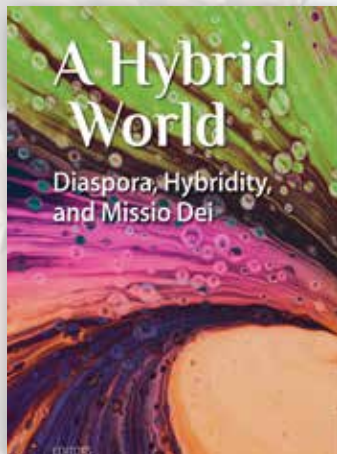
*Diaspora, Hybridity, and Missio Dei*

Sadiri Joy Tira and Juliet Lee Uytanlet (Editors)

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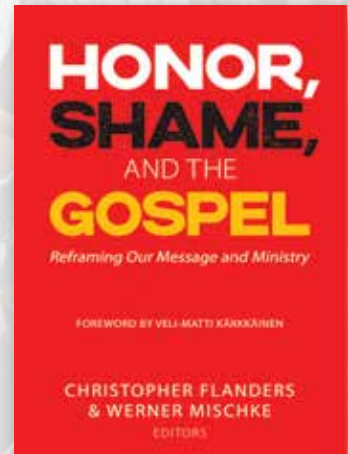
## Honor, Shame, and the Gospel

*Reframing Our Message and Ministry*

Christopher Flanders, and Werner Mischke (Editors)

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Note: Scripture references are from the *English Standard Version* (ESV). 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.

## NOVEMBER



### ■ 1 Adyge in Syria

Fleeing Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, the Muslim Adyge people left the northern Russian Caucasus Mountains for Syria prior to World War II. There are still five locations where they live in northern Syria. Today they are experiencing a renaissance of self-identification.

2 Thessalonians  
3:1

*Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you.*

- Make this your prayer for this people group.
- Pray that the churches in Syria would grow spiritually and numerically and serve Christ by thrusting out workers to the Adyge people.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Adyge people in Syria and Russia.
- Pray that the Adyge would come to seek their identity in Christ and learn to obey Him.

### ■ 2 Levantine Bedouin in Syria

Most of the Levantine Bedouin are semi-nomadic, living in the desert during the rainy season and along its edges the rest of the year, raising sheep, goats and camels. Those who have become farmers are no longer called Bedouin. Their patriarchal life has changed little in hundreds of years.

2 Thessalonians  
3:5

*May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.*

- May today's people group find full understanding of the love of God.
- Pray for Christian medical workers to work among them because their health needs are great.
- Pray that those in Israel would be won to follow Christ and carry the gospel to their kinsmen in Syria and Lebanon.

### ■ 3 Alawite in Syria

The Alawis are divided into four main tribes. They are a closed society, and they see themselves as a persecuted and despised people who actually are the chosen people of God, the only ones to have seen the light in a world of darkness. The Alawis have survived as a distinct group in spite of repeated persecution. Ironically, Syria's president is Alawite.

2 Timothy  
2:2

*...and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.*

- Use this verse to pray for a disciple making movement among this people group.
- Pray the Lord would use turmoil in the Middle East to point people in that region towards Jesus the Prince of Peace, Immanuel God with us.

### ■ 4 Druze in Syria

"Druze" is a word derived from el-Drzi, the name of one of the early propagandists of the Druze religion. The religion of the Druze began in the 9th century as a sect of Islam. Druze hold the Koran to be sacred, but look upon it as an outer shell, holding an "inner, esoteric meaning." They can be found in Israel, Lebanon, and Syria, where they follow a lifestyle of isolation.

2 Timothy  
2:25–26

*Correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.*

- Pray for new believers to have mercy and love for those who are abusive.
- Pray that they will intercede in prayer for them.
- Pray each individual in the Druze community would soon become persuaded that Jesus is truly the only way to God and would place their faith in His finished work on the cross.
- Pray for hundreds of disciples among the Druze.





### ■ 5 Kabardian in Syria

The name looks Armenian, but it isn't. Originally from Russia, some Kabardian people live in northern Syria. Their life code values both hospitality and blood revenge: hospitality to guests and blood revenge to their enemies. Their youth are becoming radicalized by Muslim militants.

Titus 1:5 | *This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you—*

- Pray for the Lord to raise up elders to lead this people group into all truth.
- Pray that the "tree of life" motif (see Revelation 2:7, 22:1-3) in their culture would become a "bridge of God" to open the door in their communities to the one who gives abundant life.
- Pray that Arab believers would reach out to them with love, compassion, and zeal, leading to a powerful church planting movement.

### ■ 6 Middle-Eastern Turkmen in Syria

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

Hebrews 1:1-2 | *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.*

- Pray that today's people group comes to understand that the one, true God has spoken through His Son, Jesus Christ.
- Pray they would have the wisdom to listen to Jesus.
- Pray for the Syrian church to become unified in Christ's purposes so that they can and will go to the Turkmen among them.
- Pray for the Turkmen of Syria to respond to the limited witness and grow disenchanted with Islam.
- Pray that they would see faith in Jesus as an acceptable alternative to the spiritual answers they have embraced for generations.

### ■ 7 Kerinci in Bahrain

Hot and humid to hot and dry: this is the climate change faced by the Kerinci people who migrated from Indonesia to Bahrain for work. They were a farming people in Sumatra, Indonesia, but farming is not something many people do in Bahrain. Islam is their main religion although the Kerinci retain many animistic beliefs.

Hebrews 2:3 | *How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard.*

- Pray that this people group would not ignore good news of salvation announced by the Lord Jesus.
- Pray for God's abundant spiritual and physical blessings for the Kerinci people.
- Pray for those who love the Savior to go to the Kerinci people in Bahrain.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Kerinci people this decade.

### ■ 8 Ambalavasi in India

The Ambalavasi community lived and worked near Hindu temples, so their name comes from "ambal," which means temple and "vasi," which means inmate. Most consider them Brahmins though their roles are even more complex than the Brahmins. They work in Hindu temples where they often serve as artists. Some are musicians or perform dramas.

Hebrews 2:14 | *Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.*

- Pray for today's people group to escape the power of death and the devil and to flee to Jesus Christ.
- Pray the Ambalavasi come to see religion as more than ritual and festivals and that they would long for a personal encounter with God.
- Pray for a movement to Christ this decade among the Ambalavasi people.
- Pray that God would open Ambalavasi hearts and minds to be receptive to scripture and power encounters.

■ 9 Eluthassan in India

The Eluthassan people live in Kerala, one of India's most Christianized states. They speak Malayalam, Kerala's language. These Hindus remain unreached, despite the fact that a high percentage of their neighbors follow the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

Hebrews 3:3 *For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself.*

- Pray for God to grant this people group the wisdom to know that Jesus' glory far exceeds the glory of any human prophet.
- Pray for the Lord to move on Eluthassan hearts to open the doors of their communities to those who believe in Christ.
- Pray for spiritual openness among the Eluthassan people of India.
- Pray that there would be a Disciple Making Movement among the Eluthassan people this decade.
- Pray for physical and spiritual blessings for this people group.

■ 10 Gujarati in Tanzania

The Gujarati are primarily classified as the inhabitants of the state of Gujarat, western India. Many Gujarati have migrated to other countries such as Tanzania and are often referred to as simply "Gujarati," even though a number of castes and tribes may be represented. The majority of the Gujarati are Hindus, but there may be many Muslims among them. The Gujarati of Tanzania may well have an insular mindset, desiring to protect their culture from those very different cultures around them.

Hebrews 3:18 *And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient?*

- Pray today's people group would enter into God's spiritual rest by trusting in and obeying His Son.
- Pray that each individual in the Gujarati community in Tanzania would have one or more opportunities to hear about the Savior.



■ 11 Gujarati in Australia

The Indian state of Gujarat has long been an important center for trade, and their merchants have been sent all over the world. Today, they are successful in business ventures internationally. Thousands live in Australia. Often people who have material wealth are less open to accepting the abundant life Christ offers. For that reason, there is a very low percentage of Gujarati believers anywhere in the world, including Australia.

Hebrews 4:16 *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

- Pray for this people group to approach God's throne of grace and receive the mercy and grace found in Jesus Christ.
- Pray that Gujarati businessmen would embrace the Savior and take His name to Gujaratis around the world.
- Pray the Lord would raise a Disciple Making Movement among the Australian Gujaratis.



■ 12 Danuwar Rai in Nepal

If you believed you had Hindu goddesses as ancestors, would it be hard to break away from Hinduism? That is the situation for the Danuwar Rai people of Nepal. Collectively, the Rai are known as a very courageous, daring and fearless people. In recent history, they have won worldwide respect for their bravery in the Royal Nepalese Army. Joining the army is often a way out of enduring economic hardship.

Hebrews 5:9 *And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.*

- Pray for today's people group to obey God and that Jesus to become their source of eternal salvation.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger among the Danuwar Rai people that will leave them dissatisfied with anything short of a relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Pray for Holy Spirit-driven workers to go to the Danuwar Rai people this decade.

### ■ 13 Srigaud Brahmin in India

The Srigaud Brahmins are almost exclusively Hindu, a truly unreached group! Most Srigaud Brahmin families prefer to be employed in challenging professions such as computer software engineering rather than being a priest. Few know a Christ follower from any Brahmin community.

Hebrews 6:19 | *We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain.*

- Pray that the Spirit leads this people group to hope in Christ and that He becomes the trustworthy anchor of their souls.
- Pray that the Church in South India would reach out to the Srigaud Brahmin community.
- Pray that the Srigaud Brahmin community would become dissatisfied with their current situation and begin to seek answers to their questions in the teachings of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for spiritual hunger among these Brahmins that will result in a movement to Christ.

### ■ 14 Chain in India

Caste-consciousness is an obvious obstacle that limits who may evangelize them. This is one of the reasons why those from the more prestigious castes are not reached. It has been the lower castes who have responded to Christ in the past. The Chain people are mainly landowners, so for them to have a fair chance to accept the gospel, they will need to hear from others from their level of society.

Hebrews 7:22 | *This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant.*

- Pray that this people group believes in Jesus and embraces the blessings of the New Covenant.
- Pray for the Lord to thrust out His chosen vessels as Christ bearers to the Chain people.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Chain people and other prestigious communities in India.



### ■ 15 Chhetri in Bhutan

Hundreds of years ago the Chhetri people group was formed by the intermarriage of several people groups that had settled in the mountains of Nepal. Later the Chhetri conquered most of Nepal; the name Chhetri is based on a word for warrior. In 1768, one Chhetri family formed the royal family of Nepal.

Hebrews 8:6 | *But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.*

- Pray for today's people to realize that their works will never make them pleasing to God.
- Pray they trust in the grace of God found only in Christ.
- Pray that believers would lead the Chhetri people in Nepal to Jesus Christ.
- Pray for them to be disciplined in the ways of Jesus Christ and to spread His glory to other communities.

### ■ 16 Eastern Cham in Vietnam

As a small minority group now overrun with poverty and persecution, one must remember that the Eastern Cham kingdom once reigned in Southeast Asia. The Cham are descendants from what was known as the Champa Kingdom. The Eastern Cham are a mixture of Hindus and Muslims, but they are also highly influenced by ancestor worship and animism.

Hebrews 9:12 | *He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.*

- Pray for this people group to come to comprehend that the blood of animals will never get them right with the one, true God.
- Pray that they realize that only the blood of Christ can forgive their sins and gain for them eternal life.
- Pray that followers of Christ from Vietnam will be led by the Lord's Spirit to take Christ to the Eastern Cham.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among them.

■ 17 Hindu Bedia in Nepal

One source considers Bedia to be the generic name of a number of vagrant nomadic groups. Traditionally, a large section of the Bedia were reported to be earning a livelihood from prostitution and dancing, however, this has largely been discontinued.

Hebrews 10:23

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.*

- Pray that the believers in today's people group would hold fast to the hope they have in Christ.
- Pray for the Bedia people to be delivered from their fear of "Christendom" and to embrace God's blessing through His word for their families and clans.
- Pray the Bedia would make schooling a priority for their children and would be able to improve their standard of living.
- Pray the few followers of Jesus among the Bedia would have pastors and teachers to help them grow to become faithful disciples.

■ 18 Hindu Bairagi in Nepal

The history of the Bairagi commences with Ramanuja, who lived in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and taught in the southern part of India. A proper Bairagi is one whose principal deity is either Vishnu or any of his incarnations like Rama and Krishna. To follow Christ is to risk disturbing community harmony within this Hindu community.

Hebrews 11:6

*And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*

- Pray for this people group to come to God and understand that He will reward them with His truth.
- Pray the few believers among the Bairagi people would grow in sharing and discussing God's Word with their families and friends.
- Pray that those that the Lord will soon call to Himself will be catalysts for a movement to Christ.
- Pray they would live holy lives that honor Christ.



■ 19 Sikh Arora in India

Arora Sikhs have had to rely on their resilience and determination. This grit has not only brought them through various obstacles, but it has also helped them rise above them. Today, the Arora are prominent figures in many fields. One of them, Dr. Manmohan Singh, was a recent prime minister of India. Though they are known for their religious tolerance, very few Aroras have actually embraced Christ as the only way to salvation.

Hebrews 12:2

*Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

- Pray that the believers in this people group keep their spiritual focus on Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith.
- Pray for their mental well-being and for all their physical and spiritual needs to be met.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Arora Sikhs this decade.

■ 20 Bhojpuri Bihari in South Africa

During colonial days a large number of people from Bihar region of British India moved to various parts of the world to work as indentured laborers. Some even went to South Africa, where the community found employment and was able to put down roots working in sugarcane, cocoa, rice, and rubber plantations. Now, the Biharis in South Africa have prospered, are well educated, and have a high rate of literacy.

Mark 10:14-15

*But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.*

- Pray for today's people group to show hospitality to those messengers of the gospel who God sends to them.
- Pray for a people movement to Jesus Christ during the 2020s among the Hindu Biharis of South Africa.



### ■ 21 Balinese in Malaysia

The island of Bali is probably better known than the host country of Indonesia! Bali's beauty, friendly people, exquisite art, and unique culture have made this Indonesian island a favorite destination for millions of tourists. On this "island of the gods" reside the Balinese people. Some Balinese live in Malaysia, a beautiful country near Indonesia.

James 1:5 | *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*

- Pray for this people group to begin to seek the wisdom of God that is found in His word.
- Pray for spiritual openness among the Balinese people.
- Pray that as Balinese Hindus embrace Christ, they would forsake all other gods.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Balinese in Malaysia that will spread to their communities in Indonesia and Australia.

### ■ 22 Highland Bali Baliaga in Indonesia

The culture, language, and religion of the Baliaga differ significantly from that of their Balinese neighbors. They maintain a strong sense of cultural identity and still practice unique rituals found nowhere else. Although they practice the Balinese form of Hinduism, they are also animistic. They worship at various Balinese temples but also practice a form of ancestor worship

James 1:12 | *Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.*

- Pray that the believers in today's people group patiently endure their afflictions and share the good news with others.
- Pray for the Baliaga people to hunger and thirst for righteousness.
- Pray for their elders to open the door for their people to embrace the only Savior.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Baliaga people this decade.



### ■ 23 Sikh Bawaria in India

According to Bawari legends, they were Rajputs and nobles before the coming of the Moghul armies. The Muslims defeated them and banished them to the forests. Today, they are eligible for special government jobs and extra university admissions. Most Bawari Sikhs work in agriculture on land owned by higher caste Indians.

James 1:22 | *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

- Pray for the believers in this people group to become not merely hearers but doers of God's word.
- Pray for workers to develop outreach plans.
- Pray for a desire for spiritual truth that will lead Bawari Sikhs to the spiritual blessings of Christ.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to send dreams and visions of Jesus Christ to the Sikhs.
- Pray for a people movement among Sikhs during the 2020s.

### ■ 24 Sikh Chhipa in India

A Chhipa can be a Sikh, Hindu, or a Muslim. Confusing? We can only imagine the spiritual confusion caused by three major religions within one people group. Do they view faith in Christ as a fourth "religion" that would add more confusion? Presenting the gospel will be a challenge.

James 2:8 | *If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you are doing well.*

- Pray for today's people group to obey God's law and love their neighbor as themselves.
- Pray that the Chhipa people would see the futility of their conflicting religions and seek and find the only savior.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to anoint Chhipa families, especially the children and the youth, and to raise up a new generation of fruitful, multiplying witnesses of Jesus Christ's mercy and love.

### ■ 25 Sikh Jat Dhillon in India

The Dhillon Jats had a large number of kings, royalty and warriors in their history. Some believe the Dhillon Jats founded India's capital city, Delhi. Unfortunately, people with high status are often the least open to the gospel. Christianity got its foothold in India by appealing to backward castes who eagerly welcomed the gospel. It gave them hope, but it also made the Dhillon Jats see faith in Christ as being for "lower status" peoples.

James 4:8 | *Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

- Pray that God draws this people group to Himself.
- Pray that their hearts are purified and become completely devoted to Him.
- Pray for Dhillon Jats to put their hope and identity in Christ rather than in their social standing.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Dhillon Jats.

### ■ 26 Sikh Jat Gil in India

Throughout most of South Asia, the entertainment hub is nicknamed "Bollywood," centered in Mumbai. A number of Shergills are prominent in India's entertainment industry. The Shergill name comes from the Gil Jat clan, and it is one of the largest and most aristocratic of the Jat clans. Historically, they were renowned for their courage, honesty and bravery.

1 Peter 1:3 | *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

- Pray that many among this people are born again and become part of God's family.
- Pray for the Gil Jats, even those who work in the entertainment industry, to see their need for Jesus Christ.
- Pray for God to anoint and appoint workers to create relevant, culturally sensitive Christ-centered radio, TV programs, and films that will be appropriate for the Gil Jats of India.

### ■ 27 Sikh Sidhu Jat in India

Who are the best farmers in India? Some might say they are the Jats. Their success over time allowed them to become prosperous landowners, and to this day they are some of the wealthiest people in India. Currently, many Sidhu Jats have advanced through education to successful professional positions, but there are still a fair number of Sidhu who struggle to maintain their farms to provide for their families. Most Sidhu Jats are a proud people who do not see a reason to change their religious life.

1 Peter 2:2 | *Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.*

- Pray that the believers in today's people group would long for the word of God and grow into spiritual maturity.
- Pray that thousands of Sidhu Jats would be open to a personal relationship with God and enter into His kingdom.

### ■ 28 Sikh Rajput in India

Rajputs are descendants of ruling Hindu warrior classes of North India, but they vary greatly in status from princely lineages to farmers. Due to the influence of Sikhism in the Punjab, a number of Rajput villages in that state converted to Sikhism during the Mughal era. The Rajput influence played a major role in Sikhism by militarizing common Sikhs.

1 Peter 1:24-25 | *For All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever. And this word is the good news that was preached to you.*

- Pray that as the word of God is shared with this people group and that they see its truth and beauty.
- Pray the Sikh Rajputs would be given the gift of conviction of sin and would deeply feel a need for Jesus as savior.
- Pray that there will soon be a Disciple Making Movement among them in India.



■ 29 Sikh Kumhar in India

If you ever buy anything made from ceramics in India, you will probably be buying from someone from the Kumhar community who can be either Hindu or Sikh. The Sikhs among them live primarily in Punjab, where there is a Sikh majority. They are faithful to the Sikh code of conduct, established by the teaching of ten Sikh gurus. This includes reading or reciting daily prayers as written in their holy book known as the Guru Granth.

1 Peter 2:10 | *Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

- Pray for the Lord would to extend His mercy to this people group and that many of them become God's children
- Pray that the Sikh Kumhars would be touched by God's word.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Sikh Kumhars in the 2020s.

■ 30 Sikh Sonar in India

The Sonar community is known for their amazing creativity in the art of designing and producing beautiful gold jewelry. Their very name "Sonar" means goldsmith. Many have done well financially, and some are money lenders or bankers. The younger Sonars are advancing in education, which has given them more professional opportunities in other fields of work. Though most are Hindus, there are also many Sikhs among them.

1 Peter 3:14-15 | *But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.*

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to give His words of wisdom to believers who share their faith to this people group.
- Pray that Sikh Sonars would humble themselves to be open to the Lord. Pray for believers to go to them as Christ bearers.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Sonars in the 2020s.

DECEMBER

■ 1 Gulf-spoken Arabs in Egypt

As the prodigy of the founders of Islam, Gulf Arabs have a strong vested interest in remaining faithful to the Islamic political/religious system. Gulf Arabs are often part of the most conservative forms of Islam. Radio and satellite TV efforts like SAT-7 provide all Arabic speakers with the gospel in the privacy of their own homes.

1 Peter 3:15 | *But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,*

- Pray for today's people group to learn to worship Christ as Lord and King.
- Pray for openness to these messages. Ask the Holy Spirit to thrust out people who are willing to share the love of Christ with the Gulf Arabs in Egypt.
- Pray that a strong church planting movement would be raised up among the Gulf Arabs in Egypt.

■ 2 Baharia in Egypt

Bahariya is the name of an oasis located in north central Egypt. There are many villages in the oasis. There is substantial tourism to the oasis because of antiquities (tombs, mummies and other artifacts have been discovered there), and because of the beautiful surrounding deserts.

1 Peter 4:12 | *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.*

- Pray that the hardships that God allows in the lives of believers in this people group do not discourage them.
- Pray for tourists to take Christ to the Baharia people in Egypt.
- Pray this will be the time when there is a movement to Christ among them.

UNREACHED OF THE DAY



### ■ 3 Eastern Bedawi Bedouin in Egypt

Several Bedouin tribes reside in Egypt, often occupying various oases in the desert areas. They lead a fairly harsh existence, with few amenities. Almost all are Sunni Muslim. The Eastern Bedawi Bedouin tend to be insular, separated from communities around them. Radio and television broadcasts of the gospel message in the language of the Bedouin will be very useful, even necessary to reach these tribes.

1 Peter 5:5 | *Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.*

- Pray that the believers in this people group are clothed with humility and grace.
- Pray for movements to Jesus to sweep through Bedouin families, permeating the group from within.
- Pray for the Bedouin, that they would hunger to know the forgiveness and fulfillment found only through Christ.

### ■ 4 Bedawi Beja in Egypt

The Bejas worshipped the Egyptian goddess Isis at Philae. After the temple was closed down in the 6th century by the Byzantine emperor Justinian, the Beja converted to Christianity. In the 10th century, Islam spread and gained popularity among the Beja people. Most Beja people today are Sufi Muslim, but they practice black magic against enemies, and they use sacred fires to ward off spirits which they believe cause sickness and accidents.

2 Peter 1:2-3 | *May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence.*

- Make this your prayer for today's people group.
- Pray the Beja would once again discover their ancient Christian heritage, and that the Lord would remember the prayers of their ancestors.
- Pray for them to return to Jesus Christ.



### ■ 5 Siwa Berbers in Egypt

The Siwa people mostly live in the Siwa Oasis, a remote desert location in the far west of Egypt, close to the Libyan border. A road was built in the 1980s from this oasis to the Mediterranean coast. The people are culturally closer to the Berbers of Libya than they are to Egyptians, and they have their own language. Tourists visit the Siwa Oasis; this offers interesting possibilities insofar as bringing the gospel to these people.

2 Peter 1:4 | *By which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.*

- Pray for the believers in this people group to cling to the promises of God and escape Earthly corruption.
- Pray for Christ to send out His ambassadors to the Siwa Berbers.
- Pray for them to crave the spiritual nourishment only Jesus Christ can offer.

### ■ 6 Fur in Egypt

Darfur, the name of the area where they live today, means the homeland of the Fur. They are an active farming people and may also raise cattle. The Fur are nominally Sunni Muslims. They are kin to the Kanuri people of Nigeria, with whom they maintained contact over the centuries. Some live in Egypt.

2 Peter 3:17 | *You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.*

- Pray that the Lord protects the believers in today's people group from false teachers and false teaching.
- There are few followers of Christ among the Fur; pray the Lord would soon build a church planting movement among this ancient community.
- Ask the Lord to help the Fur care properly for their families, and to live lives of peace.



## 7 Halebi Romani in Egypt

Halebi is an Egyptian name for Romani, and they reside in Egypt's Nile Delta. Traditionally, the men traded in horses, and the women practiced folk medicine, fortune-telling, and divination. Some travel into the Sudan because of economic hardship. It may be difficult for the Halebi to trust outsiders. Therefore, Christians need to build friendships with these Romani, caring genuinely for their material and physical needs.

2 Peter  
3:18

*But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

- Pray that the believers in this people group grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for their material and physical well-being.
- Pray for these Romani to increasingly hunger to know the Son of God.
- Pray the few believers among the Romani would grow in sharing and discussing God's Word with their families and neighbors.

## 8 Fezzan Bedouin in Libya

Resources are available in the languages of most Bedouin, but how can resources be made available to these people living largely in remote portions of Libya? Gospel radio can be effective in reaching people in remote areas and is especially needed for nomadic groups. Pray for funding needed to create good quality programs and to keep them on the air. There are no known followers of Jesus among the Fezzan Bedouin.

1 John  
1:5

*This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

- Pray for today's people group to perceive the holiness and justice of God and to be led by the Spirit to repent of their sins.
- Pray for those the Lord is preparing for Himself.
- Pray for the Fezzan Bedouin to have adequate rainfall for their crops and herds.
- Pray also that they would see the importance of educating their children well for a rapidly changing world.



## 9 Sanusi Bedouin in Libya

The Sanusi are one of the most unique groups of Bedouin. They have been influenced by both the traditional nomadic lifestyle of the Bedouin and the religious teachings of a prophet known as Sayyid Muhammad ibn' Ali as-Sanusi. This particular Muslim influence has made them one of the gentler of the Bedouin tribes.

1 John  
2:4

*Whoever says I know him but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

- Pray for this people to learn and obey the commandments of God.
- Pray for gospel radio to reach the Sanusi people and that they would learn of these broadcasts.
- Pray for excellent programming, to which they will want to listen.
- Pray they would clearly understand that the salvation God offers is a gift from Him, not something to be earned.

## 10 Sirtican Bedouin in Libya

The Sirtican Bedouin of Libya speak Arabic and their primary religion is Sunni Islam, the largest branch of Islam. The Bedouin fall into two basic groups: the "true" Bedouin who live as nomadic shepherds, and the majority group who have embraced farming and are known as the fellahin. The fellahin lead a more settled life on the edge of the desert. Their unique language (Badawi Arabic) and the dominance of Islam make them difficult to engage with.

1 John  
3:10

*By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.*

- Pray for the believers in today's people group to live righteously for the Lord and to love their brothers and sisters.
- Pray for Sirticans to become disillusioned with traditional spiritual answers and to understand they need a sin-bearing savior.
- Pray that they would have dreams and visions of Jesus Christ.

■ 11 Jabal Nafusah in Libya

A unique aspect of Nafusah villages is the famous troglodyte houses. These are underground homes carved vertically or horizontally into the soft limestone. Although most Libyans are Sunni Muslims, the Nefusah belong to a tiny Islamic sect called Ibadaya. Ibadaya originated in the seventh century, when they withdrew from mainstream Islam and relocated in several countries.

1 John 4:4 | *Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

- Pray that the believers in this people group would understand that God’s Spirit who lives in them is far greater than any spirit in the world.
- Pray the growing number of Christians among the Berber peoples would become strong enough to reach all of the tribes of North Africa with the gospel.
- Pray for a stable and effective government that will be able to protect the people and provide stability in Libya.

■ 12 Tubu in Libya

Known as “desert warriors,” the folk Islamic Tubu (or Teda) live as semi-nomadic herders in Libya as well as in neighboring Chad. These hardy people have their own independent rules that govern their affairs. For years, the Libyan government claimed they are not Libyan citizens and declared they belonged in Chad. Starting in November 2009, the government began a forced eviction and demolishing of Tubu property.

1 John 5:11-12 | *And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

*Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.*

- Pray that this people group realizes that it is only through the Son of God, Jesus Christ, that they can obtain eternal life.
- Pray that compassionate followers of Christ with a deep understanding and caring for the Tubu people would be thrust out to present them with God’s grace.
- Pray for spiritual hunger among Tubu elders that will lead to a Disciple Making Movement.

■ 13 Muhamasheen in Libya

The Muhamasheen live in fierce poverty. Many of the men work as street sweepers while the women and children collect cans and bottles for income and beg. Almost none of the children attend school. It is said that most of the Muhamasheen have internalized their low status and do not try to better themselves, find real jobs or seek an education. Much of their meager income goes to buy qat, a stimulant.

2 John 1:4 | *I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we were commanded by the Father.*

- Pray for this people group to learn to walk in the truth and to obey the commandments of God.
- Pray these desperately poor and marginalized people would be able to escape the bonds of their low status.
- Pray for them to find their sense of worth in Jesus Christ.

■ 14 Zuwarah in Libya

The Zuwarah, like other Berbers, are generally bilingual, speaking both Zuara (a dialect of Nafusi) and Arabic. The Zuwarah are almost entirely Muslim. There is a great lack of Christian resources available in the Nafusi language.

2 John 1:10 | *If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting.*

- Pray that today’s people group rejects false teachers and false doctrine.
- Pray for the funds and workers needed to create resources and deliver them to the people.
- Pray that the few believers among the Zuwarah Berbers would be quick to repent of sin and would teach others to live the Spirit-filled life.
- Pray for the Lord to remember the ancient prayers of long-dead Berber believers, as they prayed for their descendants to know and follow Christ.





### ■ 15 Idaksahak in Algeria

These “sons of Isaac,” which is what Idaksahak means, are committed to their livestock, their families, and their Muslim faith. Few, if any, missionaries are willing to live like nomads to reach nomads.

3 John 1:11 | *Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.*

- Pray that the Lord raises up pastors and teachers in this people group who set good examples and are able to teach the Bible.
- Pray for rugged but loving believers to go to them until they have the resources they need to teach their own people the gospel.
- Pray for an intense spiritual hunger among the Idaksahak people that will lead to a Disciple Making Movement.
- Pray for the Lord to provide the Idaksahak people with adequate rainfall and healthy livestock as an example of His goodness to all.

### ■ 16 Dui-Menia Bedouin in Algeria

The Bedouins are hailed by Arabs as “ideal” Arabs, especially because of their rich oral poetic tradition, their herding lifestyle, and their traditional code of honor. Bedouins are distinct from other Arabs because of their extensive kinship networks, which provide them with community support and the basic necessities for survival. Only a few Dui-Menia Bedouins live as their forefathers did in camel and goat hair tents.

Jude 1:24-25 | *Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.*

- Make this your prayer for today’s people group.
- Pray for pure drinking water for the Dui-Menia Bedouin, for improved medical care, and for employment opportunities.
- Pray for gospel radio to be widely available throughout the lands of the Bedouin.

### ■ 17 Nail Bedouin in Algeria

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

Revelation 1:7 | *Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.*

- Pray for this people group to rejoice at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to grant fruitful and divine outreach strategies to mission agencies focusing on Bedouins.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Nail and other Bedouin tribes.

### ■ 18 Sidi Bedouin in Algeria

The Sidi Bedouins are almost all Sunni, but some are Sufis who seek a heart-felt response to Allah. They are suspicious of outside influences. Their language, culture, religious beliefs, and often-nomadic lifestyle make them hard to reach. There are a small number of believers among them who can disciple them. Their Sufi beliefs might indicate that some are open to seeking a relationship with the Almighty.

Revelation 2:5 | *Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.*

- Pray for this people group to repent and to make Jesus Christ the first love of their lives.
- Pray they would have dreams and visions of the one true God.
- Pray that any Sidi believers would be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and receive divine strategies for reaching others until they have their own movement to Christ.

■ 19 Belbali in Algeria

How would you like to live in a place that is near two international borders? That is the situation for the Belbali, a West African people who are located in southwestern Algeria. Recently their area has been built up significantly because it is the last outpost before the Moroccan, Saharawi and Mauritanian borders, and there has been a large influx of refugees from the Western Sahara. The area is very fertile, so agriculture is common.

Revelation 3:5 *The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.*

- Pray for many names in this people group to be written in the Lamb's Book of Life.
- Pray that many from this people group are clothed with the righteousness of Christ.
- Pray for God's original intent for the land of Algeria and the Belbali people.
- Pray for God to draw the Belbali people to Him, leading to a powerful movement to Christ this decade.

■ 20 Chenoua in Algeria

What would you teach your children to speak if your own people group was small, and there were three other small languages in the local vicinity? You would use the trade language, right? This is what most Chenoua speaking parents do. They live in rural Algeria and speak Arabic.

Revelation 3:8 *I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.*

- Pray for a wide-open door for the gospel to penetrate the culture of this people group.
- Pray that they will listen to and heed radio outreaches in their language.
- Pray for laborers who are willing to lay down their lives for the sake of the gospel.
- Pray for every hindrance of the gospel's touching the Chenoua people's lives to be removed.



■ 21 Ouargla in Algeria

The Ouargla are a Berber people who live in and around the oasis city of Ouargla in central Algeria. Ouargla has a major university and is a center of oil production. The Berber peoples were Christian before the Islamic conquest, and nearly all recent church growth in Algeria has occurred within Berber communities.

Revelation 3:15-16 *I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.*

- Pray that believers in this people group become passionate in their zeal for the true God and His Son.
- Ask the Lord to send Berber followers of Christ to reach the Ouargla people.
- Pray that the university and oil industry provide jobs for workers in the Lord's harvest.
- Pray the Bible and social media resources would bless these people with the profound love of Christ.

■ 22 Algerian Tuareg in Algeria

The Tuareg are descended from Berbers. Following the independence of African countries in the 1960s, Tuareg territory was artificially divided into modern nations: Niger, Mali, Algeria, Libya, and Burkina Faso. The Tuareg adopted nomadism, along with its distinctive form of social organization from camel-herding Arabs about two thousand years ago.

Revelation 4:9-10 *And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever.*

- Pray for members in this people group to give glory, honor and thanks to the God who sits on the throne.
- Pray that the few followers of Christ among the Tuareg would live exemplary lives and reveal the Lord's character.
- Pray for improved living conditions for the Tuareg and for good schools for their children, so they can be well prepared to live in the 21st century.



### ■ 23 Deaf in Morocco

We often talk about people groups who haven't had the opportunity to hear the gospel. In this case, it is the literal truth. The Deaf in Morocco find themselves without many opportunities, spiritual or otherwise. Morocco doesn't have many resources for this community. As a result, the vast majority of Deaf children don't attend school.

Rev.  
5:8–10

*And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.*

- Pray for many in this people group to begin to worship and serve the Lord of lords.
- Pray for the Deaf in Morocco to have the chance to understand and respond to the gospel. Pray for gospel materials to be produced in Moroccan Sign Language.
- Pray for the Deaf in Morocco to be blessed with the joy and peace offered by the Lord of lords.

### ■ 24 Yahia Bedouin in Morocco

Yahia Bedouin clothing is vibrant red and orange with multi-colored beads, with some silver jewelry and semi-precious stones. Their diet comes mainly from their herds: milk, yoghurt and butter, accompanied by rice. They only eat meat on special occasions. Nowadays, the younger generation is leaving the nomadic life, moving to and working in cities, thereby significantly impacting their culture.

Revelation  
5:13

*And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!*

- May God's praises ring out forever among this people group, and for a massive movement to Christ among the Bedouin peoples!
- Pray their changing circumstances would create a new openness and opportunities for them to know the love of Jesus.

### ■ 25 Atta Berbers in Morocco

Rather than calling themselves "Berbers," they refer to themselves by the name of their particular subgroup, in this case the Atta. Berbers also use the overarching term "Imazighen."

Revelation  
7:9–10

*After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!*

- Pray that many members of this people group will be part of the vast crowd praising God in heaven.
- Pray that those who are beginning to find Christ among the Berber communities would be protected and nurtured by the Lord and find one another to begin a church planting movement.
- Pray that radio broadcasts will bear much fruit.
- Pray the Berbers of Morocco would have access to the good news of Jesus in many forms, hearing clearly who He is in their mother tongue.

### ■ 26 Zekara Berbers in Morocco

The Berbers lived in North Africa long before the arrival of the Arabs and Islam, and once had a Christian heritage. In Morocco, about 40% acknowledge a Berber identity though many more have Berber ancestry. Many Berber children drop out of school because they are taught, in what is to them a foreign language, Arabic. Some of these are from the Zekara community.

Revelation  
11:16–17

*And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.*

- Pray for today's people group to worship the true God for His great power and sovereignty over the universe.
- Pray for Christ followers to find ways to build friendships and trust with the Zekara Berber people.
- Pray the Berbers of Morocco would once again find the faith of many of their ancestors, faith in Jesus Christ, the only way to God the Father.

### ■ 27 Harratine in Morocco

The ancestors of the Harratines were at one time captured and taken north by slave traders but were abandoned in Morocco. These ancestors found small plots of land on which to settle near desert oases. The people have found employment as day laborers and in various manual trades. The jewelry and adornment of Harratine women is bold, rich and colorful. Leather, shell, coins, and glass are typical of the pieces worn by their ladies.

Revelation  
12:7–8

*Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.*

- Pray for this people group to understand that the Lord of hosts had already defeated the dragon, Satan, and his demons.
- Pray for adequate rainfall, pure drinking water and improved medical care for the Harratine people.
- Pray for Christian radio to be widely available throughout Morocco in the language of the Harratine people.

### ■ 28 Izarguien in Morocco

The Izarguien are Saharan Arabs, a sub-group of the Tekna tribe. The Tekna is a tribal confederation of Berber and Arab origins in southern Morocco and parts of northern Western Sahara. Their traditional lifestyle was partly nomadic and partly sedentary, controlling important routes of the Saharan caravan trade. They live in a harsh and dangerous environment.

Revelation  
14:7

*And he said with a loud voice, Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water.*

- Pray for today's people group to learn to fear God and give Him all the glory.
- Pray for the Izarguien tribe to be able to provide adequately for their needs.
- Pray these people would be able to adjust to the changing requirements of the modern era.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among them.

### ■ 29 Jebala in Morocco

The word Jebala comes from Moroccan Arabic "jbel," which means mountain. Thus, Jebala means mountain people. A man or boy is called a Jebli while a woman or a girl is called a Jebliya. They traditionally have lived in or near the Rif mountains in northern Morocco. The Jebala favor pointed-toed leather slippers, and reed hats. Their musicians sometimes perform Sufi music.

Revelation  
14:12

*Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.*

- Pray that the Lord grants endurance to the believers in this people group and that they are faithful to share the good news.
- Pray the Jebala community would be able to care adequately for their families and for good schools for their children.
- Pray for a massive movement to Christ among them in the coming years.

### ■ 30 Gil Bedouin in Morocco

Gil Bedouins traditionally lived a nomadic lifestyle. It will take hearty believers who can and will live among them for years, learn their language and share the gospel in a way that makes sense in their culture.

Revelation  
15:4

*Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.*

- Make this also your song of praise to the victorious King of kings!
- Pray believers who encounter Gil Bedouins would use opportunities to develop friendships with them and earn their respect to speak the truth of the gospel to them.
- Pray for courage and accurate communication.
- Pray the Gil Bedouin leaders would see their desperate need for the only savior.
- Pray that Gil Bedouin children would be educated in technology, so they could be participants in the modern world.

### ■ 31 Uregu Berbers in Morocco

The Uregu Berbers are one of the smaller Berber tribes who live in the southeastern part of Morocco. Their Berber society is primarily made up of farmers and merchants. Close knit Berber clans adhere to traditional customs, giving communities a strong sense of identity and loyalty. Most Berbers are Muslim, but many also believe in the power of spirits called jinn.

Revelation  
17:14

*They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.*

- Pray that this people group understands the fact that the Lamb's victory over evil is assured.
- Pray that many in this people group will choose to be the faithful ones of the Lamb of God. Ask the Lord of the harvest to send laborers to the Uregu Berbers.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus through dreams and visions, and that tribal leaders and influential persons would receive Jesus and lead their people into a movement to Christ.

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