

# MISSION™ FRONTIERS

A MAGAZINE OF FRONTIER VENTURES | [missionfrontiers.org](http://missionfrontiers.org) ISSUE 44:4 JULY / AUG 2022

## The Proper Care and Nurturing of Our Mission Workers

PRAYER

CHILD CARE

COUNSELING

LANGUAGE

TRAINING

COMMUNICATION

MEDICAL

CULTURE

HOUSING

TRANSPORTATION



1855

KNOWN KINGDOM MOVEMENTS

# A Bible for Those Who Can't Read



**Equip • Empower • Engage**  
NON-READERS with GOD'S WORD!

**Pastor Raju has a heart and a passion for teaching people about God.**

For over 20 years, Pastor Raju has been in the same place, amongst the same people, reaching them for Christ. His church is full of people who have believed the good news about Jesus.

He has seen the hunger in the new believers to know what the Bible says. Over time, Pastor Raju says, "this hunger to know what the Bible says grows and grows!"

The people in Pastor Raju's church who cannot read want to know what the Bible says, but they cannot read it for themselves. "The Talking Bible is the best way!" Pastor Raju says.

They can't read, but they can listen. The Talking Bible can be a real blessing to someone who wants to know what the Word of God says!



Order online at  
**TB2U.com**

Learn more at  
**talkingbibles.org**

# MISSION FRONTIERS

VOL.44, NO.4 JULY/AUG 2022 ISSN 0889-9436

*Mission Frontiers*, a publication of Frontier Ventures, is published six times a year. Contents © 2022, Frontier Ventures. FV is a member of MissionNexus and Evangelical Press Association (EPA).

Email: [subscriptions@frontierventures.org](mailto:subscriptions@frontierventures.org)

Editorial Office: [rick.wood@frontierventures.org](mailto:rick.wood@frontierventures.org)

Advertising: [advertising@missionfrontiers.org](mailto:advertising@missionfrontiers.org)

Website: [www.missionfrontiers.org](http://www.missionfrontiers.org)

Address: PO Box 41450, Pasadena, CA 91114

Rick Wood, Editor

Taya Johnson, Production Coordinator

Mike Riestler, Graphic Design

Photos throughout this issue are from Unsplash.com, pexels.com, and pixabay.com unless otherwise noted. Photos on pages 59 and 63 are from International Mission Board Photos.

## SUBSCRIBE

[www.missionfrontiers.org](http://www.missionfrontiers.org)

Click on the subscribe button on the top of the page, or call 1.626.398.2249

## 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 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*.



04

### Learning How to Care For Our "Sent Ones"

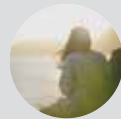
Rick Wood



08

### The Lead Pastor's Role in Missionary Care

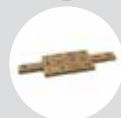
Bradley Bell



12

### A Witnessed Life: Being Seen and Cared for as a Single Overseas Worker

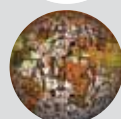
Elizabeth George



15

### Advocate Teams: The Local Church Caring for Missionaries

Nathan Sloan



19

### Partners In The Gospel

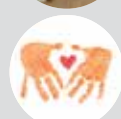
Neal Pirolo



22

### Helping Missionary Kids Thrive on Home Assignment

Valerie Williams



25

### Member Care: The Scriptural Foundation

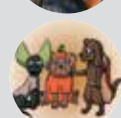
Neal Pirolo



28

### Missionary Care Teams: A Personal Testimony

Elizabeth George, Rebekah & Chris Meredith

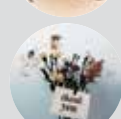


31

### Giving

Traveling Team

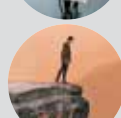
[www.travelingteam.org](http://www.travelingteam.org)



32

### Decades of Faithful Service

An Interview with Dot Everett and *Mission Frontiers* magazine



36

### Toward the Edges

Kevin Higgins



38

### Obedience to God's Word Overcomes Systemic Prejudice

The Walker Family



40

### In Serious Pursuit of Movements

C. Anderson



44

### Further Reflections: Contextualization

Greg H. Parsons



46

### Who is Defining the Priorities of Our Church's Mission Efforts?

Stan Parks



52

### Unreached Of The Day

Joshua Project

# Learning How to Care For Our “Sent Ones”



BY RICK WOOD | Editor of *Mission Frontiers* | rick.wood@frontierventures.org

If you ask mission workers if they feel adequately cared for by their sending churches, most will likely say, “Not as much as we would like.” The relationship between the sending church and the “sent ones” can be complicated with many factors getting in the way of doing a good job of sending people well and caring for them while they are on the field. It takes lots of time, energy, vision and commitment for a church to do it well. In this issue we provide stories of churches who are doing it well. But what are some of the things that get in the way of churches caring well for their mission workers?

## Ignorance of the Mission

A majority in the church don't understand the mission of the global Church. The people in the church cannot adequately care for the mission workers sent if the members do not understand or have a commitment or passion for the mission. As reported in the Nov-Dec 2019 issue of *MF*, only 37% of Christians can identify the Great Commission passage in Matt. 28:18-20 when it is read to them. Those who know it well are likely even less than 37%. That means that only 37% have any idea of what Jesus has asked us to do in missions. Therefore, at best, only 37% will care about the mission of the church and those sent to carry it out. Matt. 28:18-20 should be the core vision and identity of every follower of Jesus, but it is not, and our missionaries suffer neglect because it is not. Because the church does not understand its mission, many workers are sent out to do things that do not help accomplish this mission. Only a very small fraction of mission workers is sent to start movements to Christ within the unreached peoples. This is the same problem Dr. Ralph Winter identified in 1974—most mission workers are sent to serve the existing church around the world, not those who have never heard. Every sending church should have a missions priority grid that prioritizes the sending of mission workers to those people groups with the least access to the gospel, often referred to as Frontier Peoples. It

must be the job of pastors to catch this vision and then pass it on to their church members. How often do you hear Matt. 28:18-20 quoted in your church services? Likely, not very often and that is the problem.

## Caring More About Ourselves Than the Mission

It is a sad reality that 94% of the money given to the church stays within to bless the people of the church. Almost 6% is given to missions of all varieties and only 1.7% is given to the highest priority in missions of going to the unreached peoples. Out of every \$100 given to the church only \$1.70 is given to reach those who have never heard of Jesus or have little or no access to the gospel. As is reported on page 31, Americans spend more on golf balls and Twinkies than what is given to reach the unreached peoples. There is a severe imbalance in our priorities, and this is reflected in how we care for the mission workers who have given their lives for the cause of reaching the unreached. Where your money is, there goes your heart. Is it any surprise that the hearts of God's people are not with those who are carrying out this mission? The church should do better than 1.7%. That is not even 2 cents of every dollar given. But unless the vision of God's people increases, giving to reach the unreached is unlikely to improve.

## Out of Sight, Out of Mission

The missionary enterprise has an inherent flaw: the people most committed to the mission of the church are not in regular contact each week with their home church that has sent them to make disciples of all nations. They are not at church talking with fellow church members before or after the service each week. They are not attending home groups or Bible studies throughout the week. They are not able to share their passion and mission vision with the very people they depend upon for the resources to carry out their mission. Over time this distance creates increasing ignorance of who these “sent ones” are

and why the church sent them out in the first place. Over time these mission workers become strangers to their home church which often leads to a discontinuance of prayer and financial support. This issue of *MF* is all about what the church and its sent ones can do to overcome this problem and to make sure that the precious saints we send out are properly cared for and supported in their vital mission.

My wife and I have lived on missionary support for 32 years now and this issue was inspired by our experiences, both good and bad from interacting with churches and individual supporters. My wife, Lorena, was a huge help in pulling together the articles for this issue. I asked her to share some of her thoughts on caring well for our mission workers.

## Lorena Wood on Serving Well as Senders

Our cover title *The Proper Care and Nurturing (Feeding) of Our Mission Workers* may sound a bit familiar. I read Dr. Laura Schlessinger's common-sense book titled *The Proper Care and Feeding of Husbands*. I just couldn't get that title out of my mind as I worked to find great articles and examples of those churches doing it well for this theme issue of *Mission Frontiers*. And yes, this is my first ever time bringing a theme issue together, so I hope you won't be too critical of me in your reviews. I wanted to help the editor, my husband, to have a break from the constant treadmill of pushing out one issue after another. I also really felt that I wanted to create a "manual" of sorts that could be sent to churches and pastors in the hope of blessing missionaries even more. Don't worry, I'm not thinking this will be the definitive work on caring for mission workers like Eric Metaxas' book on Martin Luther. I just want to do my small part in highlighting the wonderful authors and resources in this issue for you to learn from, connect with and share with others.

Wouldn't it be great if we could encourage those that our churches send out, or dare I even say, those we partner with individually who are on the front lines of breaking Satan's grasp on the 7,000 unreached peoples still living in darkness? Wouldn't it be incredible if we could help the local church who has workers on the field do their job a bit better in letting the supported know they haven't been forgotten and that we have taken the time to grow ourselves and educate others

in the area of caring well for those who have been entrusted to us? There is an array of authors in this issue whose expertise can be so life giving if we take their advice and apply it in caring for our workers.

For the line-up we have a spectrum of articles about missionary support ranging from kids to senior leadership.

Valerie Williams/TEAM defines ways to help missionary kids feel valuable on home assignment and shares seven key ways that a church can help missionary kids.

Neil Pirolo shares the biblical basis for sending workers out well.

Stan Parks shares three priorities for every sending body.


Q & A with Dorothy (Dot) Everett, a "just getting started" 86-year-old worker who has served for 65+ years in missions. Just because one may be eight decades old does not mean the work is done. This is a great perspective piece and Dot is an example worth following.

"Elizabeth" serving in a highly sensitive area helps us understand how to meet the specific needs of a female worker in her article, *A Witnessed Life*.

Bradly Bell, a lead pastor and former missionary steps in and shares his wisdom and advice on the importance of real connection to our workers. He gives first-hand accounts of being on the field and in the pulpit.

See the article by E. George and the Merediths on their four "missionary care" resolutions and the course one church took to implement a church-wide support team for their missionaries.

Another very helpful piece is Nathan Sloan's piece on Advocacy Teams. Not only does he have the perspective of living on the field as a missionary, but he also has the wisdom gained from being the executive director of Upstream Collective where his team works tenaciously on church-centric global sending. They are a wonderful resource with hundreds of articles related to this very issue.

I hope this issue is a great blessing to you and the mission workers you serve. 



# The Proper Care and Feeding



# The Lead Pastor's Role in Missionary Care

By **BRADLEY BELL**

**Bradley Bell** serves as the lead pastor of Antioch Church in Louisville, Kentucky, and as a staff writer for The Upstream Collective. He is the author of *The Sending Church Defined* and his writing is compiled at [brokenmissiology.org](http://brokenmissiology.org). Prior to his current roles he served as a missionary and a missions pastor. Bradley is married to Katie and they have three daughters, Elisabeth, Charlotte, and Anneliese, all named after missionaries.



“Wilson!”

You probably know it as the most famous line from the film *Castaway*, starring Tom Hanks. If you haven't seen it, the story follows a man named Chuck Noland whose plane crashes en route to Malaysia, which strands him on a deserted island. There he's completely cut off from all relationships. And in the pain and madness of being so isolated, he eventually finds a volleyball, names it Wilson (since it's already branded on the face of the ball), and the two are then inseparable.

That is, until Chuck tries to boat away from the island. At one point in the wind and waves, Wilson accidentally floats away in the ocean. Chuck desperately tries to rescue him, but nearly drowns doing so. Sadly, as he makes his way back to the boat, he bawls over and over, “I'm sorry, Wilson!” And whatever thread of comedy that was left in the film has suddenly drowned in tragedy.

When the church sends someone globally on mission, there are *literally* hundreds of miles and days between them. And if they don't bind themselves together, then they'll drift apart forever, relationship forsaken.

You see, Chuck had bound Wilson to the boat, but not to himself. And the danger of failing to do that became reality: they drifted apart forever, relationship forsaken. Sadly, that's the same danger when it comes to missionary care. When the church sends someone globally on mission, there are *literally* hundreds of miles and days between them. And if they don't bind themselves together, then they'll drift apart forever, relationship forsaken.

## My Story

I learned this painful truth for myself when I served as a missionary. I had no idea what a “sending church” was—by that I mean a church who is committed to the ongoing care of missionaries before they go, while they're on the field, and upon their return. Ideally this relationship begins with the person submitting himself or herself to the church through membership. This allows you to assess their potential as a missionary candidate, disciple them into readiness and have confidence that your church is sending a qualified missionary as a blessing to the nations. And perhaps even more relevant to this article, it's the foundation that allows you to have an ongoing relationship of pastoral care in his or her life long after they leave for the field.



Unfortunately, I didn't have that. I had served as a youth minister at a church prior to going overseas. They loved me, affirmed my sense of calling and committed to pray for me. But I can't say that they "sent" me. It was more like they "released" me. There was no commissioning. There was no relationship of ongoing spiritual authority. I was simply set adrift into the care of a missions organization.

But I can't say that they "sent" me. It was more like they "released" me. There was no commissioning. There was no relationship of ongoing spiritual authority. I was simply set adrift into the care of a missions organization.

Here's the thing about being released instead of sent: it's normal practice. It's what most churches have done for decades—allowing missions organizations to play the central role in global missions. So what's the big deal? Why should a lead pastor care? Because the Scriptures that he preaches calls him and his church to something very different.

## A Little Example

One of the most meaningful examples of missionary care in the New Testament is tucked away in the little letter of 3 John. In this brief correspondence, the apostle John rejoiced that his friend Gaius was "walking in the truth" (v. 3). How was Gaius walking in the truth? In this instance by caring for itinerant missionaries who had passed through his church. We read,

*Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore, we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth. —3 John 5-8*

One of the most remarkable (and easily missed!) lines in the passage sets the bar for our ongoing care of missionaries, especially those we've sent from among our own church members. We are to do so "in a manner worthy of God." Consider this: if Jesus Himself were to come to your church and ask you to send Him out, how would you do it?

By rolling out the red carpet!



You would be eager to provision Him with whatever He needed and support Him by any means necessary. It would be a great joy and privilege!

And *that* is the bar. That is the standard that John sets for us in all of our ongoing care of missionaries: sending them in a manner worthy of God Himself. And in doing so, John says, we become "fellow workers for the truth," active participants in global missions.

## Becoming the Example

Ironically, after experiencing the strange lack of care and accountability from the local church as a missionary, I came home and began serving as a missions pastor. Suddenly on the front lines of missionary care, I was committed to helping our missionaries have a better experience than I had, and to helping the church be more faithful to its biblical role than mine had been. It was hard, but it made for a healthier church, healthier missionaries,

and ultimately more fruitful ministry among the nations. It was at this time through the ministry of The Upstream Collective that I wrote a book called *The Sending Church Defined* to help other churches do the same.

A few years later God then saw fit for me to begin serving as a lead pastor at Antioch Church. Antioch is a small congregation (around 100 members) with an abnormally large number of “distributed members.”

This is the term we use for our missionaries in order to communicate their ongoing church membership, and how we are still bound to one another. As of the writing of this article, 17% of Antioch’s members are serving overseas.

Although this is outwardly impressive, it creates a unique dilemma for a lead pastor, especially in a church where I am the only full-time staff member. Antioch has committed to *a lot* of ongoing missionary care. What is my role in that, especially in light of my many other biblical responsibilities? Allow me to outline it in a way that is useful to any lead pastor in any church setting.

**Champion the vision.** One of the primary responsibilities of a lead pastor is preaching God’s word. This is where the particular vision of a local church is birthed and fueled. As a natural part of his preaching and visionary leadership, the lead pastor can champion the church’s role in global missions and, specifically, in missionary care. This can come from expository series through books (such as 3 John, Acts, and Philippians), through topical sermons about global missions, and/or through occasional missionary care related examples within sermons. At Antioch we call these emphases “Sending Sundays” and try to make them happen every few months.

**Build the relationship.** I have found that at the heart of pastoral care is relationship. In fact, the Bible teaches that pastors will one day give an account to Jesus for the souls under their care (Hebrews 13:17). Although I know that lead pastors cannot have a deep relationship with every church member, they *can* seek to be available and relatable. This must be especially so with missionaries. If at all possible, seek to develop a relationship with missionary candidates before they are sent. If that’s not possible, then take the initiative to connect with them virtually, or share a meal when they come to visit. And once the relationship is established,



remind them occasionally that you're still there for them. I have a notification set on my calendar to text a missionary every few weeks.

**Develop a team.** Whether a church has one missionary or a dozen, take my advice: don't try to do it all yourself! Caring well for the soul of a missionary means attending to their many unique needs. These include finances, prayer, accountability and the catch-all category of logistical support. Although a missions organization may assist with many of these needs, there will still be plenty of gaps. Lead pastors do well to raise up a team of church members to be the primary support link between the church and the missionary. At Antioch we call this the "missionary care team." They handle all the day to day communication and needs, and let me know when I need to get involved.

Although the above three steps are the most critical part of the lead pastor's role in missionary care, here are a few more worthy of brief mention:

- **Organize a commissioning.** Care for them by making a big deal of their sending, and by publicly clarifying what the church and the missionary are committing to one another. Put the commitment in writing and be specific.
- **Share the stage.** Anytime missionaries visit, give them prime time on stage to report to the church "all that God has done with them" (Acts 14:27). Welcome them to talk about not just the victories, but also the struggles.
- **Go visit them.** One of the most tangible, life-changing, pastor-changing, church-changing acts of missionary care is to visit them on the field. It may be hard to step away from responsibilities, but it will be worth it!

Whatever steps you put in place, just don't be like Chuck, who assumed that Wilson would never drift away from the boat. For each missionary you commit to care for, resolve to bind them to yourself, so that you and your church may send them in a manner worthy of God. In this way, you will truly be fellow workers for the truth.

“ For each missionary you commit to care for, resolve to bind them to yourself, so that you and your church may send them in a manner worthy of God. ”

# A Witnessed Life: Being Seen and Cared for as a Single Overseas Worker

By **ELIZABETH GEORGE**

**Elizabeth George** has served as a teacher in a creative-access country. She greatly values the relationship she has with her sending church, and views it as one of the reasons she has been sustained on the field.



When I returned to the U.S. for my first furlough after more than two years on the field, one of the biggest treasures I experienced within my sending church was having a witness to my life. A retired couple from my church came to visit me abroad, and they spent almost two weeks with me. This couple had been mentors to me as I prepared to move overseas, and we were very close. They traveled the bumpy, sandy, not-really-a-road journey from the airport to my city. They stayed in my home and met my housemate and my language helper. They ate local food and bought things in the market, walking through the winding and narrow alleys. They toured the place where I worked, and my friends joined me during teaching sessions. These friends knew the sound of the muezzin, the smell of the market and the sight of the armed guards following us around. This couple experienced the community found in my team and the darkness felt in the neighborhood. They witnessed my life, and it was a gift when I returned to the U.S. to have someone who could verify what I had seen and known and who could understand the stories I tried to tell.

I think their visit was important for so many reasons, and it was especially valuable to me as a single overseas worker. First, when I came back to the U.S. to share my experiences, they are mine alone—there

is no spouse nor children to complement my stories or to fill in gaps in my memory. Having this couple as visitors for even a few weeks allowed them to see things I could not and to even tell stories about my life that validated my experience. It became a shared experience. Their visit also strengthened my connection to the church, as I felt valued and seen, worthy of the trouble and logistics of sending visitors. This is missionary care done well.

Having this couple as visitors for even a few weeks allowed them to see things I could not and to even tell stories about my life that validated my experience. It became a shared experience.

But it could have gone differently—making my singleness feel like a burden to the church or making me feel less valued as a single worker. There are special considerations in the care of single workers by the church. As a single woman who has spent nearly 10 years overseas, here are some observations and suggestions for churches in caring for their singles serving abroad.

1. **Consider how to visit.** Planning a visit to a single female overseas worker requires some special considerations. The “Missions Pastor” cannot just be deployed for a site visit—where would he stay? How would I explain this man’s appearance at my workplace or neighborhood? So would the missions pastor just bring his wife? And what if I did not know her well and we were expected to bond simply because of her husband’s position in the church? Realize that singles may relish the opportunity to travel with visitors from church. Especially as a single woman, solo travel may be problematic in certain parts of the world. Think about meeting your single missionary at a vacation site. Enjoying a time of rest together could be relaxing and more meaningful. Do not underestimate the pressures of hosting visitors, so ask your missionary what would be more helpful.

Do not underestimate the pressures of hosting visitors, so ask your missionary what would be more helpful.

2. **Watch your words.** I am a woman in my forties with a doctorate. I am not a “girl” just because I am unmarried. Don’t say, “Our church has a couple of girls serving as ESL teachers in Asia.” Ask about terminology when grouping missionaries together. Some use “family” or “unit.” Will your church say, “We have sent out seven families and two single women” or “nine families” or “nine units”? Our words matter.

3. **Be intentional at holidays.** Holidays and birthdays can exacerbate loneliness on the field. Families have their traditions, and singles can sometimes feel left out. One of my single friends finds it very meaningful to have gifts to unwrap *on the day*. That might mean sending a package *months* in advance to ensure it arrives in time for Christmas or a birthday. Construction paper drawings from the church’s children ministry can be delightful, as can Amazon gift cards or video well-wishes.

4. **Assume nothing about desire for marriage.** Not everyone in the church needs to be included in this conversation, but someone should have an understanding of the single missionary’s heart when it comes to dating and marriage. Some may feel called, like Paul, to a life of singlehood, while others may be intentionally seeking out a mate. Many would consider themselves in various stages along this spectrum (and often moving back and forth!). Be sensitive and supportive; ask questions. Realize marriage is neither the goal nor is it a hindrance for a single missionary.

5. **Invite sharing in a consistent manner.** Extend the same invitation to all missionaries speaking with the church body. If your church only allows men to preach, then think twice about asking a missionary to fill the preaching slot. Imagine how it feels for a single woman to be sent out by a church to proclaim the gospel in a foreign land, but not allowed the same forum to share with her own fellowship. Decide how your church will hear from its sent ones—maybe in Sunday school classes or small groups or a special time at the beginning of the worship time—and be consistent.

Decide how your church will hear from its sent ones—maybe in Sunday school classes or small groups or a special time at the beginning of the worship time—and be consistent.

6. **Provide advocacy and wisdom.** Every missionary should have an advocate within the church—the one acting as a liaison and primary point of contact between the sent one and the church. I also think every family or single sent out should develop an “inner circle” of partners with whom the missionary can be completely transparent, can rely on for advice and can count on for prayer and wisdom. My inner circle has permission to ask hard questions, give

unsolicited advice and intervene before I make an unwise decision. Some of the members of the inner circle should be from the sending church in a way that gives the church a “seat at the table” when making big decisions. For instance, if a missionary wants to change organizations or move to a different country or embark on a new type of work or evacuate during a time of crisis, their community—the inner circle and members of the church—are invited to consider and pray alongside the missionary. This type of interaction can be even more valuable for a single missionary, who does not have the automatic sounding board of a spouse. It is empowering to know there is a community that is behind you, with you and alongside you.

Caring for single missionaries, and especially single women, is something the church should take seriously. Estimates suggest almost 30% of the missionary workforce is comprised of single women, with little more than 5% single men (Piper, 2016). And our churches do not necessarily feel comfortable with this, as a recent Barna study showed that 80%

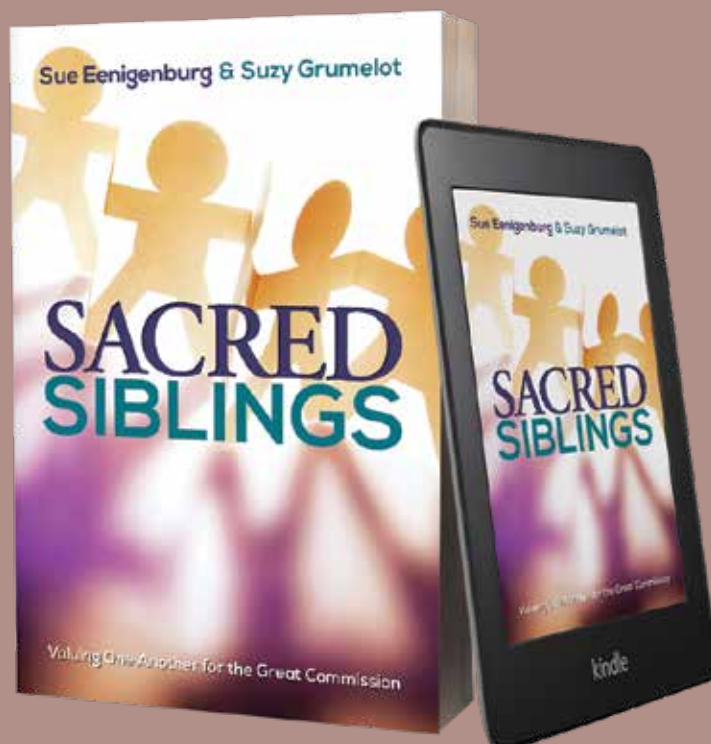
of churchgoers believe it is “particularly dangerous for a single woman to be a career missionary in a foreign country” (Barna Future Missions). Maybe this explains some of the reticence to care well for single workers overseas? We’re not quite sure they should be there in the first place out in this dangerous world. And the irony is that should call us to care even more deeply for the women who are called to serve God in this way. These suggestions are by no means an exhaustive list of dos and don’ts for caring for single missionaries, but rather a few ideas to spark conversation. Invest in relationships with the singles sent from your church. Know them well and maintain connections across the miles. ❏

#### References

- The future of missions—10 Questions about global ministry the church must answer with the next generation.* A Barna Report produced in partnership with the International Mission Board.
- Piper, J. (2016). Why are women more eager missionaries? *Desiring God*. Retrieved 4 April 2022 from <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/why-are-women-more-eager-missionaries>

Read this and have your agency make moves to be better prepared for the increasingly single next generation of field workers and take action for team effectiveness now.

Available at [missionbooks.org](http://missionbooks.org)



# Advocate Teams: The Local Church Caring for Missionaries

By **NATHAN SLOAN**

**Nathan Sloan** is the executive director of Upstream Sending, a missions organization focused on church-centric global sending. Before his current role, Nathan served as a missionary and missions pastor. He holds a doctorate of missiology from Southern Seminary and is the author of *You Are Sent*.



It was 2008 and I had just finished my first term as a cross-cultural missionary in Nepal. It had been a wonderful season of life and ministry. Alongside the grueling work of language learning, I was discipling young men in the faith, I met my wife and I was personally growing in faith and maturity. That last part, the part about personal growth, was the most painful part. You see, I had been well trained, I had a good team on the field, but no one prepared me for the personal struggles I would face as I crossed cultures. I came head-to-head with significant inner struggles of loneliness, selfishness and ethnocentrism. These, along with other struggles and sins, reared their ugly head in my heart and too often came out in the way I treated others. What I know now that I didn't know then, is that doing cross-cultural missions work is like pouring Miracle Gro on your sins. Mixed in with the good days were days of darkness and deep inner struggle. Thankfully, I had a solid team along with good missionary and Nepali friends who pressed in and journeyed with me. But do you know what I didn't have? I didn't have a sending church who knew how to care for me or be present with me in the struggle. Don't hear me wrong. I came from a good church with wonderful people, but they had no idea that missionary care and encouragement could and should be provided by the local church. Let's not make the same mistake my local church did.

I came from a good church with wonderful people, but they had no idea that missionary care and encouragement could and should be provided by the local church. Let's not make the same mistake my local church did.

Local churches are primed to be a place of encouragement, care, and even correction for people serving cross-culturally.

Gary Strauss and Kelly Narramore write that "much of the responsibility for the preparation and spiritual and emotional support of missionaries has been assumed to be the domain of the mission agency...It is imperative that the local church play a larger role in world missions, particularly in the care and development of missionaries that they send out." This kind of deep ownership in global missions begins with good discipleship and leads to thoughtful pre-field missionary assessment and

development in the local church. It also leads to intentional missionary care.

But missionary care doesn't just happen. Churches and church leaders would be wise to develop systems and structures that allow for their local church, both leaders and the average member, to care for their cross-cultural sent ones. There are several models of missionary support, care and advocacy that can be implemented in a local church. By far the most popular, and maybe the most effective, is the concept of the advocate team.

## Advocate Teams

In the 1980s, Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota created the concept of the Barnabas Team. These are teams of 6–12 church members focused on providing care and encouragement to missionaries sent out from their local church. Each Barnabas Team seeks to meet practical needs while also being a place where missionaries can be open and honest with their needs and struggles. More than 20 years later, churches like Austin Stone and Sojourn Church Midtown took these foundational ideas and created advocate teams, an evolution of the early Barnabas Team. The development of missionary care in the local church has continued with a variety of models that fit churches of different contexts and capacities.

If you're looking to develop an advocate team model in your local church, here are some helpful principles to consider.



### *What Does an Advocate Team Do?*

There are two major roles of an advocate team—care and representation. Advocate teams should provide ongoing presence and intentional care to their missionary as well as be a voice for them to the church as a whole and to church leaders.

#### *Care*

Many missionaries live in physically and emotionally challenging environments. Some are raising children far from extended family. Others struggle with cultural adjustments and language barriers. Most significantly, all serve on the front lines of spiritual warfare. For survival and spiritual health, missionaries need the assurance that they are not forgotten, that others in the body of Christ love them and are committed to their welfare as well as to the success of their ministry. Missionaries need empathetic listeners—compassionate, caring friends who are not in a supervisory role but willingly pursue them and their family. An advocate team can provide this kind of spiritual, relational, and emotional care.

A word of caution here. Advocate teams are not intended to be professional counselors. Advocate teams provide proactive care and encouragement. Often missionaries will still need counselors and pastors to provide deep care and counseling as they face hardship and trauma in life and ministry.

Walking alongside missionaries also involves identifying specific needs which the team can meet or organize others in their church to meet. These could include departure tasks, stateside time, tax preparation, housing and any number of practical needs.

#### *Representation*

Advocate teams should also be champions for the missionary and his or her work to the church body and to church leaders. Because advocate teams are often talking regularly with their missionary, they will know real time information they can pass on to others for prayer, encouragement and intervention when needed.





Walking alongside missionaries also involves identifying specific needs which the team can meet or organize others in their church to meet.

### ***What Does an Advocate Team Look Like?***

Ideally, the structure of an advocate team should be simple. The foundation of each advocate team is the team leader. He or she is the one who has the main connection with the missionary and leads the team toward healthy care and representation. The team leader either already knows the missionary well or commits to build a deep relationship with them. The rest of the team is built under the leadership of this committed team leader. Other team members could have specific responsibilities that define their role. These responsibilities could include communication, prayer, practical service, care packages and more.

Ideally, the structure of an advocate team should be simple. The foundation of each advocate team is the team leader.

For some churches and missionaries, having just one person serve as an advocate is a more practical option. The single model advocate allows mission leaders to more easily hold people accountable which creates more stability over time. For other church leaders

and missionaries, they find success in building teams around committed leaders which allows greater involvement from members, a growing number of people engaged in global missions, and more people praying on a regular basis.

So, whether your church adopts the team model or the leader-only model, make sure to define what you expect from advocates in writing, provide training and encouragement on a regular basis, and hold people accountable to follow through with their commitment to serve.

### ***What Does an Advocate Team Do?***

The following are some suggestions on what advocate teams can do to provide care and representation to missionaries.

#### *Meet Regularly*

Teams can meet at anytime and anywhere, just ask your teams to set a time and meet regularly to fulfill their role as advocates. Many churches find that meeting monthly is a good rhythm. But I've also talked with churches who meet quarterly or even weekly to pray and support their missionaries.

#### *Pray*

One of the main roles of an advocate team is to pray for their missionary on a regular basis, both as a group and individually. This means that missionaries will need to provide regular prayer needs to the team. I've found that this can be a struggle for some missionaries. The accountability the advocate team provides the missionary in this way is a good and needed aspect of the advocate relationship. If missionaries want to be prayed for, they need to communicate regularly.

#### *Stay Connected*

Ask most missionaries and they will tell you that it is a struggle to stay connected with their friends and church family back home. Part of providing care to missionaries is the commitment to stay connected. I would encourage advocate teams to communicate to their missionaries at a minimum

of once a month. In today's technological world, communication is much easier and more frequent than ever before. Consider adopting channels of communicating that your missionaries already use and would want to communicate through. Communication tools like iMessage, What's App, Signal, Zoom, Slack and others are good things to consider. Start by asking your missionary what communication channels they prefer and what they desire communication to look like.

Also, be sensitive to missionaries' security needs. We live in a rapidly changing world. More and more people are realizing the dangers of communication, social media and unfiltered language surrounding missionary work. Make sure and ask your missionaries what security measures they are taking and what policies they would want you to adopt.

#### *Send Care Packages and Handwritten Letters*

Nothing says I love you to a missionary quite like a handwritten letter or box full of things from their home culture. Advocate teams should consider pooling resources to send care packages, write letters and find ways to practically bless missionaries—especially missionary kids. Make sure to ask your missionaries what things they enjoy and how best to mail items to them.

#### *Help with Departure and Arrival*

Some of the hardest times for your missionary will be preparing to leave for the field and returning home for a visit or to resettle back in the States. Whether your missionary is headed to the field or headed back to your community, there are countless things that need to be done. I've found that missionaries are hesitant to ask for help and may not even know what they need themselves. Take the initiative and find ways to jump in to serve your missionary. These can include helping to clean their home, watching their kids while they pack, hosting a going away party, lending a car, paying for counseling, stocking their fridge with food, providing a listening ear and more. The best thing you can do in these moments is to show up, offer your presence and meet the needs you see.



By creating, implementing and maintaining healthy systems of advocacy and missionary care, we are committing to not only send missionaries, but to stay with them, to fight for them and to love them on a consistent basis.

### One Final Thought

Adopting an advocate or care structure in your church will be extremely helpful. However, systems and structures only go so far. Missionary care and support structures must be rooted in relationship and be held accountable by leadership. These models won't work unless we invite people in, train them well, and then hold them accountable to be relationally present with people over the long haul. Too often the old adage is true, "out of sight, out of mind." By creating, implementing and maintaining healthy systems of advocacy and missionary care, we are committing to not only send missionaries, but to stay with them, to fight for them and to love them on a consistent basis.

So, what are you waiting for? Take time to talk through the principles, talking with other churches who do these things well and then jump in and start doing the work of advocacy. Will you make mistakes? Probably. Will your sent ones feel loved and empowered for better ministry? Absolutely! 🎯

# Partners In The Gospel

By **NEAL PIROLO**

**Neal Pirolo** is the founder and director of Emmaus Road International. His background is in education. With a B.A. in Bible and Education, and an M.A. in Educational Administration, he has his California Teaching and Administration Credentials. He has taught and/or administered students from preschool through postgraduates in public and/or private schools in the US, Peru and Brazil. Neal founded Maranatha Christian Academy in Costa Mesa, California. Neal also directed a one-year ministry school in San Diego, California for five years. He is an ordained minister.



The age-old issue of missionary “support” has an age-old solution. It is found in the clear words of Scripture. Paul, a missionary of the first century, had been on a number of ventures. When he had *fully preached in these parts*, he heard there were unreached peoples in Spain. On his way there, he wanted to visit the Christians in Rome. So he wrote them a letter. In Chapter 10, from his vast experience in missions (and prompted by the Holy Spirit), he states the simplicity of the *whole* missions process: the goal? The salvation of the lost. The rationale? Call! Believe! Hear! Preach! Then, the too-often neglected foundation question: *And how can they preach* (how can our missionaries be effective) *unless they are sent?*

Thus, those who go and those who send are partners in the missions process. Where do these “senders” come from? Who is suited to be a sender? What skills are needed to be a sender?

Again, God, the Holy Spirit through Paul gives us the answers: Paul is in prison...again. But this time he really did it! He appealed to Caesar! He is under house arrest in Rome. He has been before Caesar once and is now about to face him again. He cannot freely preach the gospel. Some men are preaching to be an encouragement to him but others are preaching to make Paul feel bad! Can you believe it? Ha! Ha! Paul we can preach freely, but you can't!

Thus, those who go and those who send are partners in the missions process.

Yet under those circumstances, he begins his letter to the Philippian believers with the words: *I rejoice greatly...!* What? What does he have to rejoice over? Certainly not his circumstances. Listen further: *I rejoice greatly for every time I pray for you it brings back to my remembrance how you have been **PARTNERS in the GOSPEL** from the very first day even until now.* (Philippians 1:3-5)

“Partners in the gospel,” he calls them. They never traveled with him. They were people in that local fellowship that he and Silas and Timothy had planted so many years before. Who were these people? You remember the story: On his second missionary journey, Paul, with Silas, tried going into Asia. The Holy Spirit prevented them. They tried going north to Bithynia. Again, the Holy Spirit said, “No.” They go west to Troas. In a night vision, Paul hears a man from Macedonia calling. Doctor Luke joins the team there. He continues to write, *Immediately we endeavored to go...* The “Macedonia man” turned out to be a merchant woman by the name of Lydia! She trusts in Christ. And her whole family. The jailor and his whole family! And a church was established.

Now, these many, *many* years later, Paul is writing to them, thanking these people for being his *partners*.

How were they his partners? He goes on to address six areas of care for which he was thankful. **and** that every missionary today would be well-advised to have. Let's look at them:

- He was **encouraged**. Yes, even in those difficult circumstances, Paul is encouraged at the knowledge of their care. In this brief letter, he uses the words *joy*, *rejoice* or *rejoicing* fourteen times! His morale was high!

Today, every missionary needs encouragement. Surveys verify that depression is one of the main pitfalls of missionary work. Yes, they can “encourage themselves in the Lord” as David had to (I Samuel 30:7). But so much better for there to be a team of people providing the encouragement needed. And this is accomplished more by the team fulfilling the other five areas of care than by just standing on the sidelines saying, “Cheer! Cheer!”

- Paul was covered by their **prayer**. He says, “*I know this will work out for the good of my soul by your prayers and the Spirit of Christ*. What will be worked out? His thoughts and feelings about those out there preaching the gospel to *add to his grief*. In his spirit, he had the right answer: *Praise God, the gospel is being preached*. But, in his soul, he is still struggling. He is confident that through their prayers it will *turn out for my deliverance*.”

Today, as much as ever, a missionary needs a team of people sustaining them in prayer...every step of the way! I returned from a very difficult four-week ministry trip to Asia. During the greeting time at church my first Sunday back, a lady approached me. She said, “This has been the hardest trip for *me* that you have ever been on!” Why? Because even without email contact, she sensed the difficulty, and her battling in prayer took its toll on her.

- Paul was confident of their care on his **re-entry**. He is reasoning about living or dying. He decides that because of the great need, he would live. And that he would come back to them. There will

be a lot of rejoicing. *But*, he says, *let's make sure our rejoicing is in the Lord!* He no doubt remembered how well the church people allowed him and Barnabas to *rehearse all that God had done with them and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles* when they returned from their first journey (Acts 14:25-28).

Today, opportunity to share *all* is critical—on two levels: 1) The great stories of battles won and 2) how the missionary is different now. Helping them keep in balance the good and the not-so-good that happened on the field will more likely help them adjust to the good and not-so-good back home.

Today, there is a plethora of logistical details that a missionary's partnership team can fulfill.

- He was sure Epaphroditus would be careful with the **logistics** of getting this letter safely to the people at Philippi. Paul had first thought of sending Timothy. When he found out that he was about to go before Caesar again, he wanted to keep Timothy with him.

Today, there is a plethora of logistical details that a missionary's partnership team can fulfill from feeding their pet “Nemo” while on a short trip to adopting their children if both parents die on the field!

- Paul was thrilled that Epaphroditus was sent by the congregation to minister to his needs.


Today, there is no higher form of **communication** support than to send someone to bring the love of home to the field. Of course, with the many forms of communication today, a word of caution of what is said, is extremely important.

- In chapter four, Paul is *rejoicing greatly* again. **Finances** have arrived. But, he didn't say, “Hey, Epi, did you bring the cash? I want to buy a new sun dial watch!”

Today, what a lesson can be learned from what Paul *did* say: The attitude of a missionary: *Not that I looked for the gift, but the fruit that abounds to your account.* The attitude of the giver: Given generously and sacrificially as *...a fragrant incense, a gift that pleases the very heart of God.* And in that context, we need not worry, for having just given a sacrificial gift to missions, he adds, *My God will supply all of your needs....*

Whatever your gifting, ability or talent might be, there is a place for you to partner with a missionary in advancing the kingdom of God. For His glory!

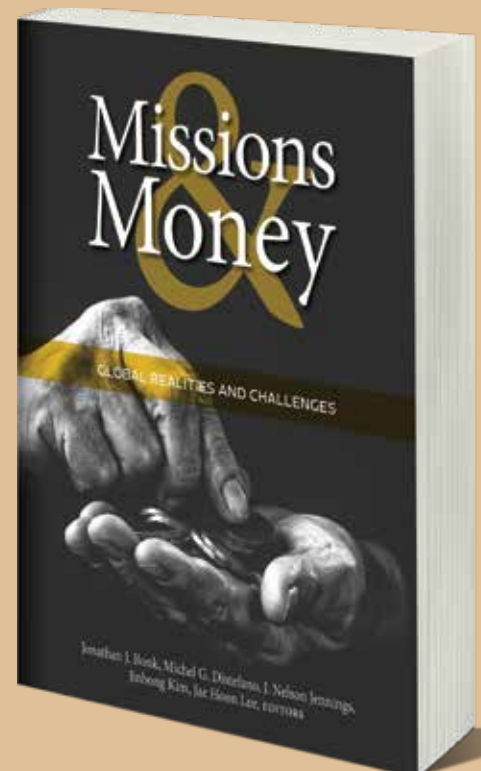
© EMMAUS ROAD INTERNATIONAL  
7150 Tanner Court, San Diego, CA 92111 USA

Neal\_Pirolo@eri.org • 1+858 248-3330 • www.eri.org  
This White Paper may be reproduced only in its entirety, and without charge. 

Whatever your gifting, ability or talent might be, there is a place for you to partner with a missionary in advancing the kingdom of God. For His glory!

*The Realities of Money & Missions* was not written by experts in the fields of investment, money management, or fundraising, but by men and women whose calling as missionaries, pastors, and administrators has brought them face-to-face with the complex, real-life issues involving the intersection of money and ministry.

Available at [missionbooks.org](http://missionbooks.org)



# Helping Missionary Kids Thrive on Home Assignment

By **VALERIE WILLIAMS**

**Valerie Williams** has worked for the past ten years as the MK Coordinator for TEAM, serving over 400 missionary kids across the globe. Before becoming the MK Coordinator, Valerie and her husband Jim were mission workers in China and Russia where they parented four MKs of their own.



For most of us, missionary kids are an anomaly of life. They come to our churches for a year or a single Sunday while their parents are on home assignment. And we hardly get to know them before they leave again for the mission field.

But on the Global Missions Podcast, TEAM Missionary Kid Coordinator Valerie Williams explains why these kids need your love—and how you can impact their lives in just one church visit.

Listen to the podcast episode to find out:

- What “home” means to missionary kids
- What to do before missionary kids come for a visit
- How to make the church experience less intimidating
- The power of truly listening
- How to keep connecting after a missionary kid leaves

**Inspired by the podcast, we also asked missionaries for real-life examples of how churches and friends have helped their kids thrive on home assignment.** Check out their ideas and talk with your church body about what you can do to help missionary kids on home assignment.

## 1. Build a welcome basket or road trip kit.

Before a word is spoken, a welcome basket says, “We care about you and have been looking forward to your arrival.”

“A few of our churches gave [our] girls little baskets with small gifts or gift cards,” says Jessica Malec, TEAM missionary to Peru. **“They really enjoyed this, no matter how big or small it was.”**

When Kacie Mann’s family arrived from Papua, Indonesia, a friend had made road trip kits with coloring books, crayons, little toys and snacks.

“We had supplies for our kids, but especially for little ones, their short attention spans mean they get bored of what they know,” Kacie says, “and a new pack of things—even cheap dollar store things—is so great for passing the time in the car.”

If you have kids, get them involved in making the welcome baskets or road trip kits. Let them pick out toys and write notes. The gift basket could even include an invitation to a playdate, showing the missionary kids that they have friends at the ready.

## 2. Provide stability and rest.

Every kid needs stability and rest. But that’s hard to find when you’re driving across the country or hopping from church to church. Missionary parents work hard to give their kids a break, but there are a few ways you can help.

If the family is staying in one spot, offer to take the kids to the same church, even when parents can’t go. That way, they can make friends, join classes and set into a natural weekend rhythm.

“We didn’t go with the entire family to every supporting church that we needed to visit. ... We focused as a family on our home sending church so they would get well-connected,” says Gretchen Potma, TEAM missionary to the Czech Republic.

**Find out the family’s travel route and look up which museums, historical sites, national parks and other excursions they’ll pass on their travels. Then, offer to give them a day at one of them.** It will give the kids a chance to just be kids, and it will help everyone make great memories together.

Besides speaking at churches, missionaries will visit supporters at their homes, take them out for coffee, speak at Bible studies and more. Offer to be their go-to babysitter, so kids have somewhere familiar to go. This works even better if you have kids of a similar age and can turn it into a playdate!



Constant travel can be stressful for missionary kids on home assignment. Give them a more restful experience by sending their family on a fun outing.

### 3. Lend old toys.

“We don’t bring many toys with us from our home in Austria,” says TEAM missionary Melissa Lundquist. So, it meant a lot when friends let their boys borrow a box of Duplo and a box of Playmobil.

TEAM missionary to Papua Susan Cochran says her home church “collected toys to have ready for our kids, including a big tub of Lego, bikes and a trampoline for our backyard.”

**Before you sell your kids’ old toys, find out if you know age-appropriate missionary kids who will visit soon.** Whether the kids are there for a year or a few months, these simple items will make their time easier. Plus, it’s a huge help to the parents!

“[Borrowing old toys] allowed us to not stress about investing in something that will only be used for a year and then sit in storage or be given away,” says Eric Kroner, TEAM missionary to Chad.

### 4. Make it easy for missionary kids to jump back into life.

Missionary kids on home assignment don’t have long to make friends, learn new activities and build a life before they go back to the mission field. Generally, the longest home assignment only lasts one year. So make sure it’s easy for missionary kids to quickly jump into church activities.

**Gretchen suggests having a family assigned to connect with missionaries before their visit to a church, especially at large churches.** The assigned family can help the missionary family find Sunday school classes, sign in kids and tell them what’s happening in the church.

And even before missionaries come home, Kurt zurBurg, missionary to Ukraine, says to read missionary newsletters and see what they’re saying about the kids. “If they do try to contact the family, be sure to ask about the kids and remember what they are interested in as they share,” Kurt says. “Take notes if needed.”

Find ways to get your own kids familiar with the missionary kids, as well. “One Sunday school teacher took pictures of our kids to leave up on the classroom wall so other kids could remember and pray for our kids,” says Susan.

### 5. Rekindle old friendships.

Outside of church, be bold in setting up playdates if you have similarly aged kids. Missionary kids on home assignment deeply miss their friends abroad.

“Our kids can get overwhelmed, unsure how they fit in, what’s their place now after being gone,” says Eric. **A gift of genuine friendship can be the difference between a fantastic home assignment and a long, lonely one.**

“We ... tried to spend as much time with their friends as possible,” says Jessica. “We had park dates, went hiking, took friends to lunch, had sleepovers, had game afternoons and parties.”

When Amanda Burleson's family came home from South Africa, a supporter took them on a beach weekend with their own family. "That was really special," she says.

As kids get older, it can be harder to arrange friendships, so talk with your teens about what returning missionary kids are going through. Encourage them to make a new friend—one who will have a unique perspective to share.

#### 6. Don't pressure missionary kids to be part of their parents' presentations.

Some missionary kids will eagerly hop on stage to sing a song in a foreign language. Other missionary kids would rather die. It's important to remember that their parents made the decision to go overseas, while they were likely born into it. So, before a missionary family visits, ask them what they're comfortable doing.

**"If [the kids] want to play a song on the piano for a church service, let them. But don't force them,"** says Melissa. "We included them as much as they wanted to be included."

Be prepared for missionaries to leave their kids with their grandparents, where they can feel that important sense of stability. And if they do come, **let the kids be kids.** Look out for their needs.

"When we spoke at one supporting church, a friend made a special effort to make the morning special for our son, giving him a tour of the library and helping him pick out books to read while we were speaking," says Susan.

#### 7. Ask questions and acknowledge each missionary kid's journey.

When a missionary family comes to town, we tend to gravitate toward the parents. After all, they were our friends before they left, and they're the ones doing big, exciting ministry. But missionary kids want to be asked about their lives, just like anyone else.

"[Our] girls know a lot about Peru, and they have stories to tell of our time there," Jessica says. **"It was really meaningful when someone would direct their questions to them."**



Ultimately, helping missionary kids thrive on home assignment is all about treating them like people.

Kurt encourages supporters to show genuine interest in missionary kids as people, not just as church-planters. "Ask them about regular life things in Ukraine, and not stuff like, 'Tell us about how you share Jesus with your friends in Ukraine.'"


Some missionary kids will be eager to talk about ministry. Others will be more reserved. Still other missionary kids may not have a relationship with God at all. Get to know each kid to find out where they are spiritually and what *they* enjoy talking about.

### A Testament of God's Love

Ultimately, helping missionary kids thrive on home assignment is all about treating them like people. What would you want and need in a strange place? How do your kids feel on long car trips? What questions did you like to be asked as a child?

Start asking these questions, and you'll find ample ways to serve the missionary kids in your life. You'll be a testament of God's love for them. And you'll enable their parents to keep serving and sharing Christ in foreign lands.

For links to the many references listed throughout, visit the *Mission Frontiers* website for the digital version of this article. [www.missionfrontiers.org](http://www.missionfrontiers.org).

*Want to learn more about serving missionary kids and their parents? Check out our Church Engagement page for an abundance of resources! Learn how to support missionaries in practical ways and talk with one of our coaches to create a missionary support strategy! *



# Member Care: The Scriptural Foundation

By **NEAL PIROLO**

**Neal Pirollo** is the founder and director of Emmaus Road International. His background is in education. With a B.A. in Bible and Education, and an M.A. in Educational Administration, he has his California Teaching and Administration Credentials. He has taught and/or administered students from preschool through postgraduates in public and/or private schools in the US, Peru and Brazil. Neal founded Maranatha Christian Academy in Costa Mesa, California. Neal also directed a one-year ministry school in San Diego, California for five years. He is an ordained minister.



There is no doubt that the ministry of member care is multi-leveled and multi-faceted. Multi-leveled in the cooperation of mission agencies, churches, individual caregivers and crisis agencies; multifaceted in the diversity of need of each individual field worker in each of numerous ministry locations and situations.

## Scriptural Foundation

The Scriptural foundation for this most-needed and, unfortunately, still most-neglected aspect of the missions process, is found in the letter of Romans, written later in the ministry of Paul, the Apostle. He had heard of an Unreached People Group in Spain. After all, that was his life verse and working principle: *I have strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation.*

By the time Paul got to Romans 10, he was ready to spell out for us the whole missions process. Using the Gapless Linear Logic form of reasoning so well understood by the people of that day, Paul laid out his premise in verse 13. And because he had something very important to say, he established that premise in Scripture by quoting Joel 2:32: *“Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.”* There it is!

Using all the varied and creative means available to us, the goal of all mission endeavors is the salvation of the lost. Certainly, as John Piper takes it one step further: “that worship for all of eternity will result.”

Now, Paul begins a series of four (not three) questions with each new thought directly (without a gap) connected to the previous thought. Thus, he must begin his reasoning with the thought of calling. Question one: *How shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed?* An easy concept to understand. No one is going to call on one in whom they do not believe. Next question, tied to the previous thought of believing: *How can they believe on Him of Whom they have not heard?* A third question: *And how can they hear without a preacher?*

## The Process Truncated

There it is! The question we have all been waiting for—so goes the average missions conference. And with all the passion of a skilled orator, the one making the appeal can work up the emotions of many. Even to misuse the Scripture in Isaiah 6. For, after Isaiah said those “famous” words, *Here am I. Send me*, God sent him to his own people, not into a cross-cultural ministry! But, not to be concerned

with such detail, to the front they come, making a “commitment” to be a “missionary!” Of course, many wake up the next morning, wondering what in the world did I commit to? This is one of the great tragedies in the Christian community. Whether it is in that appeal or just in the structure of a missions conference, disservice is done to those who could be mobilized into the ministry of serving as senders. Ninety per cent of conference attendees will never go to the field. Yet, without a clear understanding of all that is involved in Paul’s last question, they go home wondering “Why did I waste my time at yet another conference? I’ll never go to the mission field.”



But the beauty of timeless Scripture is that Paul didn’t stop at the third question. He asked one more. And it is pertinent to note that when one is using this form of logic, they end with the very most important point they want to make. So, here is his final question. It has to be tied to the preacher, the one who goes, the cross-cultural worker, the missionary: *And how can they preach* (How can our missionaries be effective.) **unless they are SENT?**

But the beauty of timeless Scripture is that Paul didn’t stop at the third question. He asked one more.

## Full Circle

This final question then, draws our attention to the whole subject of “the rest of the team”—others than the missionaries that Paul is saying are vital to the missions process. But, again, in the beauty of the Holy Spirit-inspiration of Paul’s words, so that those who serve as senders (member caregivers) do not get to thinking that they are the focus of missions, in verse 15, Paul brings it back full circle to the missionary by quoting Isaiah 52:7: *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.* Thus, *those who go* and *those who serve as senders* form the team for effective cross-cultural ministry.

## Missionary Care

I grew up in a church that believed in missions. Pictures of families in faraway places lined our foyer wall. Each had their names, country of ministry and the amount of money we were giving. When a missionary came to our church, he would tell of the great exploits being accomplished. For those of us not “called” to go, we thought the best we could do was to say good-bye.

As I became an adult and began reading my Bible, I was surprised to discover that Paul, a first century missionary, continually asked for care. By the time he wrote to the church in Rome, he had been on several missionary journeys. Yet, in chapter one and twice repeated in chapter 15, this seasoned missionary said he needed their encouragement.

He also received logistic support. Reading Acts 19 and 20, you can clearly see that *someone* had to find the ship to take them to the next port. Paul asked Timothy to come before winter. He had forgotten to take his coat with him. “Please bring it, Timothy. Also the books, but if you don’t have room for everything, at least bring the parchments.” “No man at war gets himself entangled in the affairs of daily living,” Paul told Timothy.

Financial support? Of course, money is a *part* of missionary care. For, “no man goes to war at his own expense,” Paul said. And what commendations he had for the church at Philippi! “You have been partners with me from the very beginning.” Later in the letter he said (in *response* to their generous financial gift), “My God will supply all of your needs according to His riches in glory!”

Paul’s continual request for prayer stands above all other expressions of need for care. Sometimes it was simply, “Pray with me...” Other times it became a passionate appeal, for prayer invades the spiritual. Daily, intercessory, maintaining the “hedge of protection” prayer is needed by every missionary.

Without the aid of computers and cell or satellite phones, Paul maintained an amazing degree of contact with people and churches. And today, as culturally adaptive as a missionary may be, he needs contact with his home culture.

When Jesus stood on the Mount of Ascension and said, “As you are going...” He never said anything

about coming home. However, His men came back to Him. And most missionaries do come home. Again, the Bible gives us our model for helping a missionary through this difficult transition. Acts 14:26-28 and Acts 15:35 give us the five steps to a healthy re-entry. Because the missionary is going through the stress, he needs a team of people to help him.

Without the aid of computers and cell or satellite phones, Paul maintained an amazing degree of contact with people and churches.

In Romans 10, Paul was describing the missions process. In a beautiful sequence of thought, he ended by saying, “And how can they preach (how can missionaries be effective), unless they are *sent*?” With that question, he lays at the feet of those who serve as senders an equal (though different) responsibility to those who go. MF



# Missionary Care Teams (MCT = TLC): A Personal Testimony

By **ELIZABETH GEORGE, REBEKAH & CHRIS MEREDITH**

**Elizabeth George** has served as a teacher in a creative-access country. She greatly values the relationship she has with her sending church, and views it as one of the reasons she has been sustained on the field.

**Rebekah and Chris Meredith** served as Elizabeth's advocates and leaders of MCT at Antioch for many years until moving out of state. They continue to support many Antioch Distributed Members even while living in Minnesota.



Antioch Church in Louisville, Kentucky just celebrated the 10-year anniversary of its Missionary Care Team (MCT) in January 2022. This small church, with around 100 members, currently has 7 families and 2 single women sent out from its body and has cared for 25 families or singles on the mission field since 2012. Its declaration, “We pursue intentional gospel relationships to proclaim Christ’s glory among the nations” has drawn and encouraged missions-minded Christians since its inception. The church’s desire to intentionally pursue gospel relationships extends not only to the lost, but to those from its membership who take the gospel to the nations.

The development of the MCT at Antioch Church was very organic, as it grew out of a shared experience by some of its members. The idea for the MCT was planted by God simultaneously in the hearts of three members of Antioch. Elizabeth had served overseas for two years in a very challenging setting with little support from home. She had been sent out by a large congregation, and she felt forgotten. Even as she left Africa depleted and disappointed, she did not waiver from the conviction that God had called her to missions. When she returned from the field, suffering from burnout, she was eager to find a church that was passionate about missions and would be supportive of its sent ones. She knew

she would return overseas when better prepared and with much more support. Chris and Rebekah had been friends with Elizabeth for years and their relationship was rekindled once they all joined Antioch. Chris and Rebekah had not realized the depth of struggles Elizabeth had faced during her overseas term and wanted to help her return to the field in a healthier way. After one particular sermon, each of their hearts was stirred to do something together that would allow Antioch to care for its missionaries.

“When she returned from the field, suffering from burnout, she was eager to find a church that was passionate about missions and would be supportive of its sent ones.”

Their idea consisted of a team of church members who would be responsible and accountable to support the sent ones. They envisioned, not a committee with a few people involved, but missionary care to be woven into the fabric of church life. They desired a concerted, purposeful effort to get as many people involved so that missionaries



For each missionary, MCT might look different in its application but would be consistent in its desire—to be a support network.

were a constant conversation in Antioch families. Because not every missionary had the same process, MCT would help as needed with logistics, commissioning, advocacy, etc. This team would meet regularly and pray for the missionaries, would help coordinate sending out and welcoming home, would assist with logistics, would be a voice for the missionaries to the church as a whole—encouraging prayer and connection. For each missionary, MCT might look different in its application but would be consistent in its desire—to be a support network. Elizabeth, Chris, and Rebekah met with the elders of the church to present their dream and the Missionary Care Team was born.



The initial meetings of the MCT gathered mission-minded Antioch members in a home, sharing ideas about what MCT could be and do. Many had previously served overseas, some planned to eventually work overseas, and others—like Chris and Rebekah—cared about God’s mission and the people He chose to send. Early on, it was proposed that our missionaries would be labeled “Distributed Members,” recognizing their continued membership in the church, their role as part of us but “distributed”

or sent out to a specific place, and the need to speak carefully about certain workers and the places they served. It was paramount for the church, through the MCT, to create layers of care and accountability for each of the Distributed Members. Each would choose an advocate, a person or couple who would be the first line of communication and connection. Advocates would be the liaison between the wider church body and the sent one; they would come to MCT meetings and share news and prayer requests from their missionaries. When life gets overwhelming abroad, the Advocate takes the initiative to reach out and invite interaction. If an Advocate was not fulfilling expectations, then the greater group of MCT members would be able to check with both the Distributed Member and the Advocate to ensure connections were being maintained. A system of checks and balances was created by this structure.

The Distributed Member-Advocate relationship is foundational to Antioch’s care for its missionaries. One Distributed Member, describing her relationship with her Advocate, said it “isn’t just her listening to me and talking about me, we have a real two-way relationship where I care about what is going on with her. Things like that also make it easier when we come back, I still feel connected and loved in Kentucky.” This dual commitment, sharing life even across miles and oceans, takes work on both sides. It means the Distributed Member continues to share their concerns and also asks about the Advocate and Antioch. The relationship is upheld in regular communication. **Advocacy is missionary care.**

MCT also started a prayer calendar, featuring photos of the Distributed Members, one family or single for each month, encouraging Antioch members to pray for the sent ones. Other ways to bring the Distributed Members before the church have been implemented through the years, including a slide with the missionary’s photo on the screen as people filter in for church on Sunday mornings with time set aside during the Sunday morning service to specifically pray for that Distributed Member. MCT has also hosted specific prayer times for God’s work

among the nations and our specific ones sent out. Family groups are an integral part of the life of Antioch, and Distributed Members are encouraged to visit each family group when stateside to share about their work and their lives and to engender more personal connections. Additionally, these small groups are encouraged to pray for a specific Distributed Member each week. **Prayer is missionary care.**



Each time Distributed Members are sent out, whether for the first time or to return to their field, they are prayed over in our Sunday morning gathering.

Not long after its formation, the MCT began planning for an important event—the welcoming home of a couple and their adult son from a career of good and faithful service. This couple had been involved in the planting of Antioch while in Louisville on their final stateside visit before retirement. They had continued to pray for Antioch in its initial years of growth, and to be prayed for by Antioch. Months before their anticipated return, Antioch and the MCT planned a trip to visit this family, sending five members for two weeks. The team was not certain how God would use their time, but the Lord had beautiful plans for this trip. During their more than 30 years of overseas work, this family had never received a team from a supporting church to come alongside and witness the work they were doing. Antioch’s team was able to meet this family’s beloved colleagues, neighbors, and

mentors, was able to visit places of importance and was able to see and experience their life. When this couple and their son returned to Louisville, they had forged memories together with other Antioch members about a place so near and dear to their hearts with others in their church home. These missionaries felt so loved by this trip, and it softened the blow of culture shock and resettlement in Louisville. **Visiting is missionary care.**

Another important function of MCT at Antioch is “sending out” our Distributed Members. Because our members are affiliated with a number of organizations, the way they are sent or commissioned may look different. Some have been commissioned by their organization with a large gathering at their headquarters. When one long-standing family was sent to the mission field last summer, Antioch celebrated alongside them with Caribbean food and stories of their impact and moments of prayer as they prepared to depart for Grenada. These celebrations offer an opportunity for fond farewells, for recognition of deep connections to Antioch, for healthy grief as friends transition to another country, and for rejoicing in how God is at work. Each time Distributed Members are sent out, whether for the first time or to return to their field, they are prayed over in our Sunday morning gathering. Antioch gathers around and lays hands on those leaving, as a sign of heartfelt prayers and blessing upon them to go into the nations, proclaiming the gospel. These are often prayers spoken through tears, grateful and grieving, as God calls some to leave Antioch to go into all the world. **Sending out is missionary care.**

Antioch MCT has changed over the years, but the central aim has been the same—to pursue intentional gospel relationships with our own Distributed Members. We do this by staying connected through the Advocate and the members of MCT, by praying for one another, by caring for our missionaries in word and deed, and by bringing their work and lives before the greater Antioch body. MCT has been a support net for those called out by God into the nations, proclaiming Christ’s glory to the ends of the earth. 🌍

# Giving

## WHAT CHRISTIANS EARN:

**Annual Income of all Church Members: \$53 trillion.<sup>1</sup>**

(Annual income of evangelical Christians is approximately \$6.72 trillion.)

## WHAT PEOPLE GIVE:

**Given to any Christian causes: \$896 billion.<sup>1</sup>**

That's also how much we spend in America on Christmas.

**Given to Missions: \$52 billion**

That's only 5.78% of the money given to Christian causes of any kind (2022).<sup>1</sup>

Embezzled: If you are doing the math and realize there is \$59 billion missing, this is where it went.<sup>1</sup>

## HOW CHRISTIAN GIVING IS USED:

Pastoral ministries of local churches (mostly in Christian nations): \$734 billion (82%)<sup>2</sup>

"Home Missions" in same Christian nations: \$107.5 billion (12%)<sup>2</sup>

Going to **Un-Evangelized** Non-Christian world: \$51.7 billion (5.7%)<sup>2</sup> *\*This is different than "Unreached"*

Money that goes toward **Unreached Peoples:** Estimated \$880 million (1.7%)<sup>3</sup>

*For every \$100,000 that Christians make, they give \$1.70 to the unreached.*

"Until recently, Americans spent more on golf balls and twinkies than was given to reach the unreached." —Claude Hickman

## HYPOTHETICAL OBSERVATIONS:

Evangelical Christians could provide all of the funds needed to plant a church in each of the 7,400 unreached people groups with only 0.03% of their income.

The Church has roughly 3,000 times the financial resources and 9,000 times the manpower needed to finish the Great Commission. If every evangelical gave 10% of their income to missions we could easily support 2 million new missionaries.

Americans have recently spent more money buying Halloween costumes for their pets than the amount given to reach the unreached.




— Claude Hickman

## SOURCES:

- Gordon Conwell, Download "Status of Global Christianity" <https://www.gordonconwell.edu/center-for-global-christianity/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2020/12/Status-of-Global-Christianity-2021.pdf>  
\*also: International Bulletin of Missionary Research, Vol. 39, No. 1, also *World Christian Database*, 2015,\*Barrett and Johnson. 2001. *World Christian Trends*, pg 656
- Todd M. Johnson & Gina A. Zurlo, eds. *World Christian Database*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed July 2017.  
\*see also: Todd Johnson, *Global Atlas of Christianity*, pg 296
- World Christian Trends Table. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/4f661fde24ac1097e013deea/t/61fad19d0bbaad2bcc465978/1643827613106/WCT\\_Table20-3.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/4f661fde24ac1097e013deea/t/61fad19d0bbaad2bcc465978/1643827613106/WCT_Table20-3.pdf)  
David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson. *World Christian Trends Table 20-3*, lines 23-26, 44, Pasadena, Calif: William Carey Library, 2001  
*\*Experts and authors above have determined this trend holds true today as of 2022.*  
[https://static1.squarespace.com/static/4f661fde24ac1097e013deea/t/61fad19d0bbaad2bcc465978/1643827613106/WCT\\_Table20-3.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/4f661fde24ac1097e013deea/t/61fad19d0bbaad2bcc465978/1643827613106/WCT_Table20-3.pdf)

## QUOTES:

Just a few years ago we spent more in America on golf balls (<https://bleacherreport.com/articles/1113923-50-more-random-sports-facts-you-never-knew>), twinkies (<https://www.medicaldaily.com/unhealthy-foods-Twinkies-and-7-other-worst-junk-foods-7-eleven-shelf-slideshow-249561>), and Halloween Costumes (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/business/wp/2014/10/29/shoppers-to-spend-350-million-on-halloween-costumes-this-year-for-their-pets/>).

Used by Permission of the Traveling Team:  
[www.travelingteam.org](http://www.travelingteam.org) 

# Decades of Faithful Service

An Interview with Dot Everett and Mission Frontiers magazine

**Dorothy (Dot) Everett** grew up in New Jersey and met her husband Arthur while at Houghton College. They spent their first 20 years in ministry with native peoples in Colorado and South Dakota and worked for the next 20 years with international students in New York and Colorado. They then returned to their heart work and spent the last 22 years focusing on ministry with natives in California and Colorado. Dot is spending her widow years in Colorado Springs with children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren nearby.

**MF—How did it all start? Share a macro view of your story, who you are and how you and Art started in missions.**

**Dot—**Art and I were both students at Houghton College when we married during the summer between our sophomore and junior years. We both were praying for God's will as to what our life work should be and how to best prepare for it. During our junior year God directed us separately and directly to look into Native American missions. We finished our college studies with a major in Bible for Dot and a major in religion for Art. Seminary was next for Art.

During seminary, Art delivered milk. Art was signing up a couple for milk delivery and noticed Indian rugs and artifacts in their home. This was the home of Tom and Alfreda Claus, directors of the American Indian Crusade. We applied to this mission board, were accepted and started our ministry under them.

Our first assignment (during seminary) was establishing an Indian Hospitality Center in Denver, which through the years became Indian Bible Church. After seminary we went to White River, South Dakota on the Lakota Sioux Rosebud Reservation. We lived there for six years. While visiting native people at the Indian Health Hospital in Rosebud, Art discovered that one of our active women at Lakota Chapel had just delivered twins.



Since she lived in primitive conditions and felt she could not care for them, she asked if we would like to adopt them. We did. (They are now 56.)

Adopting the twins became the reason we changed the direction of our ministry. Their mother would show up at our door asking for rides, money or food, often after midnight. If she saw us with the twins in our tiny town, she would drunkenly lean over their stroller and slur "Why did I ever give my babies up?" Not wanting the twins dealing with this forever, Art and I searched in other locations for native ministry opportunities. God directed to International Students Inc (ISI) and we worked with them and the Association of Christian Ministries to Internationals (ACMI) for 20 years. Wanting to get back to native ministry, we have spent the last 22 years working under the American Indian Crusade, the US Center for World Mission and AmeriTribes until it merged with Pioneers. I have continued with Pioneers as a Retired Staff even after Art passed 15 years ago.

**MF—What training did you receive on support raising?**

**Dot—**Our introduction to support raising came as a shock. We were not aware that we were responsible for our own support raising. The training amounted



to “Go do it.” The church we attended while in seminary was our original supporting church. Since Art was tenacious, we began to make more contacts and had enough support to go to the reservation. While there, we both taught school to complete our financial needs.

**MF—Share a story of a partnering church doing it well.**

**Dot**—Calvary Baptist Church in New York City (CBCNYC) has been a great partnering church. For many, many years they paid our transportation costs to attend their annual mission conference. They also paid for our hotel and provided meals during the conference. During the conference we were expected to go out and visit different members of the mission board in addition to the morning and evening schedule of meetings. There was little time for rest during the conference. Any personal care was provided by a member of the mission board asking “what” or “how” we were doing.

**MF—Discuss “personal care.”**

**Dot**—I am guessing that all entities involved in our lives thought “the other one,” i.e. sending board, churches, mission conference, were providing “care” for us. In fact, through 66 years of being on support, *No* church has done this for us. If we needed pastoral or professional care, we sought it locally and paid for it ourselves. Acting individually was always expected to be our personal responsibility.

In fact, if there were very important needs or large needs (professional counseling, hospitalized mental care, or teen problems) it was best to keep this information from supporting churches to avoid losing financial support.

**MF—Is there a story of a supporting church that was disappointing or hard for you?**

**Dot**—In our work with Native Americans, we tried to contextualize whenever we could. We happily reported in a prayer letter that we had communion out in the country (not in a church) with native friends. Instead of grape juice, we used iced tea. Instead of cut and squared white bread we used fry

bread. No one else responded with a comment except for a church that withdrew their monthly support because of this episode. We realized we had to teach our resistant supporters about contextualization.

**MF—Did you and Art ever serve on a church’s mission board as members? What are some specific ways you lead the team to care for other workers the church partnered with?**

**Dot**—At different times, both Art and I were members on a church’s mission board. We were able to teach other members of the board that difficult happenings in a missionary’s life should not be the occasion to discontinue support but rather to support with phone calls, letters and perhaps an additional amount of financial support.

We also did a lot of teaching about adapting and learning culture. When a missionary reported something “odd” we assured the board they were fitting in with the culture but not compromising their faith.

**MF—Speak to churches today as to some best practices they should consider employing when it comes to their workers and caring well for them.**

**Dot**—Instead of a missionary breezing through their town and giving them one time to speak, provide a place for them to stay for two or three nights and let them simply *rest* during the day. This would be contrary to a supporting church using the missionary as much as they could, scheduling a women’s meeting, men’s meeting or congregational meeting all within one or two days.

Encourage the missionary with how their prayer letter was used: pinned to bulletin boards, read it in a meeting (or by a reporting individual), prayed about at a large church meeting. Also, a person should be assigned to follow up with a call or letter.

Ask questions about practices that are not understood to educate the local church about culture differences, about contextualization, about language learning difficulty, about family problems.

*Never* discontinue support abruptly for some suspected reason but get information about the situation first.

Provide a car for the missionary to use temporarily as they travel doing reporting and deputation.

Provide child-care so that the parents can go to a couples' retreat or a little vacation without the children.

**MF—What advice do you have for church leadership in establishing a priority grid for deciding who to support.**

**Dot**—Churches should carefully vet those whom they decide to support or invite to speak at worship. Many churches are attracted to the most charismatic or good-looking couples and not to those doing the most important or strategic work among the least reached peoples. Having a written down policy to prioritize work among those unreached peoples with the least access to the gospel would be very helpful in deciding who to support.

**MF—Talk about the mission board. Is it important to have a team versus just the senior pastor deciding who to partner with or not?**

**Dot**—Of course! Nepotism and favoritism can be rampant if only one person gets to decide. With the combined opinions of the mission board wiser decisions can be made.

**MF—How would you suggest a pastor build his team for a mission board?**

**Dot**—S/he should be aware of people who are mission minded in his congregation. He could have conversations, see who reads the missionary prayer letters, ask who individually supports a missionary, be aware of who reads mission books/magazines, know who attends the various interest groups on missions.

People who are ignorant about missions and missionary needs should never be appointed to a mission commission.

**MF—What is your advice to churches when they consider stopping their support of a certain worker? What questions should they ask?**

**Dot**—Too often when a church decides to stop support, they do it suddenly without any advanced notice. They just stop it. Period! The missionary is left with questions and often unpaid bills. It would not only be kind to let the missionary know the decision of the church, but it is an imperative. A letter of explanation should be sent to the missionary.

**MF—What about their senior workers? Should there be a time they stop their partnership with them?**

**Dot**—This should be decided in a policy session by the church. None of my supporters have stated a year or time when they would discontinue support. Those who have stopped have just floated away with no notice to me. Those who continue to do so are a pleasant surprise to me at this time. I do not know how long any of my supporters will continue my partnership with them. This makes it difficult to make long range plans.

**MF—Compare how churches care for their pastors versus their missionaries.**

**Dot**—I do not see a favorable comparison here. Large churches lavish large salaries and provisions on their pastor. I have not seen this with their care of missionaries. The missionary receives a set amount and gets a check. I would be very surprised if it ever happens that bonuses or gifts be lavished on me as a missionary. Two of my supporting churches send Christmas or Valentine gifts.

**MF—If churches could do one thing today, what would you encourage them to do that would care well/biblically for their workers?**

**Dot**—It would be an absolute boost if a pastor would call me to encourage me. Not just someone on the mission committee contact me to find out if I am doing enough.

**MF—What advice would you give missionaries that are just starting to raise their prayer and financial support as they are sharing with potential churches, mission boards etc.?**

**Dot**—Establish a relationship with someone on the mission committee. Make a good contact. Keep current so that “someone” knows what you face and is able to pray sincerely. Rather than just “bless our missionary,” be real in your dealings with the church. Sometimes public prayer letters can be too general and not touch the heart of a matter. Meet with the church or mission committee whenever you can by Zoom.

Although living under support has been trying and difficult at times, my family has never been without food, we have never lost our home and we have never been without necessities. I really thank and praise God for his care.

**MF—What advice do you have for including your children in your mission?**

**Dot**—Of course the children are “there” and can be involved in the day-to-day part of your ministry. I asked my adult son about when he was aware that we were on “support.” He said he was always aware. As parents we let our children know what “support” meant. We shared both low and adequate amounts with them. When three of our children went on mission trips with Teen Mission, they had to raise their own support. This did not shock them because they had been aware before the event. When the support was complete and they left for their trips, they were assured of both financial and prayer support. They also reported and thanked their supporters after the trip. Children need to be aware that God is providing for them whether it is through support from churches or their parents’ jobs. 📌

## How Churches Have Blessed Missionaries

*Our church prays for us often. They have sent encouraging emails in times they prayed for us, even with pics of the prayer meetings. They meet as congregations and even the staff prays for us.*

—DH, Middle East

*Our church has a faithful prayer group that meets every Sunday am. to lift us up by name. They gather needs from us and print it off for each person to pray during the week.*

—KE, Sub-Saharan Africa

*Our church uses money from their Advent giving to support projects in our ministry.*

—TN, North Africa

*When we first went to the field, we felt like we were just a part of what churches did; that we were sent so they could put our picture on the wall. Over the years, the missions department has grown and now we feel like family with someone checking on us periodically. Two of our pastors even visited us on the field!*

—MV, Southeast Asia

*A good friend on the mission board and his wife were proactive in scheduling a video call with us every month to check in on how we were doing.*

—RP, South Asia

*We feel so cared for and truly valued when churches send unexpected cards and little cash gifts.*

—LE North America  
unreached diaspora

*Our church gave us a space on their campus to self-isolate when we needed a home with no people in it.*

—SH, South Asia

# A Prayer for Missionary Care

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 and Eliza.

My wife Susan and I had just returned after a first term serving in another country and culture. If someone made a list of the dos and don'ts for how to send people, our situation would have checked all the boxes for the "don't" list.

While we were in the frying pan, we had not felt the heat. But, arriving back in the USA...

Everything felt wrong. Confusing. Loud. Rushed. It was 4<sup>th</sup> of July and when fireworks went off down the street, we hit the floor out of reflex.

Most would chalk that up to issues with our re-entry and reverse culture shock, and yes, those are very real. But one reason this was real in our lives was not the lack of re-entry preparation or care (though that was certainly absent!) but the lack of care and feeding throughout our time.

Now, we had received very good pre-field orientation. We knew what to expect. But between that and our return?

We were on our own.

## Fast Forward

That was in the early 1980s. I am grateful that since that time there has been a large movement in the mission world related to caring for families in the field. It has become an international and multicultural movement. It has become holistic:

touching every facet of human life, family life, addiction, spiritual formation, physical health and more.

That is encouraging and I have seen it up close and personal: the organization I led before coming to Frontier Ventures developed a whole focus on field partner care, with a multi-cultural team and a clear ethos and approach.

Many, most mission organizations have done so. These are encouraging signs.

## And Yet



I came across the results of a study, written up by Katie Rowe, entitled, "Closer to the Truth about Current Missionary Attrition: An Initial Analysis of Results" (<https://www.alifeoverseas.com/closer-to-the-truth-about-current-missionary-attrition-an-initial-analysis-of-results/>).

That study seems to indicate that missionary care was the responsibility of the agency.

I won't go into all the facets, but the study addressed the question about the *preventable* causes for missionary attrition. The study revealed nine factors, but two rose to the top: family factors and team/agency factors. In the family category were issues such as experiencing serious marital issues or needing to take care of extended family who live away from the mission field.

And in the second category, the team/agency factors, the highest rated factor was lack of missionary care.

That study seems to indicate that missionary care was the responsibility of the agency. And, I



would hasten to say, agencies *do* bear a responsibility for being a part of the care of those they assist in sending (and my words are carefully chosen).

## Who Cares?

This edition of *Mission Frontiers* asks about a different stakeholder in the mission effort: the arena of the body of Christ we call the church and especially the local church. Of course, we might ask, local to whom, but the assumption in the title is the churches in the sending countries of the ones being sent (there are local churches of course in almost every country where such sent ones are relocated).

The question posed is in keeping with the larger move over the past decades of local churches engaging more directly and responsibly as senders, as agents in the mission effort, and not just donators of human resources (“here, take our members”).

So, what is the role of churches in this arena of care?

Of course, an easy answer would be: if the study showed that a lack of missionary care was a key factor in attrition rates then churches are a potential pool, a resource, to add capacity.

But I will focus first on the area the study somewhat skimmed over, due to its focus, not due to any fault in the study. Namely, family issues.

## In Theory ...

... a healthy fully functioning local church would be deeply aware of the extended family of its members, especially those it might affirm as called to cross cultural lives. The same can be said for married couples.

... churches would be aware of fault lines and cracks and potential stress points.

... churches would also be able to help care for extended family members who remain in the sending country.

... churches would be able to add not only capacity but depth and quality to the whole fabric of missionary care.

The fact is that many churches are not the healthy vibrant organisms that they would need to be to provide the valuable asset they can be for their beloved ones serving in other cultures and contexts. In reality, there are churches that do these things, thankfully.

## What Can I Add?

Thus, in this edition you will be introduced to many concepts, examples and helpful insights.

But my contribution is essentially a prayer, a prayer for the health of the whole body: local, global, agency, emerging movement, teams of workers. Each of those is part of the body of Christ, and each is able to be healthy and whole and vibrant and lifegiving.

What if our first experience had been more richly adorned with the sort of care and life-giving support that we desperately needed, but did not know how to ask for?

## Back Again

I am grateful that Susan and I sought and got the help we needed. It was ad hoc, word of mouth, given us by a fellow traveler on the journey to wholeness. But we found it. And because we did, we were able and eager a few years later to return to another context, and we were better able to thrive and live with resilience.

But I do wonder, what if? What if our first experience had been more richly adorned with the sort of care and life-giving support that we desperately needed, but did not know how to ask for?

May the Lord bring health to us all, and to the whole body of Christ. ❏

# 24:14 Goal



Movement engagements in every unreached people and place by 2025 (42 months)

## Obedience to God's Word Overcomes Systemic Prejudice

By **THE WALKER FAMILY**

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

The movement with which we are connected is bringing transformation—not just to the lives of families and individuals, but also to deeply rooted social problems including systemic prejudice.

The early church celebrated the Lord's Supper: "They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity" (Acts 2:46 NLT). A few years ago, we learned of some churches in the Listening Movement that were not taking the Lord's Supper. India's systemic sin of casteism was the root of the problem. Casteism dictates that eating with a low-caste person makes a high-caste person spiritually unclean. "We cannot take the Lord's Supper across caste lines," they explained.

Teaching obedience is very different from simply teaching about Jesus or about the Bible.

Sanjay,\* the main leader in the area, didn't know how to tackle this issue. We were out of the country at the time, so he wrote to us for advice: "What should we do?"

Teaching obedience is very different from simply teaching *about* Jesus or about the Bible. Jesus' final command to His disciples was to make more

disciples, "teaching them to *obey* everything I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). At its core, casteism is racism. Prejudice in any form is unacceptable to God. It runs contrary to the truth that *all* of us are made in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27). Within His Church, racism violates the Lord's commands to both "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34), and "in humility value others above yourselves" (Phil. 2:3b). Casteism, meanwhile, teaches that from birth, some people are better and more valuable than others.

In the Indian context, caste is a huge issue. The churches needed heart changes about this systemic Indian problem. Mere verbal assents to a teaching we might give weren't going to suffice. We needed God to touch their hearts. To get there, the churches needed to learn from the Bible, not from us. We gave Sanjay a list of verses addressing the equality of all people in God's kingdom, and how in Jesus, all barriers – including gender – are dissolved. We also prayed like crazy.

Sanjay took these Scriptures to the leaders of the movement. They studied God's Word together. They discussed what God was saying regarding casteism and the Lord's Supper. Sanjay did not preach or teach. He gave them the Scriptures. He prayed. He asked questions. They all looked at Scripture together. Finally, the leaders (*not* Sanjay) came to the conclusion that, "If I am in Jesus, I am no longer

Brahmin (or whatever caste I was born into). I can either be a Brahmin, or in Jesus, but I cannot be both. If that's the option, then I want to be in Jesus!"

It is important to note that we are not turning the above personal application statements into doctrinal statements for all the churches. These particular churches wrestled with the Scripture, then applied it to their personal lives in this context of casteism. This is what it means to teach others to obey Jesus. From the very beginning, even before these Brahmin families called themselves followers of Jesus, they had been taught to not just listen to Bible stories, but to apply them. Thus, when this issue arose, the DNA of "obey the Word" was already established. They had no idea that casteism was anathema to Jesus' kingdom. So we gave them the Word, they wrestled with it and then applied it to their personal lives. They chose unity over disunity, to count all things as loss compared to knowing Jesus. And since they are committed to teaching their disciples to also obey Jesus, we know they will share the Bible verses with others.

How do we know they really meant what they said? Through their actions. After declaring they wanted to be "in Jesus," the leaders did something seldom seen in their context. They apologized. In front of each other, without attempting to save face or defend themselves, they admitted: "We are sorry; we were wrong" both to Sanjay *and* to their disciples. Apologizing in public is a big deal anywhere, but it's huge in Asia. Usually, apologies here are passive at best. For someone here to take ownership of a wrong they have done *and* apologize, not just to someone they consider "above" themselves (Sanjay), but also to people who look up to them (their disciples), is stunning. We were speechless!

That's not all. After apologizing, the leaders intentionally gathered multiple churches with mixed caste-background people, and they all took communion together! This may sound like a small thing to outsiders, but this is a *huge* thing for India. Casteism is *the* filter through which the vast majority of Indians think about relationships and community. God broke into their hearts and minds through His

Word alone. Hebrews 12:4 says, "For the Word of God is living and active *and* full of power [making it operative, energizing, and effective]. It is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as the division of the soul and spirit [the completeness of a person], and of both joints and marrow [the deepest parts of our nature], exposing *and* judging the very thoughts and intentions of the heart" (AMP). We have always believed this to be true. Now we have seen it in action, bringing transformation to individuals and to whole churches. What a joy!



/// Praise God that discovering His will through group study of His Word helps people learn to obey Jesus *for themselves*. ///

"Teach them to obey all that I've commanded you." Sadly, we Christians tend to believe that lectures, sermons and codified theological doctrines will accomplish this task. But we need to ask ourselves: is all the sharing of information resulting in obedient disciples of Jesus, even when His commands run directly counter to their deeply ingrained cultural patterns and habits? When the Holy Spirit speaks through the Bible, people recognize that they are accountable to Jesus for their obedience (or disobedience). Praise God that discovering His will through group study of His Word helps people learn to obey Jesus *for themselves*. It is a priceless, humble privilege to watch God tear down destructive attitudes and practices, and build up an out-of-this-world fellowship among people from all kinds of diverse backgrounds. Hallelujah! MF

# In Serious Pursuit of Movements

By **C. ANDERSON**

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



I don't run very fast anymore. Age and extra pounds have robbed me of those days when I could sprint like the wind. I'm more of a plodder. Jogging slowly, I keep going. Step by labored step. My eight-month-old German shepherd puppy is quite the opposite. When we go for a run together, he pulls me forward. His tan-colored legs stretch out and his black tail wags when he can run a 10-second sprint. You can almost hear him saying, "Let's do it again!"

Sometimes he'll see a bird or chicken in our yard. Off he goes...chasing hard after the prize.

My dog and I both enjoy our runs. Disciple Making Movements involve the pursuit of what can feel like an elusive goal. They are not a sprint and often require plodding along, step by step, like when I train for a marathon. But the passion and zeal of a dog chasing a rabbit is what we need as well.

## Are You Seriously Pursuing Movements?

Many people are interested in Disciple Making Movements. They like the concept. Hearing the stories of organic multiplication, of groups starting groups and spreading rapidly...we can't help but feel excited. Who wouldn't be?

Hundreds of mission organizations have begun to train their staff in DMMs and DMM principles. Books, articles and training on Discovery Bible Study abound. My email list of those getting weekly input on Disciple Making Movements is over 17,000 now. That's a lot of people expressing interest to learn about how to multiply disciples! This is truly encouraging.

But how many of those people move from casual interest to a serious pursuit? How many commit to going after the release of a Disciple Making Movement, having counted the cost and set their goals and activities to match that?

## Signing Up for a Marathon

My husband and I have run numerous half marathons together. Once, my daughter and I also did a full 42-kilometer race. These long races require months of preparation and training. They are not something most people can sign up for one day and run the next.

Three or four months before a marathon I commit. I sign up and pay my money to register for the race.

Most marathons cost about \$40 or \$50 to sign up for. You get a t-shirt and a medal and some snacks.



Wasting money is not something I like to do. So when I sign up and pay, my training gets serious. Knowing I've already paid for it, even when I'm traveling and don't have time, I get out and do my training run. I'm in serious pursuit of my goal...to run the race well and finish it.

There have been a few times when I thought, "I'll just start training, but sign up later." Inevitably, something comes up and my training goes by the wayside. I'm not committed yet, so other priorities in life take precedence.

If we want to be His disciple, we need to consider the cost and commit. The same is true of pursuing movements.

## Counting the Cost and Committing

Luke 14:28 says, "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?" Most of us have probably never built a tower. I know nothing about tower building. But I get the principle Jesus was talking about here.

If we want to be His disciple, we need to consider the cost and commit. The same is true of pursuing movements.

## What Is the Cost?

Let's be real. There is a cost to seeing the release of a Disciple Making Movement. And it's a rather large one. I'm not talking about money though. As mentioned in the title of my online course, *Getting Started in Disciple Making Movements: Even if You Are Busy, Can't Speak the Language Well, and Have No Money*, movements don't need lots of funding. Often, outside money can kill movements.

One cost is in a willingness to swim upstream. To embrace new ways of doing things that are not the norm in legacy (traditional churches that

meet in buildings). The cost is in being willing to be misunderstood and persecuted, by colleagues, friends, and others within your church or organizational structure, as well as by those who are not believers as well.

Another cost is paid on your knees. A willingness to grow in intercession personally and to put in the hours and effort to pray for the lost and for those you train is a must if you are in serious pursuit of a movement.

Additionally, one must be willing to unlearn old habits and unwind old beliefs about how to do evangelism and church-planting. This requires effort and commitment. Allowing God to shine His light on our belief systems that don't match our actions can be painful. Are we willing to seriously examine our lives and church patterns in light of Scripture and the example of Jesus and Paul and how they did missions?

I recently re-read Luke 10 in my normal daily devotions. This passage is one I've taught many times. It's the passage where we find reference to the Person of Peace, a key concept in the Disciple Making Movement strategy (See my free ebook about this on [dmmsfrontiermissions.com](http://dmmsfrontiermissions.com) if you are not familiar with it).

"Am I living this way?" I asked myself. "Am I doing missions the way Jesus modeled and sending people the way He sent them?" We must examine our lives and methods in light of Scripture and be willing to change if we want to seriously pursue a movement.

We must be willing to not only preach and teach disciple-making, but we must also become disciple-makers. That means stepping out from behind our desks and pulpits and investing time in relationships in our community. Many missionaries and pastors don't have time to get to know their neighbors, let alone start a discovery group in their community. DMM practitioners have to *do*, not only teach. This can be demanding and puts us in a place of vulnerability. Preaching and teaching a congregation is not as risky as praying for a sick person in a grocery store, or inviting your

mailman to read Scripture with you. Yet without modeling this kind of disciple-making action, we will not train others effectively.

A further cost to the serious pursuit of movements is a willingness to focus on them. To see movements, you will have to say no to other things, other attractive opportunities. You

will need to radically examine your priorities and strip away things that do not have a direct impact on your goal of seeing a multiplication of disciples. This is not easy and is where many movement practitioners fail.

// To see movements, you will have to say no to other things, other attractive opportunities. //

Giving time to lost people and not only to the saved will be required of you. Saying no to certain meetings, events, and conferences to say yes to deep relationships and investment in training and mentoring leaders well is a significant commitment. Yet it is necessary if you want to see the few reach the many as Jesus did.

There are other costs to count in pursuing movements but let me mention one more. To pursue movements, you must be willing to risk failure.

The other day I woke early with a phrase running across my heart, almost like an ad scrolling across the top of a webpage. The phrase was this, "I would rather be found guilty of asking too much of God, than of asking too little." I couldn't get this out of my mind as I set my feet on the ground and made my way to the kitchen to make my morning coffee.

"What are you trying to say to me, Lord?" I asked as I opened my Bible, coffee now in hand, ready to spend time with Him.

Scriptures I had memorized as a child filled my mind. "You have not because you ask not" (James 4:2). "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. (Matt. 7:7)." If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." (John 15:7)

"Yes, Lord," I prayed. "I'd rather be guilty of asking you for too much of God, than to be guilty of asking you for too little. I'm asking you for movements, Lord. For hundreds of new movements to spring up across the globe and for hundreds of thousands of lost people to be swept into your kingdom through them! I know this is an audacious prayer to pray, that someone like me, could be part of catalyzing that. But I ask you Lord to do the impossible through me and through the many I have the privilege of training."

Praying prayers of faith for the impossible is part of the life of movement catalysts and leaders. We must be willing to believe in things we cannot yet see and pray for them until they become a reality. This requires persistent and bold faith (Luke 18:1-8).

When you pray these kinds of prayers and call others to pray them with you, some will doubt. They will not want you to pray for things that seem impossible. If God doesn't answer, maybe people will fall away or be disappointed, they'll say. As movement practitioners and leaders, we must be willing to take the risk of praying for things far beyond ourselves...even beyond what we have ever seen happen before.

// We must be willing to believe in things we cannot yet see and pray for them until they become a reality. //

## The Greater Risk

Reading the above, you may be thinking...wow...that's a lot of costs. Am I ready to pay that price?

There was a time when I was not sure I was. I'd been working to see church multiplication for about 15 years. We'd been reading and studying Church Planting Movement books by Dr. David Garrison and others. I'd translated George Patterson's Train and Multiply materials into the Nepali language and attempted (with only limited success) to use them to train national church-planters. The YWAM training called a School of Frontier Missions (SOFM) had a week of training on church-planting where I often spoke on CPMs and DMMs. But we had seen only a handful of movements take off.

"Am I setting people up for failure by calling them to aim at a movement?" I asked myself. "Maybe we should just talk about making disciples who make disciples and leave it at that." I wondered if we were asking a local B team to aim at a Superbowl win that only one professional team per year could achieve. Maybe it wasn't fair to challenge them to pursue a movement. These real questions disturbed my pastoral heart. I didn't want to call people to something they were likely to fail at.

While these thoughts were often coming to mind, I went for a prayer walk. Slowly, I walked through a slum in the Indian city where I lived. I passed by a mosque and offered up prayers to God for the men inside on their knees answering the call to prayer. Continuing to walk, I soon passed a Hindu temple with a huge statue of Shiva. Bells were ringing and worship taking place. "Oh God, please show them who you are!" I prayed. Coming to the end of the street, and close to the river, I passed the crematorium. Smoke rose from the chimney where a body had just been burned. Another Hindu had gone into eternity having never heard the truth of God's amazing love.

"How will they hear? How will they know of His love?" I whispered as tears welled up in my eyes.

There are just too many millions for traditional methods to work and reach them. Ordinary disciples must be trained! Multiplication must happen! Or they will keep dying apart from the knowledge of His saving grace.


Then I knew. The pursuit of movements was not an option, it was a mandate. Jesus commanded His disciples to make disciples of all nations and teach them to obey all He had commanded. That meant every disciple of Jesus needs to be trained to multiply. I would continue to call people to pursue the seemingly impossible because it was the will of God to do this through ordinary people like the fishermen and tax collectors he had trained. They were not professionals, they were B team-type guys. But filled with the Holy Spirit, they started movements. So could we.

Then I knew. The pursuit of movements was not an option, it was a mandate.

### Will You Commit?

I come again to my earlier question. How committed are you to pursuing Disciple Making Movements? Are they a passing interest? Something you are curious about? Or have you "signed up for the race"? Until you commit to them, you may be a bit like I am before I sign up for a marathon. You can't casually pursue movements. You're either all in, or not really in at all.

Count the cost, yes. Know what you are committing to and that it is not an easy road to walk. But the cost of not committing to movements is greater. The millions will not hear. The temples and mosques will continue to be filled with many who have never yet heard of His love. Jesus' last command to us will not be obeyed.

The way to address the issue and urgency of humankind's lostness is if we pursue not only handfuls of disciples, but movements of them to spread rapidly across the globe. Having counted the cost, will you join me in a sold-out, full-on commitment to pursue the release of new movements? 

# Further Reflections

By **Greg H. Parsons** Frontier Ventures staff since 1982, and currently serving as Global Connections Strategist.

We talk about the idea of contextualization from many different angles that I've wondered what people think when they hear that word. On one extreme, some say, "the gospel needs no contextualization... the message doesn't change!"

Probably, if you are reading *Mission Frontiers*, you have a different perspective. Still, I'm sure that we each might land in a different place on the contextualization continuum—beyond which (we fear) the message might become syncretized. However, perhaps more often, new workers go to serve cross culturally before they have fully understood how much the faith of their upbringing is also syncretized. Well known historian Kenneth Scott Latourette recounts the fascinating history of the spread of Christianity globally, tracking **both** the impact of the gospel on new cultures **as well as** how those cultures impacted established Christian traditions and changed the faith.

Recently, I found a simple way to describe contextualization in a series of tweets which NY pastor and author Timothy Keller posted on February 4, 2022.<sup>1</sup> Here are his posts, from a seven-part tweet:<sup>2</sup>

The recent post I made about Stephen Colbert's partial answer about his faith and the ensuing comments has shown me American Christians still have a long way to go on understanding Col 4:5–6, how to be "wise in the ways you act toward outsiders."

<sup>1</sup> <https://bit.ly/37MhooW>

<sup>2</sup> I have merged Keller's 7 tweets together, smoothed out the flow, format in order to highlight his points clearly. Bold emphasis is mine.



This is called **contextualization**. What is contextualization? Its adapting your message to be understandable and compelling to particular hearers without compromising the truth in any way.

Why contextualize?

**First**, because everyone already does it. As soon as you choose a language to speak in, and vocabulary and illustrations, and arguments, you are adapting to some human hearers more than others. If you don't become conscious of how you are contextualizing—which is inevitable—you won't contextualize well.

If you don't become conscious of how you are contextualizing—which is inevitable—you won't contextualize well.

**Second**, because Paul contextualizes in his speeches. See how he presents to Bible believers in Acts 13, blue-collar pagans in Acts 14, educated pagans in Act 17.

**Third**, because the biblical writers contextualize. See John's use of Greek philosophy's "Logos" in John 1. See the use of the Hittite Sumerian treaty form in the book of Deuteronomy. See Paul's contextualization of the gospel to Greek and Jewish cultural narratives in 1 Cor 1:22–24.

**Fourth**, because Paul calls us to contextualization without compromise in 1 Cor. 9:19-23.

**Fifth**, because the incarnation itself was a kind of contextualizing. So we could understand—the Word made flesh.

**Sixth**, keep in mind you can't and shouldn't say everything every time when bearing a public witness to your faith. In Acts 17 Paul spoke of judgment but not of the cross or how to get forgiveness. So it wasn't a full gospel presentation. It was laying a foundation for talking to people later.

Unless Christians are completely going to pull themselves out of the public square we will need to contextualize. Let's do so well.



Unless Christians are completely going to pull themselves out of the public square we will need to contextualize. Let's do so well.

Two days later, Keller added:

Over-contextualization makes an idol of the hearers' culture and is the mistake of liberal Christianity. Under-contextualization makes an idol of the speaker's culture and is the mistake of fundamentalist Christianity. We all make both mistakes—but which do you do more?"

I love his point that not every presentation of the gospel is a *full* gospel presentation.

Acts 17 is, indeed, instructive here, as Keller notes. I love his point that not every presentation of the gospel is a *full* gospel presentation. But often it is "laying a foundation for talking to people later."

My hope when I share about my faith and life, is that it would challenge the person to think more deeply about Jesus and the Scriptures and give them a longing to know Him. The Holy Spirit can encourage us to call for a decision, but that doesn't mean we will do so every time.

I'm considering a new way to engage people with the gospel, which I hope to write up in the next issue (or two). I wonder if the methods we usually use are the best in every situation. It seems like each cultural context and each generation need fresh expressions of ancient truth about Jesus and what it means to be a part of the kingdom. Thinking this through well will be a help to all of us, no matter how different the cultures around us are or become. ▣

# Who is Defining the Priorities of Our Church's Mission Efforts?<sup>1</sup>

Stan Parks, Ph.D. was a trainer and coach for a wide variety of CPMs around the world. He currently co-leads a global 2414 Coalition to start Church Planting Movement engagements in every Unreached People Group and place by 2025 (2414now.net). As part of the Ethne leadership team he helped various Ephesus teams seeking to start cascading CPMs in large UPG clusters. He is the VP of Global Strategies with Beyond (beyond.org). stan@beyond.org

*The following article challenges pastors and missions leaders to break free from good mission endeavors to seek out God's mission endeavors. It challenges us to question who is defining the priorities of our church's mission efforts.*

**We need to avoid pursuing human-sized goals with human-strength plans but earnestly and continually pray that the Holy Spirit will empower us to be vessels for God's glory.**

If we seek to reach the world according to our own priorities then we are doomed to frustration and failure. The Lord desires obedience not sacrifice, so as disciples of Christ we must consider God's priorities and shape our efforts to be in sync with His will. Based upon the Gospel message and the Commission of Jesus, I believe there are three priorities we should consider:

<sup>1</sup> First published in 2007 by Restore Hope. [www.restorehopetoday.org/who-is-defining-the-priorities-of-our-churchs-mission-efforts](http://www.restorehopetoday.org/who-is-defining-the-priorities-of-our-churchs-mission-efforts). Republished by permission of the author who made some minor edits and updated information.



**God's Glory—  
God and His Glory is both the  
beginning and end of missions.**

Missions was birthed in His heart because He is a missionary God reaching out to a lost humanity. The end of missions is the worship of God as is well shown in Revelation 7:9-10 "After this I looked, and there was an enormous crowd—no one could count all the people! They were from every race, tribe, nation, and language, and they stood in front of the throne and of the Lamb, dressed in white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. They called out in a loud voice: "Salvation comes from our God, who sits on the throne, and from the Lamb!" (GNB) In our efforts to obey God's Commission to us, it is crucial that we prioritize God's glory. We need to avoid pursuing human-sized goals with human-strength plans but earnestly and continually pray that the Holy Spirit will empower us to be vessels for God's glory.



**Growing the Body of Christ—  
The church is the goal of missions.**

The goal of missions is to see the Body of Christ birthed and expanded within a people, tribe, nation, language and/or place. Ministry that does not see local churches

birthed is often valuable, but until these church “communities of faith” are established and extended, the goal of missions has not been reached. However, this goal is not an end in itself, or the church becomes guilty of breaking the first commandment. The newly established church must be encouraged and taught that it is their mandate to reach out within their own group and beyond to the entire world. However, when we speak of growing the Body of Christ, we do not just mean numbers of converts and churches started. We must ask God to grow the church not just in quantity but also in quality. It is not enough to start churches if those churches are selfish and powerless. The goal is Acts 2 churches being continually transformed by God and in turn serving God in devoting themselves to the Word and prayer and fellowship while sharing the good news, living sacrificially and transforming their own communities and nations.



### Extending God's Kingdom— The unreached must be our priority in missions.

Is it right that some hear the gospel twice when others have never heard it once? Or some hear it 10 times, 100 times, 1000 times, even 10,000 times when some have never heard it one single time? Evangelism is sharing the good news, while missions is sharing the good news where it is news. There can be no question that while we are called to many good efforts, our priority in world missions today must be those living beyond the gospel. God does not wish that “anyone should perish but that everybody would come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). Approximately 30% of the world’s population has no access to the gospel and just as tragically 42.6% of the world’s population are members of “unreached” ethne – those without a culture-impacting indigenous

Is it right that some hear the gospel twice when others have never heard it once? Or some hear it 10 times, 100 times, 1000 times, even 10,000 times when some have never heard it one single time?

church that is strong enough to reach its own people.<sup>2</sup> If reaching the world is the charge Jesus gave us as His disciples, then we cannot defend the vast sums of money and time spent on ourselves while we pray and go and spend so little to reach those most in need of the gospel. This is not to say that we should only focus on the unreached, because no church can be truly concerned about the unreached without being concerned about the lost around them. But as a worldwide church we find it much easier to prioritize ourselves and those around us at the expense of those with the greatest need for the gospel.

So if your church is seeking to obey Jesus’ mission commission by worshipping and glorifying Him in your words and deeds, a key priority should be helping reach out and start churches among unreached cities, nations, peoples and groups. That will in turn bring glory to God by their transformed lives and transforming service to their communities and their resulting efforts to bring the good news to other cities, nations, peoples and groups. ❏

But as a worldwide church we find it much easier to prioritize ourselves and those around us at the expense of those with the greatest need for the gospel.

<sup>2</sup> In the 15 years since this article was first published, the percentage of those without access to the gospel has grown from 27% to 30% and those in unreached ethne has grown from 39.5% to 42.6%.

# Perspectives



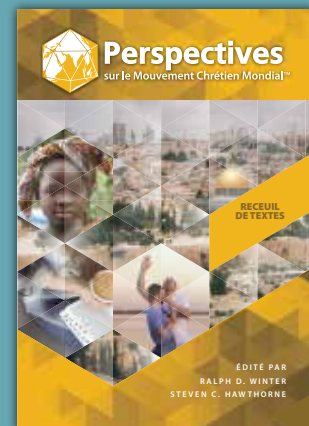
## 5TH EDITION REVISION PROJECT

### The Vision

*Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, originally published in 1981, and edited by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, is undergoing the 5th edition revision. After 47 years of refining, the truly unique *Perspectives* paradigm will gain new voices and updated content that reflects the global network that makes up the movement today.

Each year over 16,000 students—in 39 countries and 8 languages—participate in *Perspectives* classes. The movement is growing, and you can be a part of that growth! Scan the QR code above or go to: <https://missionbooks.org/pages/5th-edition-revision> to see how you can be a part of this historic project.

4th Edition  
Now Available  
in French!



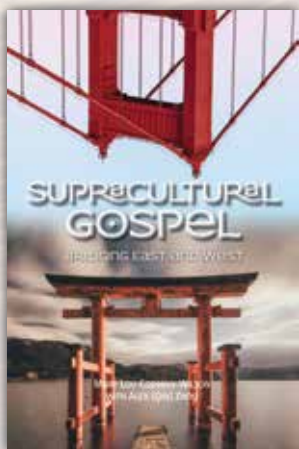


# 25% OFF NEW RELEASES

Scan this QR code:



or go to: <https://bit.ly/MissionFrontiers25> for this collection.



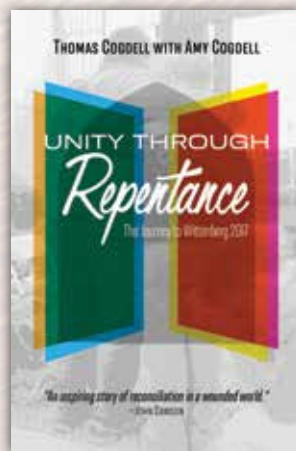
NEW

## Supracultural Gospel

Mary Lou Codman with Alex Zhou, Authors

Join Drs. Mary Lou Codman-Wilson and Alex Zhou as they dialogue about Alex's experience becoming a believer in the US and his struggle to share his faith when he returned to China. Written in a highly conversational tone and validated with personal stories from many Asian internationals, *Supracultural Gospel* is a powerful and practical tool for those who are passionate about cross-cultural discipleship.

\$15.99 paperback | \$9.99 ePub



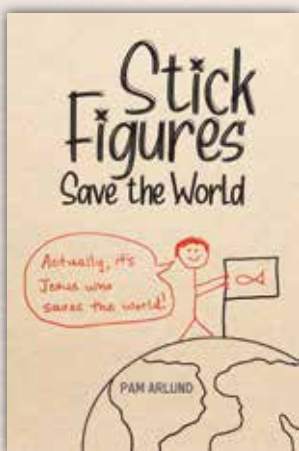
NEW

## Unity Through Repentance

Thomas Cogdell, Author

*Unity through Repentance* is a captivating story of forgiveness and reconciliation as Catholics, Protestants, and many other Jesus-followers gathered at Wittenburg for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Most Christians will agree that God has a desire to reconcile all peoples to Himself—but few are willing to explore God's fierce resolve to reconcile us to each other. Read this moving story and be inspired to make a difference in your own community

\$15.99 paperback | \$9.99 ePub



NEW

## Stick Figures

### Save the World

Pam Arlund, Author

In *Stick Figures Save the World*, you will learn to draw Bible stories in a simple way to equip even the newest follower of Jesus to pass on what they have learned to another. Whether you are trying to reach your own children, the neighbors, or a person across the world, this fun book can show you how.

\$11.99 paperback | \$9.99 ePub



NEW

## Made to Love

Geoff Peters, Author

God's message was simple, and we've made it complicated—allowing fear, shame, and traditions to stop us from aligning ourselves with God's heart for the world. Based on research and wrapped in the author's personal story and reflections, *Made to Love* challenges us to rethink the words and ideas we use to inspire disciples for kingdom service in our neighborhoods and around the world.

\$11.99 paperback | \$9.99 ePub

Visit us at [missionbooks.org](https://missionbooks.org)



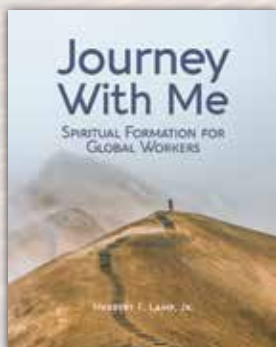
WILLIAM  
CAREY  
PUBLISHING

# 25% OFF These Member Care Titles

Scan this QR code:



or go to: <https://bit.ly/MissionFrontiers25> for this collection.



**Journey With Me**  
Herbert F. Lamp, Jr., Author

*Journey With Me* illustrates that ministry is the result of the overflow of our relationship with God, rather than vice versa. Exploring over fifteen ancient spiritual graces, the author invites us to prioritize soul care, rather than treating ministry as a replacement for intimacy.

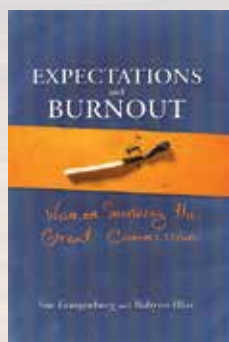
\$16.99 paperback | \$9.99 ePub



**Sacred Siblings** Sue Eenigenburg and Suzy Grumelot, Authors

In *Sacred Siblings* we learn how teams come together with varying expectations of what team life should be. The authors offer ideas and positive practices of valuing one another based on a survey from 289 missionaries. These practices build unity and understanding of each other, enabling greater effectiveness in ministry.

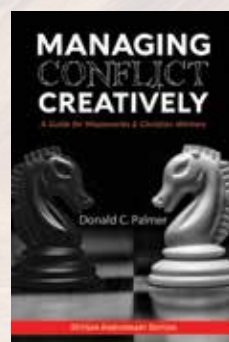
\$14.99 paperback | \$9.99 ePub



**Expectations and Burnout**  
Sue Eenigenburg, and Robyn Bliss, Authors

In *Expectations and Burnout* the authors provide research and surveys from the field with personal experiences to demonstrate how burnout can happen and how God can bring life from ashes. They explore how to develop realistic expectations and yet maintain faith in our sovereign God who continues to

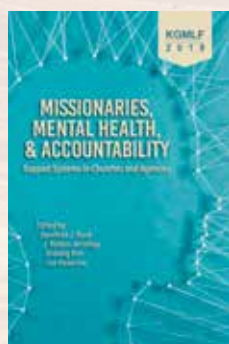
accomplish the impossible. | \$15.99 paperback | \$9.99 ePub



**Managing Conflict Creatively**  
Donald C. Palmer, Author

In *Managing Conflict Creatively*, Dr. Palmer first introduces the dynamics of conflict and the common styles of conflict management. After providing a Biblical background, he then identifies types of conflict and how to develop conflict management skills, specifically in cross-cultural situations.

\$12.99 paperback | \$9.99 ePub



**Missionaries, Mental Health, & Accountability** | Jonathan J. Bonk, Jennings, Kim, Lee, Editors

*Missionaries, Mental Health, and Accountability* opens with stories of scriptural saints who struggled and still made profound impacts for the kingdom. Korean and Western contributors reach into the complexity of missionary mental health with the

added component of accountability in church and agency support systems. | \$19.99 paperback | \$9.99 ePub

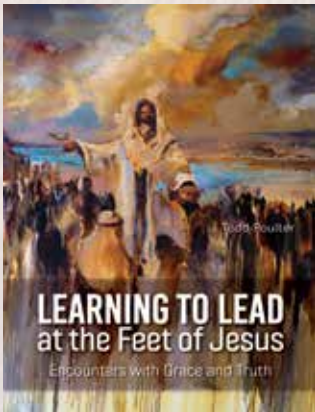


**Leading Multicultural Teams**  
Evelyn and Richard Hibbert, Authors

*Leading Multicultural Teams* integrates insights from the Bible, team theory, leadership, and intercultural studies to explain how leaders of multicultural teams can help their teams become enriching and enjoyable contexts to work in, at the same time as achieving their purpose.

\$17.99 paperback | \$9.99 ePub

# On the Horizon



## Learning to Lead at the Feet of Jesus Encounters with Grace and Truth

Herbert F. Lamp, Jr., Author

*Learning to Lead at the Feet of Jesus* highlights the rich relational setting in which Jesus exercised leadership and developed his followers into leaders. He practiced “withness,” generously sharing his life with the Twelve. Poulter

draws on a wide variety of cross-cultural experiences as he invites leaders to a journey of transformation. With reflective questions designed to provoke self-awareness, this book challenges us to evaluate our own beliefs and assumptions about leadership. **No matter how lofty our title or status, we can never rise higher in the kingdom than to the feet of Jesus.**



## Mobilizing Gen Z Challenges and Opportunities for the Global Age of Missions

Jolene Erlacher and Katy White, Authors

Amidst recent global, technological, and cultural changes, how can mission leaders continue to ensure that we fulfill the Great Commission mandate? In *Mobilizing Gen Z*, Jolene Erlacher and Katy

White blend leading research with the voices of current mission practitioners and reach the not-so-surprising conclusion that God has provided a solution—Gen Z (b. 1996–2010). Encouraging and winsome, *Mobilizing Gen Z* provides practical tools and strategies for engaging, equipping, and retaining Gen Z missionaries. Are we ready to pass the torch?

## Available in five languages!



## There are no language barriers in worship arts.

Visit us at [missionbooks.org](http://missionbooks.org)



**WILLIAM  
CAREY  
PUBLISHING**

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.

## JULY

### ■ 1 Mappila in India

Mappila Muslim communities resulted from the unions of Arab sailors and merchants with local women. Mappila people live in both India's southwestern Kerala state and the Laccadive Islands just to the west of that state, and they speak Malayalam, the language of Kerala. Kerala is about 20 percent Christian, and they have strong mission agencies. Believers who already speak Malayalam could be sent to the Mappila.

*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*  
—Isaiah 12:3

- May many from this people group drink deeply from the fountain of His salvation and mercy!
- Pray for networks of believing families and fellowships that will throw the doors open for others to follow Jesus.
- Pray for the Lord to bless families among the Mappila people with his presence and mercy.
- Pray for Bible believing fellowships and churches among the Mappila people.

### ■ 2 Hindu Kahar in India

It seems likely that the Kahar caste is a remnant of one of the ethnic groups who occupied the valley of the Ganges before Aryan invaders came from the north. They claim to be descended from one of Brahma's sons and from a warrior caste, which would give them a good social standing if other Hindu communities accepted this.

*And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted.* —Isaiah 12:4

- May this people group praise Him and tell others of His mighty deeds.
- Pray the Kahar would understand that Jesus desires to bless their families and clans, not harm them.
- Pray for their ability to raise their standard of living and be ready for the challenges of the 21st century.

### ■ 3 Hindu Pasi in India

The legend about the origin of the Pasi community is that one day, a man was going to kill a number of cows. Parashuram was, at that time, practicing austerities in the jungle. Hearing the cries of the sacred animals, he rushed to their assistance, but the cow killer was aided by his friends. So Parashuram made five men out of kusha grass and brought them to life by letting drops of his perspiration fall on them. Hence arose the name Pasi, from the Hindi *pasina* (sweat).

*For the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?*  
—Isaiah 14:27

- Pray that many from this people group will understand that God is sovereign, and they must obey Him alone.
- Pray the Pasi community would increasingly be aware of their need to know and follow the creator God.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Pasis this decade.

### ■ 4 Hindu Madiga in India

In the past, many Madiga were engaged in leatherwork and making footwear. Presently, many work as agricultural laborers and in related occupations, while some are scavengers. They also pursue the vocations of construction work, carrying heavy loads, and other low paying jobs in urban areas, and they have inferior status. They are Hindu and worship Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu.

*It will be said on that day, Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*  
—Isaiah 25:9

- Pray that many from this people group learn to trust in the Lord's salvation and rejoice in Him.
- Pray for improved employment opportunities for the Madiga and that their low caste status would not prevent them from achieving better living conditions.
- Pray that the light of the gospel would penetrate their hearts and lead them into a movement to Christ.



### ■ 5 Java Pesisir Lor in Indonesia

The Java Pesisir Lor consider the graves of two holy men to be sacred. They visit these graves to worship and to seek blessings. Javanese practice a mix of standard Islam and Sufi mysticism, which is a barrier to the gospel message. The Javanese have had a movement to Christ among them, and they can send workers to the Java Pesisir Lor.

*You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. —Isaiah 26:3*

- Pray for many from this people group to find perfect peace in trusting the Lord Almighty.
- Ask the Lord to soften the hearts of the Java Pesisir Lor people.
- Pray for a movement of family-based Bible studies.
- Pray for more effective irrigation systems and for improved employment opportunities for these people.

### ■ 6 Papuan Malay in Indonesia

Are they Malay or Papuan? Both! Papuan Malay is a language spoken that is similar to Bahasa, the generic trade language used in Indonesia and Malaysia. These people live on the island of Borneo, which is shared by Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia. The Indonesian government would like the people of Papua New Guinea to become Islamized. Christianity spread on Papua New Guinea after WWII, which made animistic tribes far more peaceful, as there was one movement to Christ after another there.

*In the path of your judgments, O LORD, we wait for you; your name and remembrance are the desire of our soul. —Isaiah 26:8*

- Pray that many from this people group will trust the Lord, obey Him, and glorify His name through their actions.
- Pray for Papuan Malay speakers to understand the vast difference that Jesus Christ makes in one's life, and cling to him no matter what the cost may be.

### ■ 7 Jambi in Indonesia

The Jambi, also known as the Jambi Malay, inhabit a lowland basin of dense jungles, peat bogs, swamps and rivers. Sadly, this pride now threatens their economic development. Many are unwilling to accept modernization and reform. Almost all Jambi are Muslim, and every village has a mosque or Prayer house, and often an Islamic religious school (madrasah). The Jambi sometimes believe that religious leaders, dwarfs and shamans have supernatural powers.

*You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, He did not make me; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, He has no understanding? —Isaiah 29:16*

- Pray that many from this people group will soon understand that they belong to God by right of His life-giving creation.
- Pray for greater educational help.
- Pray for the Jambi to learn new skills that will make them more competitive in the job market.
- Pray for more of the Jambi to hear and respond to the gospel.

### ■ 8 Java Banyumasan in Indonesia

Most of the Java Banyumasan people make their living from farming. They are fairly advanced in agricultural production. Although the majority are Muslim, most are nominal Muslims who also practice animism.

*And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken. —Isaiah 40:5*

- Pray that members of this people group will soon see the glory of the Lord and respond to it.
- Pray for the Lord to send mission workers to the Java Banyumasan to share his love and assist them in their agricultural efforts.
- Pray for a hunger for righteousness that would lead them to the cross and the empty grave.
- Pray for a massive harvest among the Java Banyumasan people this decade.

## ■ 9 Madura in Indonesia

The Madura are the third largest people group in Indonesia. They are known for their harsh character and lifestyles. This may be the result of their environment and a history of being oppressed by other people groups. The majority of the Madura are very devout Sunni Muslims. Nevertheless, many seek security through the use of magic spells and other attempts to control good and evil spirits.

*The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. —Isaiah 40:8*

- Meditate on this verse, and pray that members of this people group embrace it.
- Ask the Lord to draw many into His Kingdom, leading to a movement to Christ.
- Pray for mission workers to preach and demonstrate God's love to the Madura, assisting them with their education and occupational needs.

## ■ 10 Minangkabau in Indonesia

The Minangkabau people are well known for their tradition of merantau, which is going to distant areas to seek financial success. Many of them have moved to other islands in Indonesia to accomplish this. Individuals living outside their original home area are often somewhat open to new perspectives. Perhaps workers can seek these individuals and share the love of Jesus with them. Islam is firmly entrenched in the Minangkabau people as part of their identity.

*Behold, the LORD God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. —Isaiah 40:10*

- Pray for many from this people group to claim this verse by embracing the Lord.
- Pray for the Lord to move mightily in this people group this decade.
- Ask Him to establish His Kingdom and Church among the Minangkabau.



## ■ 11 Betawi in Indonesia

The Betawi people are descendants of the people who came to what is now Jakarta in the 15th century, and they currently live in areas surrounding Jakarta. Most farm rice, grow fruit and fish. Those in Jakarta are servants to the wealthy, craftsmen or traders. Though they are Muslim, the tenets of their religion have been changed to fit their culture.

*To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains. —Isaiah 40:18-19*

- Pray that this people group will soon understand that they can never form an idol that compares with the Lord.
- Pray for Betawi believers to disciple others in Christ's ways and that these new believers would disciple others as well.
- Pray that this would be a decade where there is a massive move of Christ among the Betawi people.

## ■ 12 Banjar in Indonesia

Although they are devout Muslims, the Banjar proudly trace their origins to a legendary Hindu kingdom, the Negara Dipa. The Banjar people do not look positively upon modern methods and technologies, nor do they mix socially with other people groups. This isolation has limited their development in education, health care, sanitation and water purification.

*Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. —Isaiah 40:28*

- Pray that they will soon understand that God is all-powerful and all-knowing.
- Pray that God would grant repentance and grace to those who need Christ and provide them opportunities to receive Him without fear.
- Pray for a move of the Holy Spirit among the Banjar people, leading to many faithful disciples.

### ■ 13 Balinese in Indonesia

Throughout the world, people know the Balinese for their artistic abilities. They live on or originated from the island of Bali. Most Balinese live in very close-knit villages. Hinduism is the primary religion of the Balinese. Even though Hinduism has greatly affected the culture, the Balinese have managed to maintain their original culture, so Balinese Hinduism differs from Indian Hinduism.

*But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. —Isaiah 40:31*

- Make this your prayer for today's people group.
- Pray that God would grant repentance and grace to those who need Christ and provide them opportunities to receive him without fear.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Balinese this decade.

### ■ 14 Southern Kurd in Iran

The Muslim Kurds in Iran are descendants of Aryan tribes that began migrating there from Central Asia in the 2nd millennium B.C. Kurds express their cultural identity freely but have no self-government or administration. During the 19th and 20th centuries, successive Iranian governments crushed Kurdish revolts. The Southern Kurds of Iran live primarily along the Iraq-Iran border in the provinces of Kermanshah and Luristan. They make their living in much the same way as their relatives in Turkey and Iraq: farming and raising cattle and goats.

*For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. —Isaiah 44:3*

- Pray that this blessing will soon reach today's people group.
- Pray for peace in Iran between the Kurdish minority and the Iranian government.
- Pray also for adequate rainfall for crops and livestock.
- Pray for an unstoppable movement to Christ.



### ■ 15 Gilaki in Iran

The Gilaki live in the southern coastal region of the Caspian Sea. The Apostle Bartholomew may have spent time evangelizing the Gilaki homeland around 50 A.D. Although Christianity was once a powerful presence here, now it is extremely weak. Today, the Gilaki are virtually all Muslim.

*Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,' —Isaiah 46:10*

- Thank the Lord that He alone can tell the future, and His plans for today's people group can never be stopped.
- Pray that the Gilaki people would increasingly hunger to receive forgiveness for their sin, forgiveness that only Jesus Christ can offer.
- Pray they would be dissatisfied with a religion that offers no pardon and no power for living.
- Pray for them to be sensitized to their need for a sin-free savior.

### ■ 16 Mazanderani in Iran

Most Mazanderani people live on the southeastern coast of the Caspian Sea, being primarily farmers and fishermen. They are closely related to neighboring Gilaki and Caucasian peoples, such as the Georgians and Armenians. Mazandaran was the last province in Iran to be converted to Islam. Today, nearly all Mazanderani people are Shia Muslims.

*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, Your God reigns. —Isaiah 52:7*

- Pray for the Lord to send people with "beautiful feet" to bring good news to today's people group.
- Pray for improving levels of literacy and learning among the Mazanderani people.
- Pray for them to hear of and respond to Bible portions in their own language, leading to a church planting movement.



### ■ 17 Iraqi Arab in Iraq

The ancient Christian Church has been a part of Iraqi culture for a very long time, but most are Muslim.

*The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. —Isaiah 52:10*

- Pray for today's people group to share in the victory of the Lord by becoming part of His family.
- Pray for protection of the faith of Iraqi Arab believers and for their families.
- Pray the Lord would encourage them and give them fruit from his Spirit: love, joy, and peace.
- Pray for peace, fairness and stability in Iraq.
- Pray the various factions in Iraq would give up hatred and revenge.
- Pray the current disorder would prepare them for the gospel of peace that Jesus offers.

### ■ 18 North Iraqi Arab in Iraq

The Muslim North Iraqi Arabs are very similar in language and culture to the Arab population we Prayed for yesterday. North Iraqi Arabs are incredibly diverse. Arabs are generally proud of their heritage, their mother tongue Arabic (or an Arabic dialect), and their culture of hospitality.

*Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. —Isaiah 54:2*

- Use this verse to pray for the Lord to expand His house to include today's people group.
- Pray that the Lord would open Iraqi eyes to see Christ as God in the flesh.
- Pray the Lord would protect Iraqis from terrorism and extremist violence.
- Ask the Lord to bless the government and to reveal Himself to those in power.
- Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches that will plant other churches.

### ■ 19 Urdu in Ireland

The term Urdu does not adequately describe the Urdu people as such but is merely a language distinction. Most Urdu speakers originate from Pakistan, but in recent years, many have immigrated to the West, including the United States, England and Ireland. Almost all are Sunni Muslim.

*Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. —Isaiah 55:1*

- Pray that this people group will soon accept God's offer of free salvation.
- Pray for a Book of Acts type of movement to Christ among Urdu speakers in Ireland.
- Pray for Urdu speaking people to understand and embrace that Jesus wants to bless their families and neighborhoods.
- Pray for Holy Spirit anointed believers from the Urdu speaking community to change their society from within.

### ■ 20 Yahudic Jew in Israel

Have you ever heard of the "Yahudic" Jews? They are Jews who settled in the area now called Iraq after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BC and Romans in 70 AD. Almost all of these Iraqi Jews have left Iraq and moved to Israel. For hundreds of years, they have been regarded as the leading scholars of the Jewish world.

*Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. —Isaiah 55:3*

- Pray for this people to have wide open ears to the words of the Lord.
- Pray that God would stir the hearts of Christ followers to share the good news of the perfect Jew, Jesus the Messiah.
- Pray that the Lord would raise up a Christ-ward movement among the Yahudic Jews of Israel in this decade.



## ■ 21 Israeli Jew in Israel

Sabra Jews are those born in the land of Israel, particularly since the founding of the Jewish State in 1948. "Sabra" is derived from the Hebrew name of the prickly pear cactus. The allusion is to a tenacious, thorny desert plant with a thick hide that conceals a sweet, softer interior. This is their description of themselves, the Israeli Jews in Israel.

*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. —Isaiah 55:7*

- Pray for true and lasting repentance to come to this people group.
- Pray the Lord would give Jewish families understanding as they hear about the love of Christ.
- Pray that the veil over their spiritual eyes would increasingly be lifted, allowing them to accurately see Jesus as their Messiah.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to move powerfully among Israeli Jewish leaders.

## ■ 22 Italian Jew in Italy

What event comes to mind when you hear the year 1492? Yes, most think of Columbus' landing in the New World. The date 1492 is also important because it is the year that Spain expelled its entire Jewish population. Some of these Jews who were forced to leave Spain ended up in the area we now call Italy.

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. —Isaiah 55:8-9*

- Pray that today's people group will understand that God's ways are far higher than theirs.
- Ask the Lord to open the spiritual hearts of the Italian Jews.
- Pray the Lord would move believers in Italy to make redemptive friendships with their Jewish neighbors.
- Pray for God to raise up a Christ-ward movement among the Italian Jews.

## ■ 23 Shawiya Berber in Italy

The Shawiya Berbers were shepherds and farmers from Algeria. Being in the mountains rather than the lowlands, the Shawiya avoided much of the Arab influence that pervaded the lowland areas, enabling them to maintain their own language, culture,

customs, and social organization. Most remain in Northern Africa, though a few have immigrated to European countries like Italy to seek better job opportunities.

*Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, The LORD will surely separate me from his people; and let not the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree. —Isaiah 56:3*

- Pray that many from today's people group will put all their hope in the Lord.
- Pray for the hearts of the Shawiya in Italy to be open and receptive to the gospel.
- Pray for the Shawiya to know and experience the transforming love of God.
- Pray for the Shawiya to be equipped and connected with discipleship, and to spread the gospel to their families back in Algeria.



## ■ 24 Youjiang Zhuang in China

The Youjiang is one of several people groups under the Zhuang designation. Aside from having shared linguistic roots, they are all thought to be descendants of the same intermingling between the Bai Yue and the Han convicts exiled during the Qin Dynasty. The Youjiang people revere the spirits of water, forest, mountain, village, etc., and they take great care not to offend the surrounding spirits.

*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn. —Isaiah 61:1-3a*

- Pray for these blessings for today's people group!
- Pray that there would be a sweeping spiritual awakening among the Youjiang and a sound movement of discipleship and training for God's kingdom.

■ 25 Yaeyama in Japan

Once independent merchants who sailed to China, today the Yaeyama are mostly farmers. They are one of several people groups living in the Ryukyu Islands to the southwest of Japan’s mainland. The family is central to Yaeyama culture and life, and they dislike being alone. They spend any time available with families or friends. The Yaeyama are considered Buddhist, though traditional shamanistic practices are still prevalent.

*Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed. —Isaiah 61:9*

- Pray that those who live near today’s people group will want their spiritual blessings after they submit to the Lord Almighty.
- Pray that Yaeyama believers may be given opportunities to spread the gospel in their own communities and among their own people.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Yaeyama and for strong churches to be raised up among them.

■ 26 Miyako Ryukyuan in Japan

During the early 1400s, the Miyako Ryukyuan had their own kingdom, though the powerful empires of both China and Japan had an interest in taking control of it. The Japanese proved more adept, and their islands became a part of the Japanese Empire. The traditional religion of the Miyako Ryukyuan was a version of shamanism. During the 1920s, Shintoism and Buddhism vied for prominence, and today the Ryukyuan adhere to a mixture of the two, blended with traditional shamanism.

*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. —Isaiah 61:10*

- Pray for the garment of salvation to come to this people group.
- Pray for church planting movements among the Ryukyuan that will be sound in doctrine and fervent in love.
- Pray that they would discover the dignity of belonging to the King of kings.



■ 27 Toku-No-Shima in Japan

Toku-No-Shima Island was first mentioned in a Japanese chronicle in the 720s. The people of this island are known for having the highest birth rate in Japan, along with a high percentage of people who live beyond 100 years. The Toku-No-Shima hold traditional beliefs in unseen gods, demons and ancestral spirits, as well as “kami,” who controls the other spirits and must be continually appeased.

*You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. —Isaiah 62:3*

- Pray for this blessing to come to today’s people group.
- Pray for the Lord to move powerfully among Toku-No-Shima leaders, so they will open the door to their people embracing Christ.
- Pray for workers to go and for hearts to be open.
- Pray that by the end of this decade, there would be Toku-No-Shima believers sharing Christ with the Japanese majority and starting church planting movements.

■ 28 Jordanian Arab in Jordan

A minority of Jordanian Arabs are highly educated and serve in the highest levels of society. The middle-class work in businesses, factories, education and as government employees, but most Jordanian Arabs live at the poverty level. They work in agriculture on land owned by others as day laborers and herdsmen.

*All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word. —Isaiah 66:2*

- Pray for the Lord to give humility and a fear of Him to this people group that will lead to them being blessed beyond measure.
- Pray that the believers in Jordan would gain a vision and burden to share the good news with their neighbors.
- Pray for a church planting movement among the Jordanian Arabs in this decade.
- Ask the Lord to make the Jordanian Arabs into a ripe harvest field in the kingdom of God.

## ■ 29 Kabardian in Jordan

Kabardian people hail from Russia's northwestern Caucasus, but some now live in Jordan. Unfortunately, equal to hospitality as a cultural value is the code of blood revenge. Once they were characterized by folk Islam. Attacks and counterattacks between Kabardian rebels and military/police both claim innocent lives and exacerbate instability, deepening bitterness and mistrust in the region.

*From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD. —Isaiah 66:23*

- Pray that soon all mankind will bow in humble submission to the Lord Almighty.
- Pray that spiritual barriers that have kept the gospel from advancing among the Kabardians would be broken down.
- Pray for divinely prepared people who would share the gospel throughout Kabardian relational networks.
- Pray that a reproducing, culturally relevant church planting movement would begin among Kabardian leaders and families.

## ■ 30 Kazakh in Kazakhstan

Kazakh people are descendants of Turkic tribes, Mongol groups and Indo-Iranian tribes, which populated the vast territory between Siberia and the Black Sea. The Kazakh nation, which amalgamated nomadic tribes of various Kazakh origins, preserved the distant memory of the original founding clans.

*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations. —Jeremiah 1:5*

- Pray for the Lord to thrust out many prophets from every nation to every nation in the 2020s.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to nurture a movement to Christ and cause church plants that will begin with leaders and influence entire Kazakh families.
- Pray for the Lord to provide Kazakhstan abundant rain as a testimony of his goodness and power.

## ■ 31 Meskhetian Turk in Kazakhstan

Meskhetian Turks arrived in Kazakhstan in 1944. They live in closely knit rural communities that are largely integrated into Kazakh society. Turkish businesspeople are investing in this country, and Meskhetian Turks act as a bridge between Turkish and Kazakh businessmen.

*Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant. —Jeremiah 1:9-10*

- Pray for Christ's ambassadors to be careful to speak only what God tells them to say when they go to the nations.
- Pray the Lord would awaken an interest among Meskhetian Turks to know Jesus personally.
- Pray for tribal leaders and family heads to understand their need for the one true God as their sin-bearer, and that this realization would affect all families.
- Pray for the Lord to bless the Meskhetian Turks in such a way they will know of his goodness and power.

## AUGUST

### ■ 1 Ajuran Somali in Kenya

The Ajuran Somali living in northeastern Kenya have their roots in the Muslim Ajuran dynasty in Somalia. The Ajuran ruled over much of the Horn of Africa in the Middle Ages. During the Ajuran period, many peoples in the southern part of the Horn of Africa converted to Islam. At the end of the 17th century, the Ajuran state disintegrated into several successor kingdoms.

*And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, 'As the LORD lives,' even as they taught my people to swear by Baal, then they shall be built up in the midst of my people. —Jeremiah 12:16*

- Pray for today's people to become well established in their devotion to the Lord alone.
- Pray that influential people within the Ajuran tribe, such as the imams, would be given a growing interest in Jesus. Perhaps He will reveal Himself to some in a vision or dream.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Ajuran people.

## ■ 2 Orma in Kenya

The Orma are semi-nomadic herders who live in the bushlands of south-eastern Kenya. All of life for the Orma focuses on the welfare of their cattle and other livestock. The Orma are nearly all Muslim, who converted to Islam three or four generations ago. Apathy among Christians in Kenya is one of the major obstacles in reaching every people group in that nation.

*We acknowledge our wickedness, O LORD, and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against you. —Jeremiah 14:20*

- Pray that soon leaders among this people group will repent of their sins and lead others to do the same.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Orma people.
- Pray for adequate rainfall for the Orma people and for their livestock.
- Pray for peaceful relations with neighboring tribes.

## ■ 3 Korean in North Korea

If God were to provide a stark spiritual and economic contrast for the world to see, it would be the Koreans. Their country was divided after Japanese colonialism ended in 1945. Today, the south has one of the most mission-minded churches worldwide. The communist north, by contrast, has been the leading persecutors of believers, and the church is entirely underground.

*Therefore, behold, I will make them know, this once I will make them know my power and my might, and they shall know that my name is the LORD. —Jeremiah 16:21*

- Pray that today's people group will understand from the heart that God is all powerful, and He can give or withhold blessings.
- Pray for North Korean believers to be so full of the fruit and the power of the Holy Spirit that they spread hope and joy to their suffering neighbors and family members.
- Pray for them to have a Holy Spirit-directed love, even for their many enemies.



## ■ 4 Deaf in North Korea

None of the schools for the Deaf in North Korea are in the capital Pyongyang. A big problem is getting to meet with and diagnosing preschool children who are at home with their families, who do not have knowledge of deafness and the help they can receive. There is a Deaf North Korean football team that travels abroad from North Korea. North Korean Sign Language is like (South) Korean Sign Language.

*Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. —Jeremiah 17:7*

- Pray that today's people group will put all their trust and confidence in the Lord only.
- Pray that when they travel abroad, the deaf North Korean footballers would be given the gospel message, come to Jesus Christ, and lead others to him when they return.
- Pray for top-down spiritual conversion of government leaders.

## ■ 5 Khmer in South Korea

The Khmer people speak Khmer, the national language of Cambodia. There is a sizable Khmer population in northwest South Korea, working mostly in industry. Khmer are Buddhist although relics of ethnic religions such as ancestor worship (praying to deceased ancestors) and spirit worship are very real.

*Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my praise. —Jeremiah 17:14*

- Pray for this people group to seek and find the Lord's healing touch.
- Pray for a chain reaction of Khmer families reaching families, resulting in thousands of new believers who share their faith with others.
- Pray that churches and believers would bless their entire people group in such a way that God's love will change the Khmer people like yeast changes dough.

## ■ 6 Zuojiang Zhuang in China

The Zhuang are a collection of related Central Tai language groups, which have been combined to form China's official Zhuang nationality. There are many subtribes and clans among the Zhuang, and one of them is the Zuojiang. Religiously, the Zhuang worship nature spirits. They are animists, and all Zhuang groups are unreached.

*Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. —Jeremiah 29:12*

- Pray that this blessing will reach today's people group soon.
- Pray for revival among Han and Zuojiang believers that would lead them to reaching each Zhuang group.
- Pray that the Zuojiang Zhuang would see that the Lord is sovereign and worthy of all their praise.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among every Zhuang group.

## ■ 7 Mahra in Kuwait

The Al-Mahrah tribe or Mahra make up the largest tribe dwelling in their original homeland, Yemen's Socotra Island. Many live elsewhere, including mainland Yemen, Oman, Somalia or Kuwait.

*You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. —Jeremiah 29:13*

- Pray that today's people group will seek the Lord will all their hearts and find Him to be merciful, loving and powerful.
- Pray for spiritual openness among this solidly Muslim people.
- Pray for opportunities for Mahra people in Kuwait to hear of the love, grace, mercy and power of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Pray for a movement to Christ to spread through Mahra communities, not only in Kuwait but also in Oman, Yemen and Somalia.



## ■ 8 Dungan in Kyrgyzstan

A mixture of Chinese, Muslim and Russian cultures blend together to create the unique Dungan culture. A proud, hospitable, nationalistic and conservative people, the Dungan are famous for their hospitality. They hold many ceremonies and banquets to preserve their former culture. The older people strictly observe Islamic law, but the younger Dungan seem unconcerned about religion.

*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. —Jeremiah 31:33*

- Pray for today's people group to become the Lord's people!
- Pray for peace in Kyrgyzstan, and for a stable, effective and just government.
- Pray spiritual hunger would affect every Dungan family and clan in Kyrgyzstan.
- Pray for a movement to Christ that would bless all the Dungan people.

## ■ 9 Lao in Laos

The Lao began migrating southward from China in the first millennium after Christ, and which now politically and culturally dominate other Laotian groups. Theravada Buddhism plays a dominant influence in Lao culture. The communist government strictly censors content from the outside world, but many Laotians access the outside world through Thai television programs.

*Not like these is he who is the portion of Jacob, for he is the one who formed all things, and Israel is the tribe of his inheritance; the LORD of hosts is his name. —Jeremiah 51:19*

- Pray for today's people group to soon become part of the Lord's inheritance.
- Pray for Lao followers of Jesus to effectively show how Jesus blesses and heals families and communities.
- Pray the Lao would not find satisfaction in their current spiritual condition.
- Pray for the Lord to lead the Lao people to a relationship with Christ that would bless their entire nation.

### ■ 10 Latvian Jew in Latvia

Are you able to find the small nation of Latvia on a world map? Latvia is located between Estonia and Lithuania. Need more help? Latvia is northeast of Poland on the Baltic Sea in Eastern Europe. Jews have lived in Latvia for centuries. Tragically, 90% of the Latvian Jews were murdered in the Holocaust of WWII. Most of the Jews now living in Latvia moved there from other parts of the former Soviet Union after 1991.

*But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, says my soul, therefore I will hope in him. —Lamentations 3:21-24*

- Pray that soon members of today's people group will embrace the love and compassion of the Lord. Pray that they become part of His portion.
- Ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers to the Jews of Latvia.
- Ask God to anoint the gospel as it goes forth through radio and TV in Latvia.

### ■ 11 Druze in Lebanon

Adherents of the Druze religion live in Lebanon, Israel and Syria. It is an offshoot of Islam and appeared in the ninth century A.D. They are firmly monotheistic. Druze hold the Koran as sacred. They also have their own inspired scripture called the Book of Wisdom. Druze believe in the transmigration of the soul. That is, at death, one's soul is instantaneously reincarnated, and it is reborn into another life. Druze do not evangelize or accept converts into their religion.

*And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. —Ezekiel 34:23*

- Pray for today's people group to submit to the one true shepherd, Jesus Christ.
- Pray that many Druze living outside of their homeland become followers of Jesus Christ.
- Pray that believing Druze would go to Lebanon and tell their family and friends about the savior.

### ■ 12 Western Ghao-Xong in China

The Western Ghao-Xong people's high mountain lifestyle shows their longstanding values of perseverance and freedom. Fierce warriors, they fought long for their tribe's independence. They avoided defeat by their inaccessibility and fortitude. They worship many spirits which separate them from the Lord.

*I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. —Ezekiel 36:25-27*

- Pray for this people group to find spiritual cleansing in Jesus Christ.
- Pray that the gospel would be quickly translated into the Ghao-Xong mother tongue, and the hope of Jesus's victory would spread into a movement of Christ-worshippers.

### ■ 13 Vai in Liberia

The Vai are one of more than twenty different tribes in Liberia. Most of the Vai are farmers, growing rice and vegetables for one or two years before the farmer must move to a new plot. The Vai are also known as tailors and craftsmen. However, modernization is changing their way of life.

*The king answered and said to Daniel, Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery. —Daniel 2:47*

- Pray that leaders among this people group will understand that God alone can reveal truth to them. Pray that they will cease to look to any other.
- Pray that presenting Jesus as a person of power against spirits would win a hearing for the gospel and open them to missionary presence.
- Pray for mission agencies to adopt the Vai for planting strong churches that would plant even more churches.



### ■ 14 Gola in Liberia

The Gola are said to be one the earliest tribes to settle in Liberia, and like their Kissi neighbors, they have lighter skin than other Liberian groups. They are known as a very proud people. They are organized into clans, which tend to be more like territorial units rather than kinship groups. For a majority of the Gola, life revolves around farming. They are largely Muslim yet incorporate features of traditional African religions. In some regions they perform animal sacrifices.

*Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. —Daniel 3:28*

- Pray that leaders of this people group will be as amazed at the works of God as this Babylonian king.
- Pray that they will worship God alone.
- Pray the Gola people would be given an increasing interest in knowing and serving Jesus Christ.
- Pray for a massive movement to Christ among the Gola people this decade.

### ■ 15 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 influence has made them one of the gentler of the Bedouin tribes. Although the Bedouin once considered it degrading to have manual labor jobs, this has changed somewhat in recent years.

*Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble. —Daniel 4:37*

- Pray for leaders of this people group to repent before the Lord Almighty like this king.
- Pray for peace in Libya, and that there would be a growing openness to Jesus among all the tribes in the land, including the Sanusi Bedouins.
- Pray for Sanusi leaders to find the Lord, and disciple others in His ways.

### ■ 16 Chakma in India

Chakma inhabit Bangladesh and adjoining areas of northeast India. In India the Chakma are a scheduled (officially designated) tribe. Experiencing turmoil and an uncertain future, they need the inner peace and hope that only faith in Christ can bring.

*And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. —Daniel 7:14*

- Pray that many from today's people group will understand and respond to the fact that Jesus Christ has an eternal kingdom. Pray for them to worship their eternal King of kings!
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Chakma people that would give them the peace and certainty they need to live victorious lives.
- Pray for the Lord to show them the way to the cross and the empty grave.

### ■ 17 Karaite Jew in Lithuania

The Karaite form of Judaism is so strange that Russian Tsars categorized them as non-Jews. So did the Nazis. Thus, they escaped Russia's pogroms and the Nazi holocaust. But Karaites know they are true Jews. They follow only the Tanach, the Jewish Bible, rejecting rabbinic interpretations. They allow each believer to make his or her own interpretation. Unlike most Jewish communities, men and women can exercise authority in their groups.

*Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, You are not my people, it shall be said to them, Children of the living God. —Hosea 1:10*

- Pray that this people group soon become children of the living God.
- Ask God to raise up Messianic Jews to go as his ambassadors to the Karaites.
- Pray for them to come alongside them to spread the fame of the only Messiah.





### ■ 18 Albanian in North Macedonia

The collapse of Albania's communist regime in 1991 brought on numerous traumatic and rapid changes in Albania, leaving the people with an identity crisis. Hurt, angry and confused, they are now struggling to find their identity in a country (Albania) that is considered to be Europe's poorest and least developed. As a result, some have migrated to other countries like Macedonia.

*I will return again to my place, until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face, and in their distress earnestly seek me.* —Hosea 5:15

- Pray that the troubles of this people group cause them to seek the Lord and find Him.
- Ask the Lord to raise up strong local churches among the Albanians in Macedonia that would multiply themselves many times over.
- Pray for the Lord to show Himself loving and powerful to them.

### ■ 19 Ndzwani Comorian in Madagascar

Many of the Comorians now residing in Madagascar initially came to Madagascar seeking better socio-economic conditions. Many university students from the Comoros study in Madagascar. Comorian life in Madagascar centers around commerce with most families involved in some form of trading. The religion of the Comorians is Islam with a strong emphasis upon folk and animistic elements. Charms, magic, trances, demon possession and curses are an integral part of their religious practice.

*Yet even now, declares the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.* —Joel 2:12

- Pray that this people group turns to the Lord and repents of their sins.
- Pray Comorians would gain a growing interest in Jesus and put their faith in His work on the cross.
- Pray they would experience the abundant life offered by the only Savior.

### ■ 20 Muslim Yao in Malawi

Though they originated in Mozambique, the majority of Yao people now live in Malawi. The Yao people migrated in the 1800s due to famines and tribal divisions and befriended their new neighbors. Though they live in a land where the Church is strong, the Yao are folk Muslims.

*And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.* —Joel 2:28

- Pray that this people group receives the gift of the Holy Spirit as they turn to the Lord.
- Pray that their cultural walls would be lowered and that they would know the true love of God.
- Pray for invested workers and discipleship movements to spring up among them in Malawi.

### ■ 21 Orang Negeri Minang in Malaysia

The Orang Negeri are a Minangkabau people from West Sumatra, Indonesia, with a distinct culture and their own royal line that dates back several centuries. The Minang place great emphasis on their women. In order to protect the rights of the female, the name and property are passed down through the line of the mother. The Minang are devout Muslims in spite of their matrilineal heritage.

*For behold, he who forms the mountains and creates the wind, and declares to man what is his thought, who makes the morning darkness, and treads on the heights of the earth—the LORD, the God of hosts, is his name!* —Amos 4:13

- Pray that this people group seeks and finds the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.
- Pray that God's Word become available to those who are seeking Him.
- May the unique culture of the Minangkabau be preserved and blessed as a culture designed by the All-Compassionate One.
- Pray for preservation of the culture while accommodating the truth personified by Jesus.





## ■ 22 Mamak in Malaysia

The Mamak live a simple life. They are not attracted to technology or education. Most live in settlements that are spread throughout rubber tree forests. Most Mamak people fuse animistic and Islamic beliefs. They believe in spirits that inhabit various places and things. They believe that ancestral treasures, such as a keris (a ceremonial knife), certain weapons and clothes have magical powers.

*But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. —Amos 5:24*

- Pray that God's justice and righteousness prevail in the society of this people group.
- Pray for reliable health care for the Mamak people.
- Pray for good schools and dedicated teachers.
- Pray they would find their way to Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

## ■ 23 Maldivian in the Maldives

Most of the Maldivians are fishermen, merchants and boat builders who take advantage of their position in the center of Indian Ocean trade routes. Despite their trade travels, the Maldivians have been influenced little by the outside world especially since the tourist industry is strong on their island homeland. The Maldivian's version of Islam has more to do with rituals and folk beliefs than anything else.

*Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD God, when I will send a famine on the land— not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. —Amos 8:11*

- Pray that the Bible becomes available to this people group. Pray that they listen to and obey the words of the Lord.
- Pray that the people of the Maldives would soon be delivered from fear.
- Pray for an unstoppable movement to Christ among the Maldivian people that would spread from family to family.

## ■ 24 Idaksahak in Mali

The Idaksahak (meaning "Sons of Isaac") formerly were herders for Tuareg nobles, in return for their protection. This relationship has now broken down and there is less mixing of the Idaksahak with the Tuaregs, except they use the same watering holes and they trade at the same markets. Some have become settled farmers.

*He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? —Micah 6:8*

- Pray that this people group learns to walk humbly with the Lord.
- Pray for good schools to be made available for the children, and for parents to recognize the importance of education.
- Pray for adequate rain so the livestock will do well.
- Pray for Idaksahak believers to make more disciples until every family is reached for Christ.

## ■ 25 Duun in Mali

The majority of the Duun practice various ethnic religions, and a sizable minority is Muslim. Like many other West African tribes, the Duun practice the tradition of worshipping dead ancestors. The people also believe that the "supreme god" is too distant to worship directly and that, therefore, the only way to serve him or to worship him is through a spirit.

*Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. —Micah 7:18*

- Pray that this people begin to experience the unfailing love of God and come to the knowledge of Christ.
- Pray for adequate rainfall for the crops and livestock of the Duun people as a testimony of God's power and love.
- Pray for Duun families to turn their lives to Jesus Christ.

## ■ 26 Maltese Jew in Malta

For religious Jews, God is the Supreme Being, the Creator of the universe, and the ultimate Judge of human affairs. Beyond this, the religious beliefs of the Jewish communities vary greatly. European Jews are extremely diverse in religious practice even in Malta.

*The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him. —Nahum 1:7*

- Pray that this people group takes refuge in the Lord.
- Pray that the Jewish people in Malta would understand that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah.
- Ask the Lord to soften their hearts towards Christ.
- Pray that God would grant Jewish believers favor as they share their faith in Christ with their own people.
- Pray that strong local churches would be raised up in each Jewish community.

### ■ 27 Moor in Mauritania

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

*Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith. —Habakkuk 2:4*

- Pray that this people group become faithful to God and not trust in themselves.
- Pray each individual in the Moor community would be prepared for the gospel message when it comes to them.

### ■ 28 Bushi in Mayotte

The Bushi (or Sakalava) people of Mayotte have their origins on the nearby island of Madagascar. The latter half of the 19th century brought immigration of the Malagasy to Mayotte island. It is these immigrants and plantation workers that are today known as the Bushi. The older generation live according to the traditional ways. The younger generations are beginning to seek the things of the west such as material wealth. Islam is their identity.

*Yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. —Habakkuk 3:18*

- Pray this people group learns to rejoice in the Lord and His salvation.
- Pray the Lord would prepare their hearts to receive and believe the gospel when it comes to them.
- Pray for a hunger for the truth - Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.

### ■ 29 Huichol in Mexico

The Huichol refer to themselves as Wixárika or simply "people." This kind of autonym is widespread in Mexico as well as much of the rest of the world. Historically, the rough topography of their homeland insulated them from outside influences. They held out against Spanish colonialism for years and always maintained a high degree of self-rule. Today the Huichol are no longer as isolated and are integrating into the general Mexican society and economy.

*Thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. —Haggai 1:7*

- Pray that this people group consider their ways and turn to the Lord.
- Pray that God would strengthen and encourage missionaries presently working among the Huichol.
- Pray that God would give Huichol believers boldness to share the love of Jesus with their own people.

### ■ 30 Buddhist Bodh in India

It is very difficult to grow enough crops or support livestock the land where the Bodh people live. But their spiritual lives are even more difficult. They depend on shamans to take care of their spiritual needs, and the spirits demands a price. The Bodh people live without a God of love and mercy.

*And many nations shall join themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people. And I will dwell in your midst, and you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. —Zechariah 2:11*

- Pray that this people group would be among the many nations that soon join themselves to the Lord.
- Ask God to lead faithful workers to reach out to the Bodh people with the message of salvation.
- Pray that the Bible and gospel recordings would be translated and widely distributed.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Bodh people that would shake the foundations of their spiritual lives and bless them for eternity.

### ■ 31 Bhotia in India

The Sikkimese Bhotia are located in India's northern state of Sikkim along the southern slopes of the Himalayas. Essentially all Buddhist groups in India today are groups who migrated from neighboring Buddhist countries (through choice or to avoid conflict), or who live along the borders with these countries. The basic lifestyle of Buddhist groups in India is not too different from the lifestyle of Hindus. The differences are only found in their religious practices.

*And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one. —Zechariah 14:9*

- Pray that this people group would learn to worship the Lord and king of all the earth.
- Ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers to work among the Sikkimese Bhotia.
- Ask the Lord to bring forth a strong and growing Sikkimese Bhotia church for the glory of his name.

# YOUR CHURCH DOESN'T HAVE TO DO MISSIONS ALONE.

**When you partner with Frontiers, we'll help you:**

- Pursue your church's global vision through one-on-one coaching.
- Apply efficient strategies based on experience and proven results.
- Send trained workers who are more effective and stay on the field longer.

**Frontiers will be by your side, from launching your vision to helping your workers thrive on the field. Together, we can make disciples among the least-reached Muslim peoples of the world.**

**Partner With Frontiers Today**

Visit [frontiersUSA.org/churches](https://frontiersUSA.org/churches)

or call 800-462-8436



**FRONTIER  
VENTURES**

PO Box 41450 Pasadena CA 91114-8450

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**



# 1 in 5 people . . .

have **NO ACCESS** to the Bible in their own language!

Help **24:14 Movements** accelerate Bible translation / access, so these people have their first chance ever to hear God's Word, become disciples and multiply!

You can give through  
**BEYOND** — (a 2414 participant)  
[beyond.org/give-2414](https://beyond.org/give-2414)

  
**24:14**

 **BEYOND**