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A MAGAZINE OF FRONTIER VENTURES
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The Changing Seasons of Life and Ministry

By RICK WOOD, Editor

As I write this, there is snow covering the ground and flocking the blue spruces surrounding my home. It is a scene worthy of a Christmas card. But soon the snow will melt, and those blue spruces will be burgeoning with new life and growth. It is the normal change in seasons that I anticipate and rejoice in each year. Likewise, Frontier Ventures and *Mission Frontiers* are entering a new season in the life of our respective organizations. In recent years, Frontier Ventures has sold off its campus properties in Pasadena, California which Dr. Ralph Winter purchased in 1976. Frontier Ventures has moved to a more decentralized organizational structure, which no longer needs such a large physical footprint in Pasadena.

I arrived on that campus in Pasadena in July of 1990 and Dr. Ralph Winter gave me the great honor of

selecting me to be the managing editor for *Mission Frontiers*. I served under Dr. Winter for many years. It was a life-changing experience for me to be mentored by the most insightful and remarkable Christian leader I have ever known. In 2008, Dr. Winter again gave me the supreme honor of asking me to take over for him as editor of *Mission Frontiers* shortly before his passing. Like Dr. Winter, I have sought to blaze new trails in mission strategy in the pages of *MF* by focusing on the movements to Christ that are now transforming the world of missions.

But my work with *Mission Frontiers* has not been without its challenges. All my life I have had functional sight in just one eye and my vision has gotten worse with age. It is hard to do all the reading required to produce *MF* under these circumstances. But I have been able to function reasonably well

until later last year when my vision took a sudden turn for the worse. By God's grace, my vision has largely recovered since then, but this incident has helped me to recognize that I cannot continue to carry the entire editorial burden of producing great content for *MF* by myself. A new season has come for me and *Mission Frontiers*. We are looking for the next editor and when we find that person, my ministry will transition into the new role of editor emeritus, where I will provide support and help smooth the transition.

If you know someone who would be interested in applying for this role, please contact us at editor@missionfrontiers.org.

For those who are concerned that the focus of *Mission Frontiers* might shift from fostering Kingdom Movements in all peoples in this transition,

please be assured that any editor that we select will share this same commitment to fostering movements. This is at the heart of the purpose and vision of *Mission Frontiers*.



I want to thank you, our readers, for allowing me to invest in your lives through the pages of *Mission Frontiers* over the last 33 years. It has been the greatest privilege of my life to serve you as the editor of *Mission Frontiers*. While transitions are rarely easy, I am comforted by the knowledge that Jesus is walking with me throughout all the changing seasons of life. MF

A NEW SEASON, A NEW EDITOR

MF has been guided by the faithful hand of Rick Wood for decades, and now it is time to raise up the next generation to take on the editorial duties. Interested in applying? Please go to missionfrontiers.org to find a link to the job description and instructions on applying.





Women in Mission





the quiet majority

Time and again, women with PhDs or decades of field experience have told me “but I’m not a missiologist” in response to invitations to write for MF. But those are the women whose writing I want to read. Their voices are worth hearing, and we the listeners will be the better for hearing them.

With that in mind, this issue on Women in Mission is neither a rant nor a token to mollify. It was an opportunity to create space for oft overlooked thinkers, leaders, and lovers of missiology. It is about intentionally pulling to the forefront voices that represent roughly two-thirds of God’s mission force.

Within this issue you’ll find keen insight and strategy to spur movements to Jesus among the unreached. Other articles share how the Lord is moving in the world or show deep vulnerability as they touch on acute subjects that impact women—married and single. The collection of content is rich.

You’ve been invited to a feast. Dig in and enjoy.

—DG WYNN, guest editor





HOUSE OF HOPE

By **ANITA RAHMA**

Anita Rahma and her family have lived and served in a slum in Jakarta for the past 12 years with Servants to Asia's Urban Poor (servantsasia.org) in partnership with VM Missions (vmmissions.org). rahma@servantsasia.org or instagram at [anitarahma101](https://www.instagram.com/anitarahma101)

Fetri's clothes were dirty, her cloth face mask was ginormous, and her nails had black dirt under them. She had some type of ear infection and there was a smelly liquid coming out of her ears. But she was one of our students and we could not cringe or hide away from her. The invitation is always to welcome such children—to welcome them and to view them as lovely children that God has made in His image. Beneath the dirt, behind the smell, and in spite of the apparent ugliness of poverty, these children are beautiful.

I moved to Indonesia 12 years ago as a single, female missionary. I came to join a new team that

had launched a year prior. Servants to Asia's Urban Poor sends teams to live and serve in urban slum communities, seeking to pray for and work towards transformation in such communities. We tie our well-being to the well-being of the communities we move into. As the prophet Jeremiah wrote, *But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare* (Jer. 29:7).

For the first year, I needed to be a learner. I had to learn the language, the culture, and how to survive in a slum. During that time our community faced a devastating fire (unfortunately fires are all too

frequent realities in slum communities), and then an even more devastating eviction. But I continued to believe that the Lord had called me to this city and to this people group. I learned that God was inviting me to meet Him amongst the least of these; I was finding Jesus in the slums.

Now, for the past 10 years, I have been living and serving in a new slum community. I met and married a wonderful Indonesian Christian man, and together we serve the Lord with our family and team on the outskirts of Jakarta, one of the largest cities in the world.

When we first moved to this community, we did not know how we should respond to the pressing needs all around us. Many of our neighbors make their livings through garbage collecting and scavenging for recycling. There are literally piles of rotting trash throughout the neighborhood, often burning, sending black smoke billowing in whichever direction the wind is blowing. Children grow up on top of trash; their playgrounds are old tires and whatever treasures the garbage brings today. Rats, mosquitos, scabies, and cockroaches are just part of life, co-existing with the humans who make their homes here. What could we offer in this place? How could we share Jesus' tangible love with the community the Lord had placed us in?

House of Hope has opened doors for us over the past decade. It has allowed us to build relationships and get to know hundreds of families in this primarily Muslim slum community.

We started trying things. What began as a daily coloring club with children in the community grew into a Monday through Friday kindergarten and after-school program. What started as being a good neighbor, letting children play UNO in our living room, has grown into "House of Hope." Currently at House of Hope, we have five Muslim women from the neighborhood working with our four Christian teammates. As we work together, we are able to teach over 100 children a day. We have a real focus

on literacy, helping children excel in reading, so that when they begin elementary school they have a head start. Without House of Hope, most of these children would not have access to attending kindergarten. We hope to lower the rate of elementary school dropouts and hope to encourage children staying in school until middle or high school!

Many students are like Fitri. Sometimes their clothes are dirty, snot covers their faces, and lice crawl in their hair. But the Lord has taught me not to cringe, not to shrink back from loving them. Because, in reality, I am also like Fitri. I am dirty, I am a sinner—I fall down and mess up. And yet the Lord loves me. The Lord embraces me. And the Lord wants me to do the same to Fitri and all the other precious children I get to encounter in this place. The Lord does not see me or these children as ugly—He sees us as His wonderful creations.

Over one billion people in our world today live in urban slum communities, which is a very overwhelming statistic. I am not very good at thinking about these large global figures; it can make me freeze as I consider the enormous physical and spiritual needs not yet being met. But I want to do my part to share Jesus' love and hope with the people in *this particular slum*, in this particular city. I want to "stop for the one," as Heidi Baker talks about in her book *There is Always Enough*. I want to see each person in front of me as an opportunity to love, as an opportunity to witness to God's kingdom.

House of Hope has opened doors for us over the past decade. It has allowed us to build relationships and get to know hundreds of families in this primarily Muslim slum community. We are able to pray for people when they are sick, share stories about Jesus, and even study Scripture together. And while we plant seeds and wait for the Lord to bring the growth, we continue to witness to Christ's love through teaching children to read and write.

Loving people is hard work. There are no shortcuts in compassion. It takes time, sweat, and immense patience. As the years pass, as I watch my two boys grow up here, I am in awe of what God has done. In this place the Lord has taught me so much—about trust, about community, about finding Jesus among

the least of these. I have been forever changed by my encounters with God in this place.

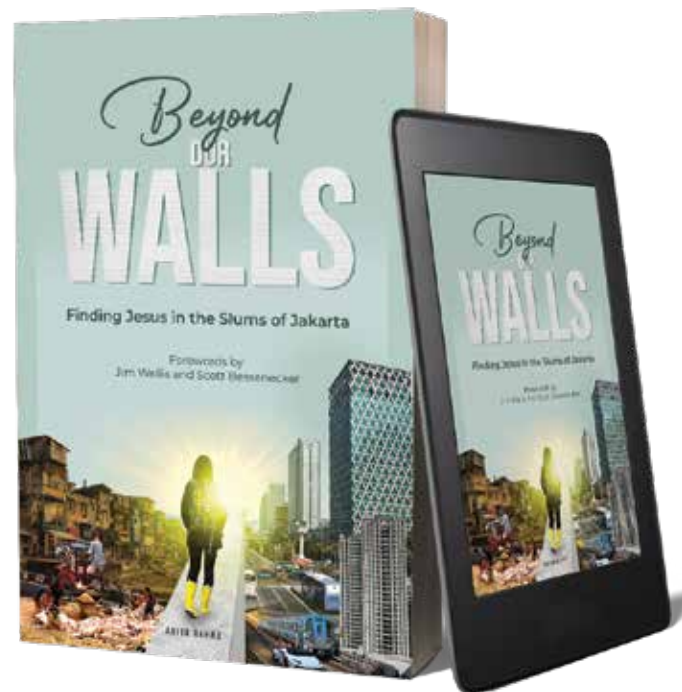
One day, early in our time in this particular slum community, there was a big rain storm. The wind blew one of the large asbestos tiles off of our roof (while asbestos is considered very dangerous in the West, in many parts of the world it is a cheap roofing option, much cooler than corrugated metal). Our first child was only a few months old. The rain started pouring into our house and we did not know what to do. Suddenly, from our window, we saw one of our neighbors grab a ladder and climb up to our roof. He had a big blue plastic tarp, the tarp that we actually had given to his family two years prior when their house burned down and the fire victims were constructing temporary tents as shelter. As the rain poured down, lightning lit up the sky, and the sound of thunder rumbled all around us, Bapak Rudi covered the hole in our roof with his tarp. It was his tangible way of showing love to our family.

So, wherever you are, whether in overseas ministry or not, my prayer is that you would dare to try to love as Jesus did.

This act has become a living metaphor for me. Am I, too, willing to love until it hurts? To climb the ladders of life—not rushing to find success or comfort— but ladders that lead to discomfort and perhaps risk? Like Bapak Rudi getting soaked in the rain in order to fix our roof, am I willing to get dirty? Because *there is no comfortable way* to serve in urban slum communities. While the needs are great, while 1.4 billion people in our world live in squalor, too often Christians seek shortcuts, want easy answers, desire magic wands to spread the Gospel and ease the pain of humanity at the same time. But that is not the way of our Savior. Our Savior came and *lived among us* (John 1:14), or as The Message puts it: *The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.* Jesus spent 30 years as a virtually unknown peasant in Nazareth (the slums of Galilee?), and only then did He start His ministry. A ministry of love that eventually took Him to the cross—for you, for me, and for the whole world.

So, wherever you are, whether in overseas ministry or not, my prayer is that you would dare to try to love as Jesus did. A love that calls us to pour ourselves out, to not cringe from the Filth of the world. A love that seeks out the least of these and realizes that in serving them, we are serving our Savior. And although we may not have easy answers or quick solutions, as we serve, we can cling to Jesus and trust that He is with us—even in the urban slums of the mega-cities of our world—and He is indeed Good News. ✎

LEARN MORE



This book is the poignant and painful story of a life lived in service to the urban poor. Read this, and you will be inspired to move out of your comfort zone and find Christ in the slums.

CRAIG GREENFIELD

Founder of Alongsiders International
Author, *Subversive Jesus* and *Subversive Mission*

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Praying with Purpose During Ramadan

By J, a kingdom worker living among the unreached.

J works in the MENA region where she and her team multiply disciples. They also build tools for the global church to accelerate movements through the strategic use of media and technology. Pray4movement.org

As a cross-cultural Christian in a 99.9% Muslim country, I find Ramadan to be filled with stark contrasts. On the one hand, multigenerational families gathering around tables each night eating homemade delicacies and food drives that collect pantry staples for poor families are almost universal. On the other hand, thievery due to pressure to buy gifts at the end of the month along with arguments, fist fights, traffic snarls, and shortened tempers due to nicotine and caffeine withdrawals all increase during the 30 days.

The sharp contrasts powerfully illustrate the ineffectiveness of outward religious practices to bring inward transformation. And yet, so few seem both-

ered with this reality and even fewer wrestle and search for a solution.

Five times a day, the Muslim call to prayer continues to ring out. It echoes and clashes from the various mosques in my neighborhood that aren't in sync with each other. Five times a day, the land is flooded with announcements from loudspeakers saying, "there is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his messenger." Year after year, many abstain from food, water, and nicotine during the daylight hours in an effort to appease God and try to earn merit.

In the midst of this environment, I and a relatively small community of other Christians seek to bring

Would God use you to champion non-stop prayer through Ramadan 2023 for a movement among the Muslims you love?



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A DAY

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<https://pray4movement.org/ramadan-2023/>

the Good News of God's kingdom and the life, death, burial, and resurrection of His Christ to people who have had virtually no access for 1400 years.

Such circumstances cause me to cry out, Who is sufficient for these things? (2 Cor. 2:16b, NKJV).

And that desperation, that utter helplessness I can feel as I engage in Gospel conversations with neighbors, friends, and strangers, leaves me no choice but to pray. The longer I live in the Muslim world, the more convinced I am that only the power of prayer and God's Spirit can bring transformation.

So, when I heard about the opportunity to champion 24/7 prayer for the entire 30 days of Ramadan last year for the Muslim country that I want to reach with the Gospel, I knew I needed to say, "Yes!"


The team at Pray4Movement.org built a free, simple tool that empowers anyone who wants to promote continuous prayer for a people group, city, country, or region. In just a few clicks and by answering a few questions, I received a web page of my own that I could customize and then send out to my friends, family, coworkers, etc. They could then sign-up for time slots to pray.


I only needed to find 96 people who would commit to pray for a different 15-minute time slot each day of Ramadan to cover the entire 30 days with prayer. Intercessors received an email each day before their committed time slot with a reminder and a link to go view that day's biblical prayer fuel. The Pray4Movement team developed content that could be customized for my people group with just a few keystrokes. However, I had complete freedom to write my own custom prayer requests and prayer guides.

By God's grace, we filled the 30 days with nonstop prayer!

Only in eternity will we know the full impact of what happened as the Church prayed extraordinarily for the Muslims in the country where I live, but I believe

God answered our prayers and is answering them in beautiful ways. Since Ramadan 2022, our team has witnessed a significant increase in groups of people interested in reading, discovering, and discussing the Bible with their friends.

Our country  wasn't the only one that tried to go for continuous prayer coverage during Ramadan 2022. It turns out that 84 different champions took on the challenge impacting 64 countries. At least 6,395 intercessors filled more than 170,000 15-minute prayer slots.

 One prayer champion in a sub-Saharan Muslim nation said they saw God move in powerful ways during Ramadan as people prayed. A Muslim man who cut off relationship with his Christian children began calling them, bringing hope of restored relationship. An elderly woman who refused to submit her life to Christ for decades accepted Christ during Ramadan. Other Christians in the country were compelled to grow their prayer life for their Muslim neighbors and sought to be brighter lights among them. Evangelism efforts among this people group in the weeks that followed proved more fruitful.

The longer I live in the Muslim world, the more convinced I am that only the power of prayer and God's Spirit can bring transformation.



One of the most persecuted countries in the world rallied more than 100% prayer coverage during the 30 days. The prayer champion for that Muslim nation said, “I don’t think that we know even a small percentage of the impact that was made by praying 24/7 during Ramadan this year. Consistently, we heard how many people felt a heavy spiritual oppression. I think that signifies that we are pushing against the enemy in an effective way. We had several people around the globe that communicated just how impactful it was to have the prayer fuel and were encouraged by the unity of praying together with others. We are expecting that fruit will come from this initiative and some evidence of that is already coming.”

Another prayer champion working in a Muslim country in South Asia said, “We had over 100 people praying daily for the work, and we know of at least three Muslims that came to faith during this time. Normally, Ramadan is very slow, with few responses or new believers. So this year was different! Five more have followed Jesus in the month after Ramadan!”

I don't think that we know even a small percentage of the impact that was made by praying 24/7 during Ramadan this year.

As if these stories aren’t glorious enough, something important happens in the *intercessors*, themselves, as they devote 15-minutes a day to pray for a Muslim people group, city, country, or region. Yes, their prayers make eternal impact in the spiritually dark places they pray on behalf of. But their prayers also make an impact in their own lives. They begin to be changed and God softens their hearts for the people for whom they are praying. If you pray for the nations consistently, you’ll find that at some level you will have to go into action for the nations through giving, going, mobilizing, or serving.

During Ramadan 2022 (April 1–May 1), when all of the time committed to pray for Muslims across all of the 84 different initiatives was added up, it totaled 4 years, 359 days of prayer or 43,660 hours! The team at Pray4Movement is asking God for even more prayer initiatives and multiples of prayer hours totaled for the Muslim world in Ramadan 2023.

My heart aches for the millions in the land that I live in to know the Christ that came to save them not just from their evil deeds, but also from their good deeds done from wrong motives—from selfishness *and* self-righteousness, from outward religion to inward transformation. This Ramadan (Mar 22–April 21, 2023), technology has given our generation unprecedented opportunity to pray with insight and specificity for Muslim people groups, cities, and countries. Would you champion prayer for one of them among your family, friends, congregations, and partners?

Scan the QR code, or go to:
<https://pray4movement.org/ramadan-champions-2023/>
 to launch a 24/7 prayer initiative today.



Friendships Can Be Complicated

By **DENISE BECK**

Denise Beck is the Executive Director of Velvet Ashes, a nonprofit that brings community and resources to women serving cross-culturally. You can connect with Velvet Ashes for more resources for women at velvetashes.com.

Friendship on any given day is a challenge. Throw some cross-cultural borders in there, maybe a few time zones, and any of us may just want to give up. But what a tragedy that would be.

Women make up nearly 70% of missionaries on the field and a recent research survey indicates that the number two reason global workers state that they *stay* on the field is because of friendship.¹

There are unique challenges that global workers face when it comes to developing meaningful friendships.

1. **Time.** The hassles of things like getting and preparing food, paying bills, and getting things repaired all take longer. Add homeschooling in the mix for some and the day is done. Making time for ministry takes priority and missionaries may feel guilty using that time to grow friendships.
2. **Mobility.** Changing your residence twice every five years is built into missionary life. You are on the field for X years, home assignment for X months. While on home assignment you are constantly on the move. While you are in your host country all of your expat friends are constantly coming and going as well. It is hard to want to invest in friendships when you know they won't be long term.
3. **Expectations.** During all of the years of preparation to go to the field, we unknowingly collect quite a large bag of expectations. In our dreams we are laughing with our team around a table. The work is hard, but we are closer because we weather it together. We may be prepared to be disappointed by the friends we left back in our passport country who increasingly cannot connect with the life we are living, but the shock comes when we are super hurt and let down by our fellow missionaries. We expect them to know

and understand our needs because we live in the same culture with the same challenges.


The longevity and flourishing of global workers would improve if they understood two things about friendships.

#1—God values community and developing friendships, even expat ones, and doing so is *not* a waste of time. You may be surprised at how many women feel guilty about the coffee shop dates with expat women, feeling that they are only fulfilling their call if their friends are locals.

#2—Your friendships will change and what you need from those friends will change as soon as you become an expat. It would greatly benefit all women preparing to serve cross-culturally if they knew about the five boxes of friendships they were getting ready to open.

- Friendships in our passport country
- Friendships on our team
- Friendships with nationals
- Friendships with expats
- Friendships with supporters and online acquaintances

Each of these friendships has different blessings and challenges. Being prepared to know what you can and can't expect from each group can save you a lot of grief around unmet expectations as you transition to a life of cross-cultural service.

In the Velvet Ashes Membership community, we are a group of cross-cultural women choosing to do life together and grow in friendship through resource and community. We go deeper into the practice of friendship through our monthly content, resources, and virtual events. Join us at grow.velvetashes.com. 

¹ Whiteman, G. (n.d.). *Resilient Missionary Study: Preliminary Findings*. Senduwiki.org.

What Can a Single Woman Do When She Goes with God?

By MARTI WADE

Marti Wade is Editorial Director for Pioneers-USA. She also publishes *Missions Catalyst*, a weekly newsletter of mission news, ideas and resources, and is on the board of MissionWorks. Marti lives in Oregon.

When that young—or maybe not so young—single woman in your church or family starts taking steps toward serving in mission, what thoughts run through your head? That it's too dangerous? That she'll never fit in? That she'd do better if she had a husband?

You aren't the first to have those thoughts, yet mission history is full of stories about single women counting the cost, going to the ends of the earth, and doing the unexpected. Think of Lottie Moon, Amy Carmichael, Mary Slessor, Elisabeth Elliot, or the army of indigenous "Bible women" who spread the Gospel across Asia.

Meet Megan—A Spiritual Mother


Megan has served on the edge of the Sahara for decades, and she recently told a local colleague that she has no regrets about being single. "I'm an evangelist, and not having a husband or kids I have much more time to get out and share the gospel."

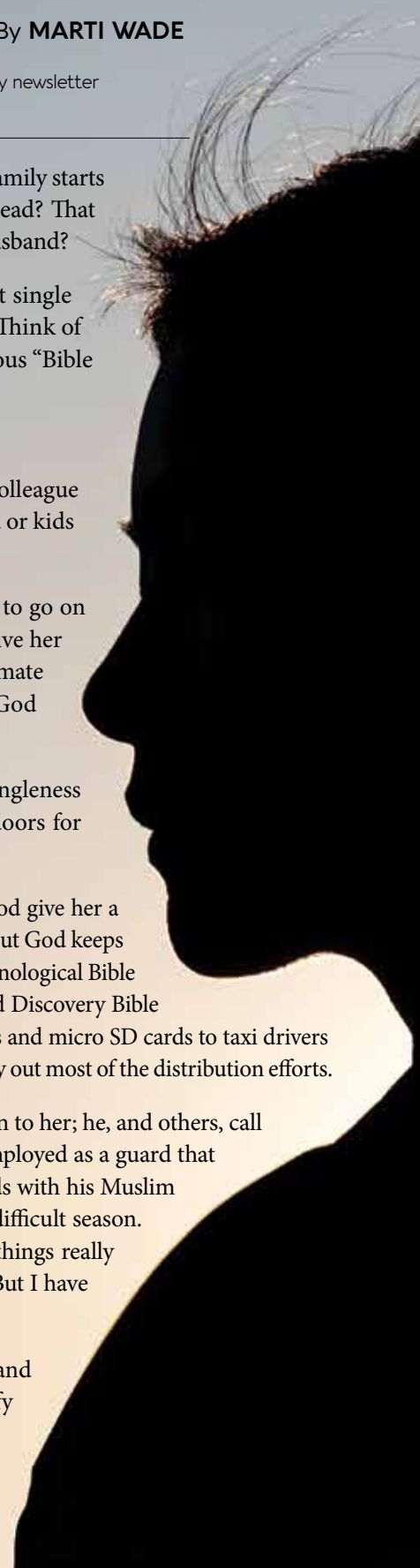
It can be a bit lonely at times. Years ago, as she was finishing her first term and about to go on home assignment, she told the Lord she wasn't sure she could come back if he didn't give her a husband or housemates to live with. "And He did," she says. "Housemate after housemate after housemate almost all of these years, or close neighbors who met my social needs. God is so real and personal."

Like other single women in her position, Megan has found the questions about her singleness a ministry opportunity. "Explaining to Muslims why I'm not married always opens doors for sharing my faith."

Though she focuses on her relationships with women, Megan has been surprised to see God give her a ministry among men as well. "It's not supposed to work that way, especially with Muslims, but God keeps bringing them my way and it's a blessing," she says. Every Friday for months she shared chronological Bible stories with a group of 25 men who met on the street outside a government office. She's led Discovery Bible studies with groups of young men. And she's distributed thousands of Gospel cassette tapes and micro SD cards to taxi drivers and men on the streets or in the marketplace; now she supplies local believing men who carry out most of the distribution efforts.

Sometimes these relationships go deeper. A man she led to the Lord years ago is like a son to her; he, and others, call her "Mama Megan." She made such an impact on a Muslim-background believer she employed as a guard that he, too, refers to her as his spiritual mother. Later he married, and Megan became friends with his Muslim wife. Last year, Megan spent hours with them providing marriage counseling during a difficult season. Her words made an impact on the wife who is now more open to the Gospel. "These things really encourage me," she says. "I've made mistakes for sure, and it's sometimes discouraging. But I have no regrets about serving among Muslims."

Being single is not for everyone. But it shouldn't surprise us to see God providing for and using single missionary women in places where their singleness would seem to disqualify or hold them back. He is God. 





Develop and Implement a Contextual Prayer Strategy

24:14 Goal—Movement engagements in every unreached people and place by 2025 (32 months)

By **JEAN COLES**

Jean and her husband Dave served in Indonesia for 24 years, is founder of Freedom for the Captives Ministries (freemin.org), and author of *Becoming Whole* a prayer resource. She serves as Beyond's (beyond.org) Director of Prayer Strategies and Associate to the VP of Team Development. Email freeminorg@gmail.com. All Scripture references are ESV.

Why develop a prayer strategy?

While my family served in Asia, my husband and I visited a team on an island a short flight away. They had experienced many setbacks to sharing Jesus with those around them. Their children often had nightmares, as did those who slept in the guest room of their house. The team leader's wife struggled with depression and suicidal thoughts, which she had never experienced before moving to that location. Kingdom work and the team limped along. A prayer calendar had been developed by the team, but it encountered multiple setbacks and

delays before it was finally printed. When the team investigated the spiritual history of that area, they discovered (among other things) that human sacrifice had been practiced there until the early 1900s.

When the prayer calendar was finally printed, that area was featured in the *Global Prayer Digest* also, which mobilized even more prayer. Prayer always precedes breakthrough. And, initial breakthroughs came, and the work continues to this day. So also do the challenges and the need for more focused prayer.

As Walter Wink wrote:

Intercessory prayer is spiritual defiance of what is in the name of what God has promised. Intercession visualizes an alternative future to the one apparently fated by the momentum of current forces. Prayer infuses the air of a time yet to be into the suffocating atmosphere of the present. ... History belongs to the intercessors who believe the future into being. ... Even a small number of people, firmly committed to the new inevitability on which they have fixed their imaginations, can decisively affect the shape the future takes.¹

Scripture teaches much about the importance of prayer. It highlights praying effectively and fervently, in holiness: *The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.* (James 5:16b). It teaches us to pray together in agreement with others: *Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father in heaven* (Matt. 18:19). And it encourages us to pray always with rejoicing and thanksgiving: *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you* (1 Thess. 5:16–18). Much more could be said about Scripture's teaching on prayer.

How can we pray more effectively?

Our God invites us into deep relationship with himself and prayer is a very important part of that relationship. It involves asking, listening, resting, abiding, seeking, and more. It's not meant to be part of a checklist. Praying is about communicating with the Heavenly Father. Praying more effectively is about growing in connection with our Lord, aligning with His heart and purposes, seeking Him above all, and living in holiness. As we spend time with our King, we grow in faith and joy, and in recognizing that He is good and delights in hearing our prayers and answering them.

One way to grow in praying more effectively is to learn from prayer strategies in Scripture. To mention only a couple of many, in 2 Corinthians 10:3–5 we learn that we have been given divine power to tear down strongholds. John 14:12–14 teaches us to believe and

ask in Jesus' name. Esther mobilized backup prayer and fasting before asking the king for help (Esther 4:12–17).

Looking at the following two passages gives insight into the prayer strategy of **identifying strongholds**, hindrances to the advance of God's kingdom in a location, situation, or group of people (2 Cor. 10:3–6), **and kingdom opposites**, what it might look like for God's kingdom to come and His will to be done in that place (Matt. 6:9–13).

Strongholds in a people or place can affect lost people, disciples, and gospel messengers. Negative effects can include nightmares, suicidal thoughts, division, intrusive thoughts, anger, infighting, fear, intimidation, sexual sin, unfaithfulness, miscommunication, sickness, and more. All too often these challenges debilitate God's people. Yet God's good plan is to give His people victory over the stronghold, then have them bring this victory to the lost, setting captives free. In this process, strongholds are demolished, God's kingdom expands, and He gets all the glory.

When we first moved to Asia, a huge stronghold in my life was fear. It was also a stronghold among the Unreached People Group we sought to serve. As God set me free from fear, He led me to deeper faith and hope. Then I was more able to pray this same victory for those around me. God gave me significant insights about that road, which I was able to pass along to others. One fruit of this was the birth of Wholeness Prayer (www.freemin.org), which God has since used to set many spiritual and emotional captives free, as He speaks to the roots of the issues involved.

Another place my husband and I lived in Asia suffered from a stronghold of division. A kingdom opposite to that is unity. A related key Scripture is John 17. Many of the churches in that city regularly join together to pray for unity. They also hold multi-denominational events and seek to speak well of one another.

Once strongholds are identified, they can be integrated into a broader prayer strategy. For example, if the strongholds are nightmares, intimidation, and intrusive thoughts, a prayer strategy might include putting on the armor of God, rejoicing in the power of God, and developing a month-long prayer campaign.

¹ Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 185.

Develop an effective prayer strategy

A first step is to identify key strongholds hindering kingdom advance in a group or location. This can be done through prayerful observation, asking key questions to cultural insiders, researching the history of the location or group, and spending time in prayer (as a group and individually) asking God to reveal whatever we need to know about strongholds affecting that location or group.

Follow-up steps include prayerfully seeking to identify kingdom opposites for each of these strongholds, identifying key Scriptures that connect with these, then using those Scriptures as the basis for effective prayer. Once you've created and implemented your prayer strategy, you'll want to periodically evaluate it, then update it as needed.



Real Strongholds, Real Strategies

After moving to a new location in Asia, I noticed that I was more inclined to be irritated with my husband. I would hear a voice in my head saying, "Find something to get irritated at him about." Since that's not a

common issue for us, I started asking other workers in that area if they were also experiencing this. They were! So, a group of us began to pray together about this stronghold we'd identified. Once this stronghold was brought into the light, its power decreased.

In that situation, one potential kingdom opposite we could have focused on is thankfulness. A related verse is 1 Thessalonians 5:18: *Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

A prayer strategy we might have chosen would be for this group to pray weekly about this issue, and invite others to do the same, and ask God to birth thankfulness in His people and in that location. An additional step could be to see how we could practice and model thankfulness and hold each other accountable to do so.

Think about your context (or the one for which you are interceding). What strongholds are there? Then, consider:

- (1) When do you plan to pray (rhythms of prayer)?
- (2) What are you planning to pray (prayer strategy)?
- (3) Who will you share your prayer initiative with?
- (4) Who will you pray with?
- (5) What are the next steps?

What does it mean to multiply prayer?

It's often helpful for many people to join together in agreement about a hindrance to kingdom advance. There is kingdom power when one person prays. And there is power where two or more are gathered in his name, agreeing together about what they are asking God to accomplish.

Key ways to multiply prayer include: (1) more and more people praying, (2) praying longer or more frequently, (3) praying more strategically (e.g., using strategies from Scripture), (4) praying more fervently or from a place of increased desperation, (5) praying from a place of deeper connection with God, and (6) praying from a place of greater purity or deeper surrender.

Extraordinary prayer has preceded every Church Planting Movement we know of. It goes beyond the ordinary in commitment, desperation, frequency, and/or quality, with the goal of engaging with God at a deeper level. The following are extraordinary prayer strategies organized by the acronym PRAY²:

P Prepare the way for the coming of His kingdom: prayer as strategy; listening prayer; prayer mobilization, training and team building and prayer shield teams and prayer research—which is Spirit-guided research into the supernatural underpinnings of reality to help produce more informed, effective intercession and outreach.

R Restore God’s rightful rule: prayer worship warfare, i.e. raising the waterline of God’s manifest presence through worship, engaging with God, proclaiming His will, and exercising His delegated authority through supplication and obedience; prayer as member health; prayer as representational repentance and reconciliation; prayer and crisis response; and prayer and suffering.

A Advance of His kingdom for His glory: prayer walking—when we carry His presence as we move prayer out of the church building or home and into the community; prayer power evangelism; prayer as spiritual warfare, i.e. taking authority over spiritual powers and strongholds hindering the advance of God’s kingdom; prayer and fasting for breakthroughs; and prayer presence.

Y Yearn for the now-but-not-yet kingdom to come: prayer yearning for maturity; prayer yearning for the full harvest—pressing forward with urgency to reap the white harvest that the Lamb who was slain receive His full reward; prayer yearning for kingdom transformation; and prayer yearning for our Bridegroom.

Consider which of these extraordinary prayer strategies you might want to include in your personal prayer strategy.



Length of prayer strategies.

Prayer strategies may span short, medium, or long-term timelines. They may involve just a few people or even millions, praying individually and together. One shorter prayer initiative I pursued was fervent prayer for one of our sons while he was hospitalized with dengue fever. In God’s graciousness, He granted complete healing in a relatively short period of time.

In “Gaining Church Planting Momentum During COVID-19,” Aila Tasse described their responses to numerous challenges COVID-19 brought to their ministry in 2020:

Our first response was prayer. In mid-March we called for prayer among all our team members: our core team and our country leaders, representing all the countries where we work. We all started praying at the same time, using WhatsApp to distribute the prayers. We prayed that God would sustain the movement, because we realized that leaders and families were suddenly losing all their sources of income. Prayer was very key for us to keep the momentum. We all started praying, especially on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We called for fasting on Wednesdays. It was a whole day of fasting every week, which still continues today.³

He later described God’s provision in response to their prayers:

I looked at what has happened in the last 15 years of our movement in East Africa, and 2020 was the peak. We saw 1,300 churches planted in just that one year. This was amazing because earlier in the

² <https://prayerstrategists.net/about/resources-by-strategy/>

³ Aila Tasse, “Gaining Church Planting Momentum During COVID-19,” *Mission Frontiers*, May/June 2022, 40–41

year, we had scaled down our goals by 30%; we said we'll trust God for 600 to 800 new churches. But God took us way beyond that, as only He can do. I could hardly believe it, as all the teams presented their data for the year. I had to see the graphs and look for myself at people group by people group.⁴

A lifelong prayer that I, and many others, are committed to pursue is for John 17 unity and *shalom* wholeness in the global Church. Whatever the length of the prayer strategy, and however you update it over time, keep praying and persevering in faith. As my brother, JFK Mensah, so aptly described,

We must believe in the weapons of our warfare. Over time there is no curse that can't be broken. To believe otherwise is to believe a lie. Have courage! You are seated with Christ in heavenly places. You are tiny, but the weapons are mighty.⁵

Whatever God calls you to pray for, don't stop. Align with His vision and promises and pray them into being. His victory is certain. He is bigger and more powerful than any problem, and all problems combined. Rejoice in Him, worship with joy, and give thanks in all circumstances. As He answers your prayers, give appropriate testimony (consistent with confidentiality). And give Him all the praise and glory.

As Walter Wink so aptly stated, "History belongs to the intercessors." So, go and do likewise. Seek the Lord and discern what kind of prayer strategy you need in your context.

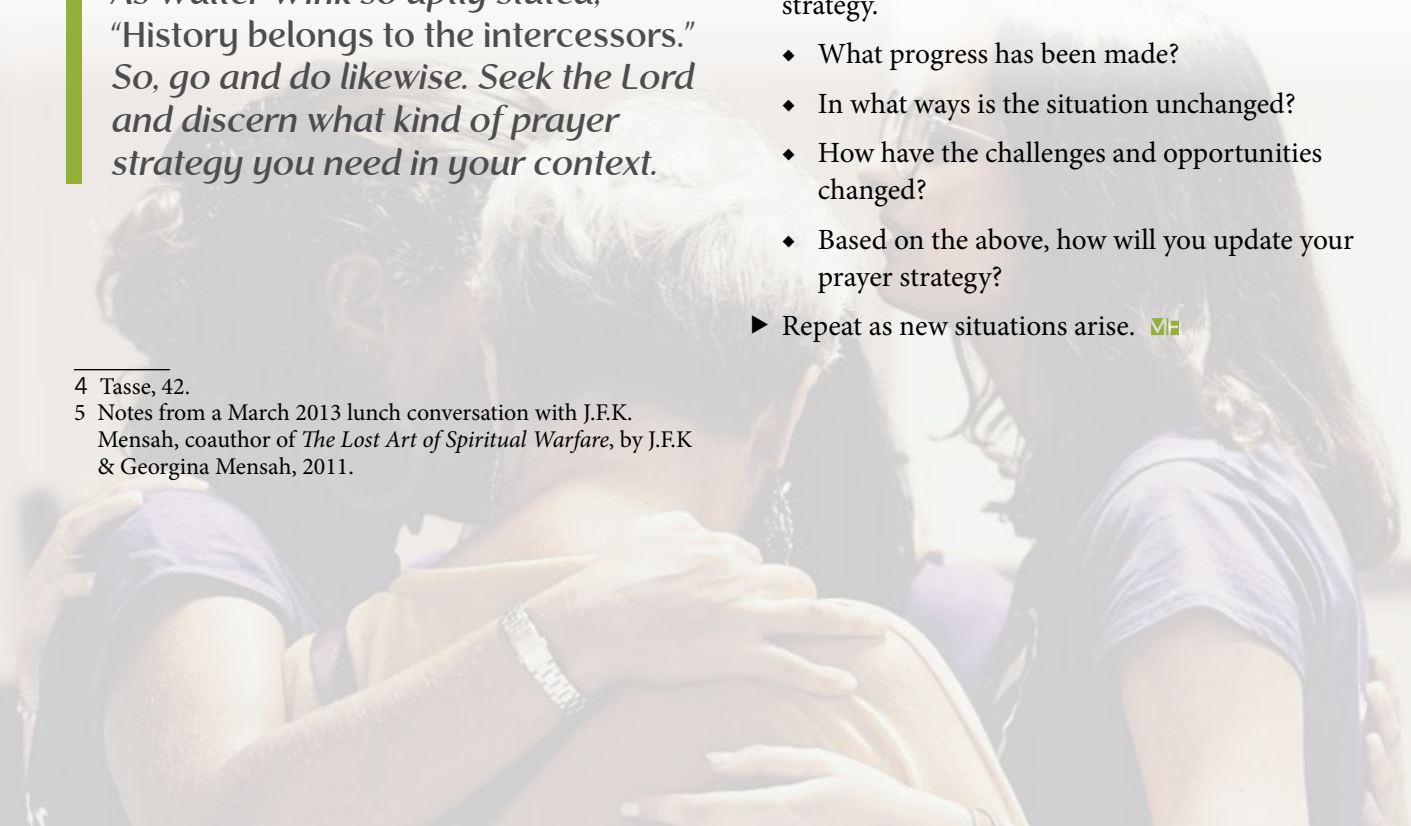
⁴ Tasse, 42.

⁵ Notes from a March 2013 lunch conversation with J.F.K. Mensah, coauthor of *The Lost Art of Spiritual Warfare*, by J.F.K. & Georgina Mensah, 2011.

Steps to develop a prayer strategy

Here are some steps for developing and implementing a prayer strategy in response to an ongoing situation.

- ▶ Develop the prayer strategy (as a group).
 - ◆ What strongholds/hindrances are factors in this situation?
 - How are they affecting the lost, the church, individuals, families, groups, and/or field workers?
 - What are the historical roots of these strongholds or hindrances?
 - What kingdom opposites do you sense God wants to bring in their place?
 - What verses connect with each of these kingdom opposites?
 - ◆ What initial prayer strategy will you pursue? i.e., Who, when, how, where, and resources, rhythms, or other activities.
 - What prayer materials will you create?
 - What rhythms of prayer will you pursue?
 - How will this multiply prayer?
- ▶ Implement the prayer strategy.
- ▶ Periodically evaluate and update the prayer strategy.
 - ◆ What progress has been made?
 - ◆ In what ways is the situation unchanged?
 - ◆ How have the challenges and opportunities changed?
 - ◆ Based on the above, how will you update your prayer strategy?
- ▶ Repeat as new situations arise. MF





this
must be
the place

6 SIGNS OF A MISSIONARY GROWTH MINDSET

By **AMY YOUNG**

Amy Amy Young, MA, LPC served in China for nearly 20 years and is the CEO of Global Trellis. Amy has written six books for Great Commission workers including *Looming Transitions* and *Becoming More Fruitful in Cross-Cultural Work*. All Scripture references are *ESV*.

Would you like to go to a dentist who graduated in 1999 and then said, “I don’t need to update my credentials or take more classes because I already invested six years of my life learning what I needed to know?”

How comfortable would you be to have your taxes prepared by someone who said, “I was up to date until 2018 and then life got really busy and I haven’t had time to stay up to date on the changes to the laws since then?” No thank you. I’m sorry life’s been hectic, but a lot has changed since 2018 and your good intentions are not enough.

It’s easy to see the flaws in their thinking, but how often have those of us in missions been guilty of our own version of this type of thinking? If you lack time, funds, or chances to learn more about what God has called you to do, you might have more of a “fixed missionary mindset” than a “missionary growth mindset.”

The good news, and with Jesus there’s always good news, is that whether you have a fixed or growth mindset, you can foster a growth mindset.

The idea of fixed versus growth mindset grew out of a study by Carol Dweck in which she researched



students' attitudes towards failure.¹

Someone with a growth mindset views intelligence, abilities, and talents as learnable and capable of improvement through effort. On the other hand, someone with a fixed mindset views those same traits as inherently stable and unchangeable over time.²

I heard Dr. Heidi Grant speak on motivation and her closing line challenged me as I thought about Global Trellis, the organization I lead. She said, "Cultivating a growth mindset is one of the most important things we can do for ourselves, organizations, and callings."³

Maybe you're not sure whether your mindset is fixed or geared towards growth. Here are four signs you might have a fixed mindset as a missionary:

1. You feel you have to prove your ability.
2. You compare yourself or your project to others.
3. You doubt yourself.
4. You experience anxiety in regard to your ministry.

The problem with a fixed mindset in ministry is that you're vulnerable when things don't go well. Many who read this publication are involved in Church Planting Movements, Disciple Making Movements, or other ways of participating in the Great Commission. These ventures are fraught with challenges and if you have a fixed mindset, you will experience high levels of anxiety. This kind of stress affects your brain chemistry, your overall health, and makes you less likely to be open to new opportunities and less open to changes you might need to make. Why? Because a fixed mindset keeps you afraid of "failure" and keeps you erroneously focused on efforts to prove yourself.

I've worked with thousands of missionaries over the years and a common refrain I've heard is, "I lack time, funds, or chances to learn about fill-in-the-blank." Even with online learning having grown exponentially in recent years, many are not taking advantage of the learning opportunities because of the perceived lack of time or funds. However, missionaries being too busy to build in time to reflect on their lives and work, connect with others doing what they are doing, or taking care of themselves is not a badge of honor. It's the trap of a fixed mindset and it leads to burnout.

As I said, the good news is that if you see yourself reflected above, you *can* foster a growth mindset.

Just like you can tell if someone has a fixed mindset, you can also tell if someone has a growth mindset. How can you tell if someone has a growth mindset? The three hallmarks are:

1. A desire to improve your ability
2. A plan to develop your skills
3. The ability to compare yourself today to yourself in the past instead of to other people or ministries

In earlier eras, missionaries needed to be "front-end loaded" with information. There will always be a need for pre-field or new-to-the-field training. My hope is

1 "Decades of Scientific Research that Started a Growth Mindset Revolution." *Mindset Works*, www.mindsetworks.com/science/.

2 Catherine Cote, "Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset: What's the Difference?" *Harvard Business School Online*, <https://www.online.hbs.edu/blog/post/growth-mindset-vs-fixed-mindset>.

3 Dr. Heidi Grant, Global Leadership Summit, August 4, 2022.

that we move beyond thinking of training as an event or a season and we see it more as a mindset that fosters life-long learning in missionaries.

Let's get specific about the six signs of not only a growth mindset, but a missionary growth mindset:

- 1** You are curious—This curiosity might be about your host culture, technology, or *whatever* is currently impacting your ministry. It can and should manifest as a regular way that you view the world.
- 2** You build reflection into your life—Set aside time to consider what's working and what's not. Ideally you have small, medium, and larger reflection practices with weekly, monthly or quarterly, and annual times for reflection. At Global Trellis, every December we offer a "Reflect and Prepare" packet geared specifically for cross-cultural workers to reflect on the previous year and prepare for the next.
- 3** You invest in learning—Don't be like the dentist or tax preparer mentioned at the beginning of this article. Instead, set aside time and money to listen to podcasts, attend online workshops, read books, and connect with others doing what you're doing.
- 4** You are attentive—Heidi Grant encourages people to "notice, then shift."⁴ She means it mostly in regard to mindset. Notice when you sense you have to prove yourself, are frustrated, or are experiencing anxiety, then shift. You can say things like "I'm not good at this *yet*" or "It's not about being good, it's about getting better." By noticing what's going on around and within you, you're able to shift. The power of shifting is that you're not ruminating on the past and are reorienting yourself to the future.
- 5** You are willing to change or redirect—Because you have spent time wrestling with the ideas of "success" and "failure" in


ministry, you are not wedded to outcomes. Of course, you're encouraged by outreaches and movements that are making positive impacts and love to see people growing in Christ! But you are not defined by them. If something isn't working, you're willing to move on and to try something different.

- 6** You share your mistakes—Be willing to talk about past challenging seasons you experienced and mistakes that you've made instead of hiding or downplaying them. You are able to talk about when you could have handled a situation better and what you learned from it.

As you read through the list, hopefully you saw yourself in all six. But if you didn't, you can start today to foster a growth mindset. A growth mindset won't just happen because you read this article and you think, "That's the kind of person I want to be!" Don't we all want to be this kind of person? But when you look around at fellow missionaries, you probably know people who operate out of a fixed missionary mindset.

You need to make the choice to foster a growth mindset because the pressure you're facing is going to push you towards a fixed mindset. You're made in the image of God, but you live in a world that has been damaged by sin. Thus, too many missionaries are stuck in the "it's all up to me" loop. That's neither true, nor is it the freedom that Christ gave His life for.

Look back over the six signs of a missionary growth mindset. Ideally, you'll get to the point that all six will be woven into your life. But if you're not there yet, choose one to focus on this month. If you see all six in your life, which one would you like to intentionally foster this next month?

Encouraging a growth mindset in yourself and others that you work with truly is one of the most important things you can do for yourself, your organization, and your calling. 

⁴ Heidi Grant, Global Leadership Network, August 4, 2022

Stick Figure Storying

By **PAM ARLUND**

Pam Arlund, PhD is currently Linguist Translator and Co-Editor of *Perspectives* 5th Edition. She serves with All Nations International and Perspectives Global. She served in Central Asia for 10 years as a field missionary.

The scene was beautiful. The Middle Eastern dad got down on the floor with his six or so children and began to draw stick figures on a piece of paper. He drew a stick figure Jesus asleep in a boat and then stick figure disciples who looked afraid. His next drawing was Jesus speaking to the waves and they grew calm. Dad had learned the story earlier that day from someone else and there he was, immediately bringing the hope of Jesus to his children through his own stick figure drawings.

Although Dad couldn't read or write words, he could read and write stick figures. This method of storytelling means he is now empowered to share "Jesus stories" with his children or anyone else in his community. His personal library of Jesus stories may have started with just the one story, but it grew and grew over time.

This Middle Eastern dad had discovered a method of Bible study that empowered him to interact with the words of the Bible as both a learner and a teacher. This is one of the goals of all believers: to be able to tell others about Jesus.

But yet, how will that happen if people can't read, are unwilling to read, or maybe are just too tired to read?

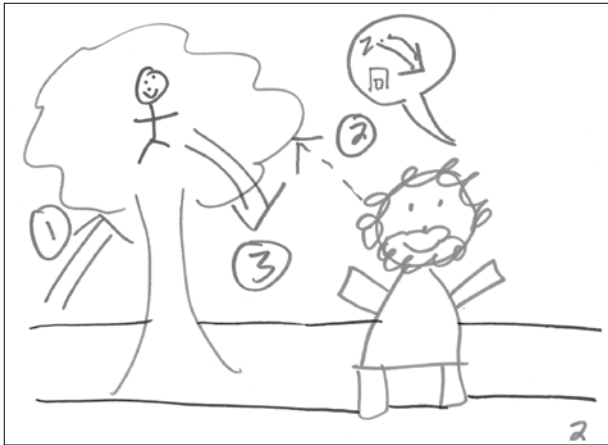
As a missionary in Central Asia, I had worked with a remote people group whose language did not have a writing system. Some of them could read and write in some other language, but many of them could not. People didn't read books in their spare time as it just wasn't part of the rhythm of the culture. This reality was a significant challenge when as believers we are "people of the book." My job, as a missionary and Bible translator, was to help them learn the Bible well enough to pass it on to someone else.

Audio Bibles were too expensive and not widely available. Also, getting recordings of native speakers was difficult, given the extreme persecution in the area. We weren't sure we could keep people's voices disguised enough to keep them from being arrested.

When I told people stories from the Bible, they seemed to lose interest, or lose details of the story that matter. I wanted the stories of the Bible to be loved and told accurately from person to person.

One day, out of frustration, I decided to tell a story from the Bible using stick figures. This was not a grand design at the time or a strategy that I had deeply thought out. It was simply another attempt and what popped into my mind at the time. Perhaps the Holy Spirit was prompting me, but in any event, as I began to draw stick figure Zacchaeus, something began to happen. The whole family was suddenly gathering around and became very interested in the story. When I finished telling it, people were able to point to the stick figures and retell the story accurately. From the littlest child who could talk all the way up to the oldest grandma, every person in the household could tell the story of Zacchaeus!





Quickly, I told all those who were there to get a piece of paper and draw their own stick figure Zacchaeus. The family began to draw together, laugh, enjoy one another, and also to learn the story.

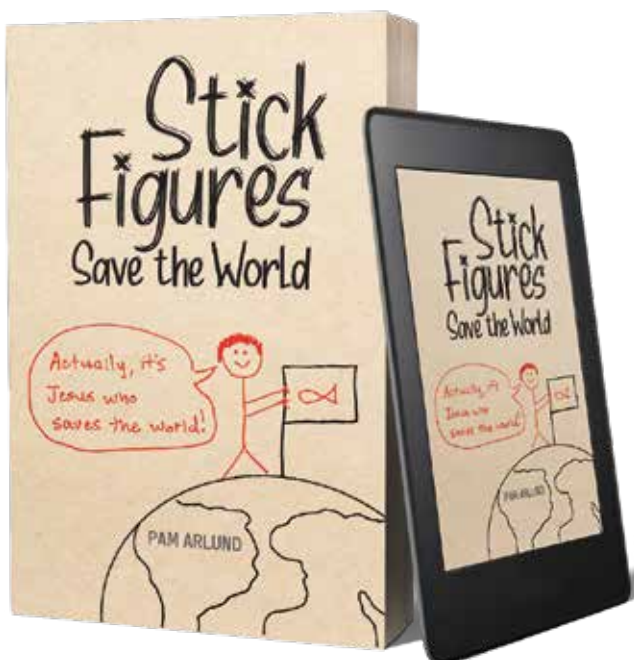
As I began to praise the Lord for what had happened that day, I began drawing stick figures of Bible stories regularly to build my own library of Jesus stories. Soon, I realized that I knew stories from the Bible in a better way than I had ever known them before. It wasn't my training as a Bible translator, nor my PhD that had brought this depth of connection with the stories. It was having to think through each story and how to draw it that had me engage on a whole new

level with the Word of God that I love. Now I, just like the Muslim dad to whom I taught the method, could tell Bible stories from my heart and could "see" my pictures in my head and reproduce them for others. Soon, despite my education that encouraged more complicated and sophisticated methods, I realized that stick figures were not something childish but rather they were simply a good learning and sharing tool that I needed to share with others.

Since that early personal discovery of this method, I have had the pleasure of empowering post-doc students at universities, impoverished people who never went to school, and church people in dozens of countries to share in, enjoy, and learn Jesus stories from the Bible. Stories that they can then immediately share with others with confidence and joy. What is particularly wonderful is how this method levels the ground. All education levels and age levels can participate together, learn and grow, with no one feeling less than or left out.

Since sharing the truth and hope of Jesus with the world is what every believer is called to do, then maybe the sword of the Spirit in this instance is a pen that draws stick figures. 🖋️

LEARN MORE



Dr. Pam Arlund has taken the big, scary complexity of evangelism and storytelling and simplified it in practical and important ways, so every believer can be empowered to share the good news of Jesus. Stick Figures Save the World is practical, inspiring, and a refreshing look at the art of storytelling. We all have good news stories to share, and this book will help you share them effectively. I highly recommend you read this, practice it, and make it part of your lifestyle.

JOSHUA JOHNSON

Co-Executive Director, All Nations Kansas City Hub


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A Leaf on a River

By **EUNICE DE LARA**

Eunice De Lara holds a Master's Degree in Higher Education and is currently obtaining a Master's Degree in Intercultural Development. She is a mobilizer in Ciudad Valles, SLP, Mexico. Contact her at eunicedelara@uaslp.mx.

My journey as a mobilizer started at a very difficult point in my life. A challenging experience had immersed me in an unspeakable pain. I felt like a shaky, fragile leaf that had fallen off a high tree into a river, adrift on cold water. Feeling weak and helpless, I just went with the flow, unaware He was about to take me into unfamiliar waters.

On the other hand, being in this position helped me to experience—firsthand—the faithful and generous love of our Lord, and His mercy and amazing power. He provided everything that was needed and surrounded me with caring and loving people. I was able to say, just as Job: *My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you* (Job 42:5).

Note, all Scripture references are NIV.

How Do I Start Mobilizing, Lord?

In 2010, I received an email from the former director of the missionary agency where I served before moving to Ciudad Valles, San Luis Potosí (SLP), Mexico, where I currently serve and live.¹ Unexpectedly, I read that they had been praying about starting a missions course called “Misión Mundial,” by Jonathan Lewis, in my city and they were wondering if I would be the instructor and coordinator. I was speechless.

My first thought was that they, being on the other side of the world, did not know what had just happened to

¹ Located in the central part of Mexico, Ciudad Valles is the second largest city in the eastern part of the state of San Luis Potosí. It is two hours away from the Gulf of Mexico.

me. To my surprise, he continued, saying they already knew about it and had confirmation from God. I replied to the email and asked them for a praying period for me to seek God's will.

After that, I went to San Luis Potosí—my hometown—to have a meeting with the current director of the mission agency where they already offered the course. He agreed on my starting it. I felt completely nervous and unworthy.

Having confirmation, I needed to get materials, information, and instructions on how to start and carry out the course. The director gave me a box with flyers, a set of books, and prayed for me. I was in shock! I had so many questions: How do I start? Where am I supposed to get the students from? Who will teach me how to teach the course? He serenely said, "Just go visit the churches and invite them. You have taken the course before, so you know how it goes."

As I started, I felt I was going deep in the water, but the Lord kept me afloat. All I could see was the next small step, but He guided me forward step by step.

As I started, I felt I was going deep in the water, but the Lord kept me afloat. All I could see was the next small step, but He guided me forward step by step. During this time, I learned to depend on Him completely and utterly. Psalm 32:8 was constantly on my mind: *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.*

As I continued forward, our loving Father opened doors I would never have imagined. He gave me His favor to talk to pastors and visit churches to invite

them to attend the course. The first generation of students graduated in April 2011. We had 40 students from seven different churches, including three pastors and four denominations represented. At the end of the course, the students organized a missions conference aimed to mobilize their own churches and the city.

People from different churches would start asking when a new one was going to begin. Amazingly, the Lord showed just the next step to be taken before starting every new course.

What Do We Do with the Vision?

There was no map or instruction manual in this journey. Each generation of students was unique, with different backgrounds and needs. Therefore, learning to depend completely on the Lord and following the Holy Spirit's direction was of paramount importance.

One of the challenges we faced was with mindset—our mindset. Mexico has been a missionary field for many years. We are truly thankful for those workers who—in past and present centuries—came and shared the Good News. We praise God that we are the fruit of their obedience.

Nevertheless, Mexico is now becoming a missionary force. Mexican churches have received the blessing and it is our time to be a blessing for all nations. Hence, one of the challenges we face is to shift from a local mindset into a global mindset. Furthermore, we need to adopt a "glocal" mindset, which is taking into account both local and global considerations, i.e. *think global, act local*. Knowledge and studies on missions are important, but it is equally important to believe we are part of the fulfillment of the Great Commission in our generation and get into action, trusting the Lord will provide all the resources needed.

July 2012

Second generation graduated.

October 2013

First generation in Tamiín, San Luis Potosí graduated.

July 2015

Third generation graduated.

Networking

In 2013, God revealed another step: establish a strategic partnership with four churches in the city. The aim was to work together sharing resources, experiences, and knowledge, while respecting their own personalities. Our vision was to see *Potosino* missionaries supported by local churches and sent to the ends of the earth.² We called it Cooperación Misionera de Valles (COMIVA). As you can imagine, it was not a simple matter. It took us two years to launch the project.

One interesting thing was that some of the churches were teaching their people about missions while others were already training workers to go on the field. Being in different stages made the partnership strong since churches with more experience could share the “dos and don’ts.” In 2012, the graduates of the first generation decided to unite efforts and join the Aventura Misionera Infantil project (Missionary Adventure for Kids).³ We continued celebrating it in 2013, 2014, and then every other year as part of the partnership work plan.

In 2019, we also became part of COMIMEX (Cooperación Misionera de México), the Mexican Missions Partnership.⁴

Further Education

By the end of 2015, an extraordinary burden was set upon me. Some of the questions that came with that were: What are all these graduates doing for the

² “*Potosino*” is the term used to refer to the inhabitants of San Luis Potosí, a geographical region located in northeast Mexico. It includes 20 municipalities and two major ethnic groups: Náhuatl and Tének.

³ For more information visit Aventura Misionera Infantil Página Oficial on Facebook.

⁴ www.comimex.org

kingdom? Are they practicing what they’ve learned? Are we producing fruit? The Lord once again revealed the next step: organize a graduates forum. We held the first forum at the end of 2015 and the second one in 2017. At these events, we prayed for one another, shared our experiences, and received instruction and information on different training courses and field opportunities.

Sending the Fruit

As I mentioned, it is time for the Mexican church to become a missionary force. Even so, there is a region in the central part of Mexico which is called “El Círculo del Silencio” (The Circle of Silence).⁵ In 2011, one of the churches in the city sent a couple to one of these states to share the Good News. After that, they also sent a young lady to a neighboring state. Others continue to be sent and move to that region. At the present time, two local churches have sent missionaries abroad: one to Africa and the other to the Middle East. Another church has sent candidates on short-term trips to Southeastern Europe and Southeast Asia.

In 2016, a pastor in the Huasteca heard the word “Eureka” in a dream. It continued to happen so she asked me about the meaning of the word. We found out some options, but she felt none of them were accurate. Then, she discovered that a small community in the mountains about an hour away from where she lives is called Eureka. She went there and discovered people were hungry to hear from God. They said that a long time ago, a Christian family lived there, but they had all passed away. She continued visiting the town and there

⁵ The Circle of Silence includes eight states in the central part of Mexico with an average of 4 percent of evangelicals. <https://converge.org/bajio/about>

February 2016

First generation, a group of 48 pastors and leaders from the Wesleyan Church in Mexico, in the Huasteca region graduated.²

July 2017

Fourth generation graduated.

is now a thriving group of disciples in this community.

Setbacks

As some pastors started to direct their programs, efforts, and resources to become a missionary church, some members of the congregations left. They did not agree with new focus and did not like the idea of abandoning their comfort zones. There were also some spirited graduates who were convinced their churches needed an immediate change. They talked to their pastors and leaders, but did not obtain the response they were looking for. They were dismayed and also left the church.

Without doubt, the pandemic was also an unexpected diversion in the flow, since most of our activities include courses, conferences, and gatherings. So, we were on standby. However, churches continued working and managed to keep active on missions.

In 2022, we were invited by a Christian camp in Rioverde, SLP to organize an Aventura Misionera as part their 50th anniversary celebrations. This was a major opportunity to get back on track and recover strength.

A characteristic of a river is that the water is continuously flowing. The Lord has kept us continuously moving forward even though all we can see is the next small step.

Next steps

It was essential to learn how to take a good care of those who have been sent, in order to ensure their continuance. In 2018 the partnership organized an integral care course, delivered by a Mexican expert

in the field, aimed for pastors and sending churches. Since this is a critical factor for us, we will need to keep learning and improving our processes.

Churches have developed their own agendas according to their needs. This is also an important asset since it helps us to learn from others' experiences and allows us to see how God is moving among the *Potosino* churches. Nevertheless, networking provides the opportunity to be the body of Christ, supporting and encouraging each other. I strongly believe unity among churches is of the utmost importance in order to fulfill the Great Commission.

Conclusion

Our journey in mobilization has not been a smooth one, but we have witnessed the power and mercy of God. Many times, a sense of unworthiness and uncertainty filled me. Many times, I felt adrift. Above all, it has been a blessing to work together for the kingdom.

A characteristic of a river is that the water is continuously flowing. The Lord has kept us continuously moving forward even though all we can see is the next small step. Our Father has always been in control of the current. We are expectant of what the Lord will do in the next years and I am truly confident He will continue moving in and through us, in spite of being just fragile leaves on the water. Ephesians 3:20-21 has strongly spoken to me:

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen. 🏳️‍🌈

June 2019

Fifth generation graduated.

February 2021

First generation in the Huasteca Mountains with the Ríos de Agua Viva churches graduated.

Lifting the Veil on Global Issues and Gender Diversity

By **WENDY WILSON**

Wendy serves by offering training and discussions around the benefits, barriers, and biblical practice of men and women leading together in God's Image. wendy@womensdevelopmenttrack.org

I recently had a conversation with a mission leader and his wife who oversee about 600 churches in an African region where wife-beating is a common, legal practice. When I asked about how they train pastors to address this problem, he responded: (1) their churches didn't have that problem, and (2) they defer issues about how men and women relate to the local culture. This is a good man who loves God and his wife. He honestly didn't see the problem. In that same conversation, his wife added that this practice did indeed go on in their area (to his surprise). This is a good woman who loves God and her husband, who never explored this rampant issue of abuse with him or the pastor. Good men and women like these don't intentionally ignore such things; they're usually horrified by them.

What do we say to these mission leaders? Part of the solution involves focused discipleship. Both Christian leaders and laypersons need a more robust understanding of human dignity, especially that of women. Many cultures see women as property, large children, or domestic servants rather than divine image bearers, full partners in God's mission, and co-heirs with Christ. Jesus and Paul, as men, countered male power structures of the day. They included women as ministry partners in stunning, counter-cultural

ways (see Luke 10:38-42; Matt. 28:5-7; Rom. 16). Redeeming our use of authority is a powerful way of expressing the Gospel and demonstrating redemption. Church leaders can address both women's dignity and culturally and biblically appropriate ways to help those local communities create solutions to those issues.

In every society, men and women both suffer from the wicked abuses of power (e.g., bullying, domestic violence, slavery). Women in particular suffer because of their gender. Men have misused God-given physical strength at the expense of women, but the Gospel reorients this strength (Phil. 2). God gives us strength to bless and empower others. He wants churches to be local expressions of counter-cultural kingdom relationships.

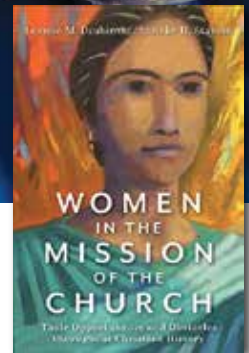
God's people have an opportunity to demonstrate a different way of being a human family, where both men and women use their talents and strengths to serve the vulnerable. Mission agencies and churches would be wise to foster gender diversity in leadership structures and strategic decision-making. Doing so will expand our collective vision and effectiveness in spreading Good News of Christ so that lives and communities are transformed. ❏

Chinese Women Led the 20th-Century Revivalist Movements

Adapted from **LEANNE M. DZUBINSKI** and **ANNEKE H. STASSON**.
Women in the Mission of the Church. Baker Academic, 2021.

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During the early 20th century, several remarkable Chinese women led a revivalist movement in the Chinese church.¹ First, there was Dora Yu (Yu Cidu), who grew up in a Christian family and in 1896 was one of the first graduates of Soochow Women's Hospital.² In 1897, Yu became "the first cross-cultural Chinese missionary in modern times."³ She traveled to Korea, where she served as the mission doctor, helped to establish a girls school, preached, wrote curriculum, and taught girls how to make lace and embroider.⁴ Despite all this work, the mission initially refused to call her a "missionary;" instead,

she had the lower and less-well-paid position of "Bible woman." As a Bible woman, she visited women in their homes and shared the Gospel with them. During one year alone, Yu visited with 925 women and 211 children.⁵

Not surprisingly, after such a strenuous schedule, Yu's health deteriorated and she was forced to return to China in 1903. The next year, she gave up practicing medicine and "established what might be called the first Chinese faith mission," living without a guaranteed salary from a missionary organization.⁶ She also learned to trust God for the messages that He asked her to give at prayer meetings.⁷

Yu had vibrant faith, often hearing God's voice giving her strength and direction. During a particularly

1 Silas H. L. Wu, "Dora Yu (1873-1931) Foremost Female Evangelist in Twentieth-Century Chinese Revivalism," in *Gospel Bearers, Gender Barriers*, ed. Dana Robert (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 86.

2 Wu, 89.

3 Wu, 85.

4 Silas H. L. Wu, *Dora Yu and Christian Revival in 20th Century China* (Boston, MA: Pishon River, 2002), 89.

5 Wu, 94.

6 Wu, "Dora Yu (1873-1931)," 92.

7 Wu, *Dora Yu and Christian Revival*, 128.

low point in her life, God sent her a dream where He reminded her of his love.⁸ Held in God's love, Yu conducted prayer meetings in Chinese, English, and Korean. Many Chinese came to faith through her work.⁹ She published *Hymns of Reviving*, "probably the first such book in Chinese church history" and became the first Chinese woman to establish a Bible school to educate people who became Christians.¹⁰ Reflecting on this amazing woman, Silas Wu called Dora Yu "the foremost female evangelist in twentieth century Chinese revivalism."¹¹

Other prominent Chinese woman evangelists during this period include Peace Wang (Wang Peizhen) and Ruth Lee (Li Yuanru). Peace Wang's story is particularly striking. Not growing up in a Christian family, she became a Christian at school.¹² When Wang's family discovered she was a Christian, her father pulled her from school. For 18 months, Wang unsuccessfully pleaded with her parents to send her back. One night in 1918, she snuck out of the house long enough to attend one of Dora Yu's revival meetings, where she gave her life to God. Wang believed that she was called to serve God as an evangelist, but she was engaged and knew that ending her engagement would disgrace her family. She was torn over her decision.¹³ But the following Scripture kept resurfacing in her heart, *Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.*¹⁴ When she told her father that she would not marry, he confined her in his mansion to prevent her from running away.

Wang felt God assure her that if she ran away, He'd help her. One night, she snuck out of the house and into the walled backyard garden. First, she took off her long skirt, threw it over the wall, and scaled the wall. Then she took a train to the home of her spiritual mentor, a missionary named Mrs. Sweet. When her father discovered she was missing, he guessed where she went and sent men to retrieve her. Wang's parents would not listen to her when she told them that God called her to evangelism. She locked herself in her room, fasted,

and prayed. Her parents feared that her hunger strike would end in suicide if they didn't allow her to go to seminary. So her father arranged for Wang's cousin to marry her fiancé instead. Wang enrolled in Jinling Theological College for Women in 1919.¹⁵

Upon finishing her education, Wang began her work as a traveling preacher. Several denominations invited her to hold services, and many people came to the Lord by her preaching, including a young man named Witness Lee. He later described how Wang led him to the Lord:

In April 1925 she was invited to my hometown of Chefoo to preach in the Southern Baptist auditorium. I heard the report and was intensely curious to witness such a young lady evangelist, twenty-five years old, preaching the gospel. We had never heard of such a thing before. Therefore, I attended her meeting, and I can testify that from that day to the present, I have never seen preaching that was so prevailing. She preached to a crowd of over one thousand, not about sin or about hell, but concerning how Satan possesses and occupies people. She used the story of Pharaoh possessing the children of Israel as the basis of her message. I was immediately caught by the Lord.¹⁶

In 1926, Wang planted a house church in Shanghai with her roommate from seminary, Ruth Lee, and male evangelist Watchman Nee. The group grew into the Little Flock Movement, led by Watchman Nee. Nee himself was initially converted through Dora Yu's preaching, but after he read John Nelson Darby's arguments against women's leadership, Nee decided that women should not teach men. He then convinced Ruth Lee and Peace Wang to stop teaching men.¹⁷ Thus, "after 1927, one observes a marked shift of gender selection in China's revival movement, which was taken over by a new generation of male evangelical revivalists such as Watchman Nee, Wang Mingdao, John Sung, and Leland Wang."¹⁸

8 Wu, 99.

9 Wu, "Dora Yu (1873-1931) Foremost Female Evangelist in Twentieth-century Chinese Revivalism," 93.

10 Wu, 85; Wu, *Dora Yu and Christian Revival in 20th Century China*, 142.

11 Wu, "Dora Yu (1873-1931)," 85.

12 Wu, *Dora Yu and Christian Revival*, 165.

13 Wu, 166.

14 Matt. 10:37.

15 Wu, *Dora Yu and Christian Revival in 20th Century China*, 167.

16 Witness Lee, *Watchman Nee—A Seer of Divine Revelation* (Living Stream Ministry), chapter 14, section 6 of 8. www.ministrybooks.org/books.cfm?n

17 Wu, "Dora Yu (1873-1931)," 98.

18 Wu, 86.


Peace Wang and Ruth Lee continued to be very active in Christian mission after 1927, but figuring out how to follow the Spirit's leading became more complicated. They had to work within the constraints of what was then considered appropriate for women. One example of how Ruth Lee navigated faithfulness within this new constraint shows clearly in a letter she sent to Watchman Nee and Witness Lee. In the letter, Lee shared her ideas about how to address several issues in the churches she served. Instead of executing her plans, she labeled her concerns as matters that she wished "from now on the brothers would pay attention to."¹⁹ Lee portrayed herself as delivering the information to "the brothers" so that they could act as they saw fit. At the same time, she encouraged them to act in ways she thought were best.

Although Watchman Nee was against women teaching men, Lee's letter shows that women's roles may have been somewhat more flexible in practice. Throughout the letter, Lee emphasized the significant contributions that women made to their local churches. She insisted that the brothers not speak harshly of women leaders or blame them for church problems, especially if the men were neither willing nor spiritually mature enough to lead. She explained that women and men should work together to build up the Church in the unity and knowledge of Christ, though for the best results she recommended that men minister to men and women minister to women.²⁰

Ruth Lee's ministry resembled Phoebe's ministry in Romans 16. Just as Phoebe ministered to Roman Christians on Paul's behalf, Ruth Lee ministered to developing churches operating under Nee's teachings. While Watchman Nee conversed with leading international theologians and wrote spiritual treatises, Ruth Lee talked one-on-one with new believers and offered practical strategies for improving local church leadership. In the early 1940s, she and Peace Wang helped to stabilize Nee's Shanghai church after scandal forced him to step down.²¹

Yet these women are often overlooked. Most sources label them as the supporters of Watchman Nee's ministry. But looking at their stories and their influence, it seems these women had a ministry of their own. Had Peace Wang been a man, it's likely that Witness Lee would have called her his "mentor." Lee frequently sought her advice and intervention. However, because she was a woman, he said, "she always strongly *supported* me, and those with her always received her *help* and care."²² He says she "was an indescribable help to me in the ministry, so much so that a revival was brought in 1947" and "she played a crucial role under the Lord's leading." Clearly, Wang had significant ministry giftings, but Witness Lee used gendered language to describe those giftings: "Hundreds of believers, not only sisters but also brothers, received her *warm, brooding care*."²³ Several times, Lee described Wang as "strong," but never explicitly called her a "leader." This omission is significant because the way in which people are described impacts how the Church remembers them. Peace Wang and Ruth Lee are remembered as "helpers" who "assisted" the male leaders even though "co-workers" was the title that God apparently suggested to Nee in a dream he had prior to meeting Ruth Lee:

The night before her arrival, Watchman Nee was considering whether or not to join the reception, thinking that although she might be a good evangelist, since she was a female, she should not be too highly esteemed. However, during the night he had a dream. ... When he saw her in the dream, the Lord told him that she would be his co-worker.²⁴

The Chinese government arrested Ruth Lee and Peace Wang in 1956 for leading the Christian movement.²⁵ Both women died in prison. Along with Dora Yu, these women's influence on the spread of Christianity in China was immense. The stories of their impact need to be remembered and shared. 

19 Ruth Lee, "A letter from Sister Ruth Lee in her travels," in *The collected works of Watchman Nee*, ed. Watchman Nee (1993), 278.

20 Lee, 278.

21 Witness Lee, *Watchman Nee—A Seer of Divine Revelation* (Living Stream Ministry), chapter 14, section 8 of 8, www.ministrybooks.org/books.cfm?n=http://bdconline.net/en/stories/nee-watchman

22 Lee, Watchman Nee, chapter 14, section 8 of 8. www.ministrybooks.org/books.cfm?n, emphasis ours.

23 Witness Lee, *Watchman Nee*, chapter 14, section 7 of 8. www.ministrybooks.org/books.cfm?n, emphasis ours.

24 Witness Lee, *Watchman Nee*, chapter 14, section 2 of 8, www.ministrybooks.org/books.cfm?n.

25 Witness Lee, *Watchman Nee*, chapter 14, section 2 of 8, www.ministrybooks.org/books.cfm?n.



Embracing Spiritual Motherhood

By **SUZY GRUMELOT**

Suzy Grumelot has served 35 years with World Team in France, church-planting, networking, mentoring, and praying. She is on the executive team of Shoulder to Shoulder and co-authored *Sacred Siblings: Valuing One Another for the Great Commission*. suzy.grumelot@worldteam.org

The Awkward Moment

On more than one occasion, I've found myself with brothers and sisters in Christ in a moment that became...awkward. I'm a never-married single woman serving in cross-cultural ministry. My singleness is not the path that I would have chosen, but it is part of God's plan for me (for now) and it comes with many blessings and challenges. One significant challenge is that it has meant being childless, even though years ago one of my high school friends imagined me as the "most likely to be a mom" in our group.

But back to the awkward moments. I've been at gatherings where a complete stranger has come up to

Note, all Scripture references are NLT.

me and asked, "So how many children do you have?" I remember the first time it happened just hanging my head and saying, "Oh, I'm not married, and I don't have any children," and suddenly I felt bad and she did too. As a result, the conversation went nowhere. This scenario didn't happen once; or even just twice in my ministry life, it has happened multiple times. Sometimes the question was a bit different, "So which one is your husband?" But the result was always the same. Whatever the question, it invariably pointed to my own ache and the desires that God, in His wisdom, had decided were not for me, at least for now. But my answers left us both feeling awkward.

In recent years, I've been delighted to see much more clearly the scriptural point of view on the big

idea of *spiritual family*. Now I can revel in how God sees both marriage and singleness and our sacred sibling relationships, as brothers and sisters in Christ. The place and value of spiritual motherhood and fatherhood make sense. Have you ever wondered about the passage in Isaiah 54, *Sing O childless woman! Break forth into loud and joyful song...for the woman who could bear no children now has more than all the other women, says the Lord*. What does that mean? How can a childless woman become a mother of many? The passage goes on to say this particular woman doesn't have a husband either, so her hopes of ever having her own children are nil. Interestingly, just two chapters later the blessing is extended beyond the barren woman:

And my blessings are for Gentiles, too, when they accept the Lord; don't let them think that I will make them second-class citizens. And this is for the eunuchs too. They can be as much mine as anyone. ⁴For I say this to the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths holy, who choose the things that please me and obey my laws: ⁵I will give them—in my house, within my walls—a name far greater than the honor they would receive from having sons and daughters. For the name that I will give them is an everlasting one; it will never disappear (Isa. 56:3–5).

As I dug into these truths even more (with the help of theologian friends), I came to see several connections in the biblical narrative. Have you ever noticed the marital and parental statuses of the Old Testament prophets? And how does the theology of offspring invite us to consider the one and the many, the physical and the spiritual? Does that somewhat obscure verse Isaiah 53:10 catch our attention?

Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring.

How can this be? This is a picture of Jesus on the cross. We know He had no physical children. Yet in that moment when He makes his offering for sin, He sees His offspring. What kind of children are these? Spiritual ones! Us! Have you ever noticed what *be fruitful and multiply* gets replaced with in the New Testament? *Hint: think Great Commission!* This is the great equalizer. All of us, married, single, with or without physical children have the same mandate:

Therefore go and make disciples in all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and then teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you; and be sure of this—that I am with you always, even to the end of the world (Matt. 28:18-20).


Who is my mother? Who are my brothers? Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!
(Matt. 12:48, 50)

And who does Jesus say is His family? *Who is my mother? Who are my brothers? Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!* (Matt. 12:48, 50). All these themes in scripture have helped me to embrace this big and beautiful idea of what God is about in redeeming His people and putting them into a spiritual family. And it gives me a place to see myself as a nurturer and lover of people, inviting them into my heart and home. That's what discipleship looks like. And this big beautiful spiritual family is such a compelling and attractive place to invite the world, who are without Jesus, into. When we live this out well, it helps us reach the lost in any culture, tribe, and nation.

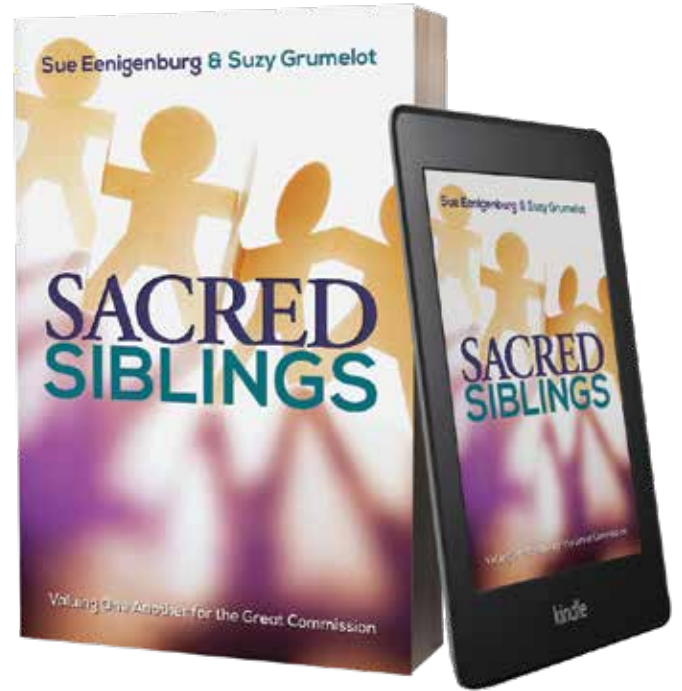
Changing the Conversation

So back to the awkward moments. How do we help to change the conversation? A dear friend who is an artist informed my thinking on this. I once remarked to him, "I'm not creative." Now I'm sure he could have waxed long and eloquently on the core theology behind why that wasn't true and talked about our various acts of worship and our creative God. But instead, he responded with a sad little smile and simply quipped, "Oh, how can that be, when you're created in His image?" And then he turned and walked away. As I stood there puzzling over his words, I didn't feel judged, or misunderstood, or shamed, or dismissed. His question merely planted a seed that piqued my curiosity and eventually led me to see that my definition of creativity was woefully inadequate.

I am a spiritual mother and sister to many! Imagine if the worldwide sisterhood of Christ understood this deeply and lived this out, nurturing other men and women into the kingdom.

Over time, I came to realize that I'm wonderfully creative too, even though I can't draw a straight line, paint a beautiful scene, or write poetry. So, taking a page out of his book, the next time someone asked me the *awkward* question (and yes, this *did* happen yet again) "How many children do you have?" I responded differently. Instead, I decided to plant a seed by referring to what I knew was true. "Actually, I don't have any physical children, but I'd love to tell you about my spiritual children someday." There was a pregnant pause, then the lady laughed and answered, "Oh, I never thought of it that way, I would love to hear more!" Neither of us felt awkward, just curious, and the invitation to go deeper and love well was there. And I later realized that my high school friend was right after all! I *am* a spiritual mother and sister to many! Imagine if the worldwide sisterhood of Christ understood this deeply and lived this out, nurturing other men and women into the kingdom. Perhaps it would be a new women's movement in the making. How I long to see the Church repurpose Mother's Day and Father's Day. Don't get me wrong! It is good to honor our physical mothers and fathers, but even the world does that. However, this is the perfect time—a great teachable moment—to remind us of our mandate and celebrate the fact that every Christian woman on the planet is called to be a spiritual mother, and every Christian man on the planet is called to be a spiritual father. Surely, we can all celebrate that! 

LEARN MORE



Ministry team relationships are especially susceptible to the bruises and pains of "missing one another" when assumptions are made about others or expectations go unmet from the team. Suzy and Sue provide us with a framework for slowly addressing relational necessities.

DAVID RIDDELL

International director, World Team

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A Special Call as Female Practitioners & Leaders?

By **C. ANDERSON**

C. Anderson is an international speaker, author, and leader who has founded several global outreach ministries. Her online disciple-making course has trained thousands of students across 90 nations. Follow her at dmmsfrontiermissions.com.

If you dust off those mission history books, you will surely find references somewhere in one of them to E. Stanley Jones. This great statesman was an amazing missionary to India during the early 1900s. If you are not familiar with him, then you've definitely heard of Mahatma Gandhi. What you may not know, however, is that E. Stanley Jones' wife, Mabel Lossing Jones, influenced this history-changing man who was responsible for Indian independence in significant ways, corresponding with this powerful leader in the field of education. They wrote letters back and forth to one another for more than 20 years.

It's a tough reality that women in missions, though having a great impact, are often unsung heroes. This is true in the past and it is true in the present. It's also true in many aspects of missions, including

Note, all Scripture references are NIV.

Disciple Making Movements. But God is using women to expand His kingdom...and He will use us more.

A Confession

Let me begin with a confession. The name I use on my books, articles, blogs, and courses is C. Anderson. Part of the reason for this is that when I started writing, I was going into many restricted-access nations. Not using my passport name was a buffer that helped me not be recognized as readily. There was another reason.

The world of Disciple Making Movements (DMMs) and Church Planting Movements (CPMs), my primary field, is male-dominated. There are only a handful of females who write, teach, and train in this area. By using the name C. Anderson, I figured some

people may begin to read and learn from what I had to say before realizing I was female. “This may remove a barrier that would be there if they knew I was a woman,” I thought to myself. As a missionary, I’m all about removing unnecessary barriers.

Once they learned from what I had to share, if they later learned I was a lady, perhaps they would no longer care. Or so was my thinking. Now, the name has stuck, and I just keep using it.

It’s not easy to be female in a male-dominated world. At times our voices are discarded or dismissed simply because of gender.

Why the confession? I wasn’t trying to be deceptive by using a gender-neutral name. It was just being practical. The issues are real. It’s not easy to be female in a male-dominated world. At times our voices are discarded or dismissed simply because of gender. At other times, we are invited to “the table” as the token female. This is always a bit of a mixed bag as to how it feels.

How do we handle these issues with grace and wisdom? We need help, and we don’t always get it right. As females, we must help each other learn and grow in releasing our contributions with confidence, stepping into our God-appointed roles and callings faithfully. And, we need the support of men in our lives who open doors of opportunity for us, encourage, and affirm what they see we have to give, often before we’ve even given it.

Though I’ve come a long way on this journey of being a woman in ministry and leadership, I still have much to learn. Let me share, however, a few keys that have helped me thus far.

Keys to Living Faithfully as a Woman in Missions and Leadership

1. *Let your identity be firmly rooted in Christ.*

Know who you are. Know who it is that called and appointed you to the task of reaching the lost. We must have an unshakeable understanding of our belovedness as a daughter of the King of Kings. Being chosen by God, to be His child, is the place from which we respond to accusations or questions as to our ability (or authority) to contribute in ministry roles. They questioned Peter because of his lack of education. So, if your identity comes from being recognized as a pastor or leader, you are already in trouble. Our source of identity must be in being His child, and in being chosen by God to be a royal priest who serves in His Kingdom (1 Pet. 2:9).

Ladies, be sure of your calling and commissioning as it is found in Matthew 28:18-20. Your appointment doesn’t come from any agency or denominational structure; it comes from Jesus himself. He told us as His disciples to go and make disciples, to baptize, and to train others to obey Him. And so, we do. It’s as simple as that.

Kathryn Hendershot wrote about Mabel Jones in the *Priscilla Papers*. “Confining herself to a ‘woman’s role’ ... was not necessary because she was secure in her identity as a servant of God. She was not out to make a name for herself or to compete with anyone.”¹ May God give us that same confidence today.

¹ Kathryn Reese Hendershot, “E. Stanley Jones Had a Wife: The Life and Mission of Mabel Lossing Jones” *Priscilla Papers*, Vol. 22, No. 2.

Remember that your gifts, both *natural* and *spiritual* ones, were given by God. He does not give us gifts and then tell us to put them in a closet or corner. Matthew 5 says, *You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven* (Matt. 5:14-16).

In this passage, Jesus instructs His disciples to let their light shine. The gifts and talents He has given you as a female need to shine, not be hidden away. Develop them and let them bring light to everyone around you.

2. *Simply do your work.*

As mentioned above, Mabel Lossing Jones had no interest in status or titles, she simply got busy doing what God had placed in her heart to do. She started a school for boys. She shared the Gospel with Hindu merchants. She did what was before her to do, and did it faithfully.

As females in ministry, we must do the same. This is true for men as well. If our eyes are on titles and promotions and status, we're set up for failure. Humbly and graciously serve. Do the work of the ministry. As it says in James 4:10, *Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.* If a promotion, particular status, or title is needed, God will make sure you get it. Don't strive or stress over those things.

I am grateful to be a part of a denomination that ordains women in ministry and leadership (the Assemblies of God). Not all do. That's okay.

It's not necessary to have a Rev. title in front of your name to be a minister of the

kingdom. Do the work, and let God worry about the rest. Serve where you can. God will grow your influence. The fruit of your labors will make space for you more than fighting for your right to be recognized ever will.

3. *Be confident in a biblical basis for women in ministry for your own sake.*

Years ago, I read and studied passages about women in ministry and leadership. I devoured books on this topic. I searched the Scriptures diligently, wanting to know what God's Word said about my role in ministry as a female. After several years of pressing into God for clarity, I came to a place of peace and assurance on these topics. I no longer spend much time on this. I've settled this issue in my heart and have a solid biblical foundation for what I do as a female leader. This is important, for my own sake, as well as for the occasional times when I need to give a biblical "defense" of my ministry to someone who asks.

Search out Bible passages on this topic. Dive deep into Romans 16. Understand who Phoebe and Priscilla were, and what Paul said about them. Wrestle with Pauline passages like 1 Timothy. Study biblical leaders like Deborah. Read about historical women like Mabel Lossing Jones, or Henrietta Mears. Determine to settle this issue first in your own heart. Then, be at peace and follow God, regardless of whether or not you are acknowledged or affirmed by others.

4. *Be gracious & refuse to take offense.*

Determine ahead of time to refuse to take offense when you are slighted, overlooked, or unacknowledged for the contributions you make to the kingdom. There is nothing the enemy would love more than to

make women angry, bitter, and left churning inside toward men in our lives or circles. It does no good and much harm, particularly to us but also to God's mission, when we take offense over gender-discrimination issues.

Be kind. Be gracious. Be forgiving. Overlook a multitude of slights and sins. It's okay. Let God defend you. You don't have to fight for yourself. Keep your heart pure. *Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it* (Prov. 4:23).

Let me close with a few final thoughts and a word to the men reading this.

Making Space for Women Is Simply a Good Strategy

One of the fathers of DMMs and CPMs in India, Dr. Victor Choudhrie, said to me in a recent interview, "It's absolute foolishness to not utilize women in disciple-making! It cuts your workforce by more than 50%!" Many, many movements around the world that are growing rapidly are growing because of female disciple-makers and the release of women in leadership. China is only one, though it is a key example.

A Word to the Men in Our Lives

My husband, Todd, has always been affirming of me as a woman in ministry and missions. That is not to say he has never struggled with feeling insecure or threatened when God used me in ministry in more public ways than God was using him. He wrestled through those issues with God and settled them in his own heart. The bottom line for Todd is this: "I never want to stand in the way of something God is releasing through my wife. I live with the fear of God upon me of the loss to His kingdom, if I were to do that." Not only does he not stand in the way but he also encourages and spurs me on to be all that God has called me to be. He believes in me, often more than I believe in myself, and for his being the humble, faithful champion of the kingdom and of me, I'm so thankful.

I also want to thank MF readers, who have created space at the table for women to share their contributions. Continue to do this. As Todd Johnson famously said about Global South leaders, "We need to not only

make room at the table, we need to make room in the kitchen as well." The same is true for women. And I don't mean the food-cooking kitchen! Make room for them in the kitchen where new strategies, innovations, and ideas are being "cooked up." Call it out and invite their voices.

Last, understand that it is not easy. As a man, you may not have any gender bias in your heart whatsoever. I've sat in rooms with men whom I know are fully supportive of female contributions and leadership. I still can feel awkward and hesitant, simply because I am in such a strong minority as a female. Call women forth and then affirm them for sharing. It's a man's world, especially when it comes to missions and the realm of Disciple Making Movements.

My thanks to the many men who have done this for me. I pray more will rise to make space for their wives, daughters, disciples, and friends to give what God has given them, freely and fruitfully.

And may God continue to help me, and all my fellow female journeyers, to walk this road with grace, our eyes on Jesus, the One we love, and the One who called us to be both His daughters and also His ambassadors here on earth. 🙏

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with C. Anderson

A rare and extremely beneficial course! It has helped me tremendously to achieve breakthrough in reaching an unreached people group. —Christian worker in Vietnam

All In for ALL Peoples

By R. NYMAN

R. Nyman and her husband have served with Beyond (www.beyond.org) in SEAsia among Muslim UPGs since 1991 and train/coach and personally implement Disciple Making Movements. Rhonda serves as Austronesian Affinity Bloc Strategy Leader for Beyond. Contact at rra@gcnw.org.

A few years ago, the VP of Global Strategies for Beyond.org turned to me and stated, “We are observing a challenge to see women, as well as men, come to initial trainings in CPM (Church Planting Movements) globally. If we are serious about the fulfillment of the Great Commission, then we need to figure out a way to make sure both men *and* women are equipped/coached in making reproducing disciples for the launch of CPMs among all UPGs (Unreached People Groups).”

My husband and I also had observed many cases among other organizations where the commitment to equip/coach women, as well as men, for the making of reproducing disciple-makers in a CPM process, was not emphasized.

When it comes to whether the global body of Christ truly yearns to be the “final lap”¹ generation of the fulfillment of the Great Commission, for Jesus’ fame

¹ Smith, Steve. See <https://2414now.net/the-storyline-of-history-finishing-the-last-lap/>.

Rhonda R. Nyman

and renown, there is what I like to call the *No Child of God left behind policy of Jesus*. All disciples of Jesus in for *all* peoples. Not some for all peoples, not all for some peoples, but ALL disciples for ALL peoples. (See Hab. 2:14; Rev. 5:9–14; Matt. 28:16–20; Rev. 7:9–12; Matt. 24:14; 2 Peter 3:9).



No Caveats in the Kingdom of God

In a recent conversation with an expat CPM Outside Catalyst² who visited a movement in the Middle East, she relayed the following. When she listened to their all-male leadership share amazing stories, she asked them what they do to help equip and coach their women in the multiple house churches to reproduce as disciple-makers. The movement leader was puzzled and answered, “We have no plan. The women have to take care of the men and the children. How could they be involved?”

Another movement leader, when asked what their plan was for the equipping of both men *and* women to implement making reproducing disciples, looked a bit puzzled and then responded, “The women in our movements must take care of the children, as well as must work in order to bring in support of the male CPM catalysts.”

² **CPM/DMM Catalyst**—A person called to help ignite a movement. The catalyst, whether expatriate or near-culture Christian, is used by God to raise up and coach the indigenous leaders of a movement. Catalysts can be called the “zero” generation (with the first group of believers from the focus group counted as “first” generation).

Another movement leader was facilitating a CPM training for the week. He assumed that the women who were gathered in the room next to his were there in order to pray for his training. In reality, the women were meeting to be trained in CPM. This common assumption that women’s sole role in movements is to support the men as they lead movements overlooks the rich resource women are and can be in seeing the Great Commission fulfilled.

I assert that we can raise the bar to see both men *and* women become more effective as a global missions effort to establish a movement mindset norm of *ALL in for ALL peoples*.

Vision Anemia

At least 50% of most UPGs are female, and in many cultures, it is not appropriate for men to interact with women. Often, especially among Muslim UPGs, women see themselves as the gatekeepers³ for their households. In other words, why wouldn’t we trust the Holy Spirit to leverage women as CPM catalysts in these UPGs? Who, if not women laborers, will seek out Women of Peace to open their *oikos* to the Gospel? And as new CPMs emerge, who will help to equip the multiple generations of local women leaders? The intent of this article is to encourage those who have yet to make sure both men *and* women are equipped as disciples who understand how to make reproducing disciple-makers. But it’s important to pause and reflect on the various seasons of life in which women may find themselves that may impact how they engage in disciple-making. Whether they are single, married without children, married with children, married without children again, single again, young or old, they all have been called by Jesus’ command to make disciples who make

³ See articles in blog for further understanding of how Muslim women see their roles in family, in community. whenwomenspeak.net/resources-books-articles-courses/





disciples of the *ethne*. This great work was given to all people (male and female) in every generation. While the call is the same, the implementation may vary significantly depending on their season of life. However, what is true in any season is that women are hugely gifted in relational acumen. That gift provides avenues into communities that might otherwise have been inaccessible.

A Bit of History

The Jan/Feb 2016 issue of *Mission Frontiers*⁴ was a huge piece in laying a foundation toward the normalization of women, as well as men, as Jesus' disciples who make reproducing disciples in CPM efforts. When I had the opportunity to put that issue of *Mission Frontiers* together, it was mostly outside catalysts who were sharing CPM implementation stories and experiences.

Now, six years past that groundbreaking *MF* issue, and we are seeing the multiplication of near-neighbor and focus UPG women who are sharing their stories, giving their insights as they implement to see the launch of CPMs. Finally, we are seeing ALL for ALL, not outsiders only for ALL peoples, not men only for ALL peoples. Not near-neighbor/indigenous UPG laborers only for ALL peoples, but ALL *ethne* to ALL *ethne*. Both men *and* women for the baseline making of reproducing disciples who love, hear, and obey Jesus.

What must be done to seeing women flourish as CPM practitioners?

Potential actionable steps for more

intentional equipping/coaching of women for CPM-focused efforts could include the following:

- Listen to and learn from the movement leaders and their stories. Discuss with listening ears how they train/coach women in their movements. The purpose is to be diagnostic in gaps in the CPMs to this end.
- Discern gaps in present movements in order to serve their gaps of seeing ALL (male *and* female) of their potential laborers equipped and coached more intentionally.
- Create avenues for women within given CPMs to tell the story of how they partner with the men in training/coaching others to reproduce disciple-makers.
- A weekly CPM coaching circle of men and women can be a most effective way to equip others. Use *7 DMM High Value Activities*⁵ to be woven into the coaching times. These CPM coaching times are suggested to be an ongoing coaching piece. The coaching circle can be most effective with four to six CPM implementers when held to ninety minutes divided into 1/3 Member Health, 1/3 CPM vision strengthening, 1/3 CPM actionable steps through listening prayer in mutual accountability.

All of us (men *and* women) are to delight in and declare God's glory, developing intimacy with God. Out of the overflow of this intimacy we are to "be" and "do" in Christ, and seek to reproduce Jesus in others. For all who follow Jesus, making reproducing disciples is a privilege as well as a command.

I urge the Body of Christ to consider how to best support, inspire, and equip women to thrive and bear multiplying fruit to the glory of God. As co-laborers with God in His mission to reconcile the world to Himself, women have a place and a role to play, and it is right beside their brothers in the faith who are committed to the same call. ✎

⁴ See www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/archive/women-engaged-in-church-planting-movements-among-upgs

⁵ See Blog entry for DMM Weekly 7 High Value Activities womeninchurchplantingmovements.blogspot.com/2022/12/dmm-raising-sails-7-high-value-weekly.html.

Opportunities in the Neighborhood

By SUE PATT

Sue and her husband live in the Philadelphia suburbs with their three children and their families. She serves the Lord through Frontier Ventures and enjoys many rewarding friendships with Muslims and Hindus in her community. sue.patt@frontierventures.org

I'm a practical person. I believe that my faith should be lived out in relationships with others around me. As a teenager, I became a believer in Jesus and wanted to honor Him in my family relationships. In college, I took the *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* class, and I learned it was important to live my faith in the context of international students on campus. Life went on and my passion to connect with Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists grew in my heart and in my daily-life expressions of connection.

Here is a story from a season of my life that was filled with young children, community life, and a desire to love on Muslims in my neighborhood. It might spark ideas of how you can reach the unreached within your reach.

I had known it as a Perkins. It was the unmistakable landmark near the closest Turnpike exit. It was even open 24 hours a day. Then it changed hands to another owner. I watched the transformation over time with disinterest since I don't eat out much. But there was one detail which attracted attention. A gigantic American flag displayed at the diner proudly waved 24 hours a day. It's an area landmark, and it's right across the street from my house.

On more than one occasion, I'd had breakfast with friends there and noticed the very polite dark-haired waiters with accents. I found out that the diner was owned by Egyptians, and many of the staff were also Egyptian. One day, I finally called and blurted out that I was just a regular American person who lived across the street. I was embarrassed that Americans like me usually didn't do a very good job welcoming internationals into this country, and perhaps there were ways a regular person might be able to help the Egyptians feel more at home in this country. The Egyptian on the other end of the phone was speechless, so he passed me to an American gal who was a manager. I told her the same thing. "You'll have


to talk with the owner, Mohammed," she said excitedly. "He will be so delighted to talk with you."

Later that afternoon, I called Mohammed and found myself blurting out the same tumble of thoughts. He was speechless too. When he found words to say, they were not quite what I expected. "This is amazing. I've never heard anything like this before."

I said, "Would you like to bring your family over for dinner at my house so we could talk tomorrow about what I might do to help welcome you and your Egyptian workers?" Mohammed and his family did come for dinner that next night and we began an amazing friendship. Family to family we began sharing about our interests, our children, our history, and when I commented to him that he was blessed by God to have such a beautiful and attentive wife, he countered with "Yes, but I'm even more blessed by God to have friends like you. I've been in this country for 25 years and I've never been invited to an American family's home."

Followers of Jesus Christ should be looking for ways to welcome the alien and the stranger, as the Bible directs us to do (Lev. 19:34). It took me a while to take the step to connect, and I was anything but smooth, but I was sure it would be a seed that would eventually bear fruit. And it has.

Many years have passed since those first conversations with my dear Egyptian friends. I even got a job at the diner and have worked there for most of the past 18 years, giving me the opportunity to have hundreds of conversations with friends from all religious backgrounds. None of those stories would have happened had I not been watching for ways to live out my faith in my community.

Who in your community is still waiting to meet a follower of Jesus? What practical steps might you take in response? 





Meet My Friend

By **GREG H. PARSONS (GP)**

For this special issue of *Mission Frontiers* on Women in Mission, I want to introduce you to my friend, Monica Mitchell (MM), the chair of the board of William Carey International University. Her leadership of the WCIU Board has been a profound service to the university and I personally have learned a lot from her.

GP: When and how did you come to faith?

MM: Growing up in a Catholic church, I learned about Jesus, and our family was very involved. Then, both my brother and I attended Catholic schools through high school. He was an altar boy, I served as a lector during mass. Even at that young age, I wanted to be good and do right. I even considered being a nun! But as a young adult, I began to question the religiosity, ritual-dependent, and performance-based dynamic of the Catholicism that I experienced.

My brother took a different path when he was saved after an appeal was made by an African-American priest at a special charismatic service. I saw him actually experience God instead of only learning about Him. He continued to pursue God by attending InterVarsity meetings and I occasionally went with him. But I struggled to come to terms with the realities of oppression and exploitation in the world in the face of a just God. I had not yet realized that God was shaping my heart to yearn for justice and righteousness—a reflection of His character. I wanted to combat evil in the world: to make a difference, eradicate inequity, injustice, and racism.

GP: How did you first “catch” a mission vision?

MM: Since my ancestry and racial/ethnic background is from oppressed peoples—Africa, Mexico, and indigenous communities—I longed to see the flourishing of those impoverished and neglected. I had met African nationals in graduate school who invited us to help their countries develop. God was planting the seed for a global mindset within me, which came into clear focus at our home church in central Harlem—Bethel Gospel Assembly (Bethel). While Bethel was a predominantly Black church, it included a missions-minded perspective, all in a multi-racial, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic engagement. The Gospel transcended race, socio-economic class, and educational status. The church was originally planted through cross-cultural ministry in which the barrier of racism was rejected to pursue a biblical view of human dignity and value. Mission was taught at all levels, and mission engagement took place everywhere: locally, regionally, nationally, and throughout the world. We supported mission agencies and missionaries. In that context, my new faith grew in understanding that mission is a core part of my identity in Christ.

GP: Share a few ways you were led to serve.

MM: While at Bethel, I served in the clothing ministry—in effect, a store for homeless. I soon became the director of the young adult ministry, then the leader of one of our Missions Prayer Groups. I helped organize our annual mission conference, in addition to participating in outreach to the local community and we hosted missionaries in our home. All while raising five children!

With a heart and active involvement in mission, in addition to my professional work in higher education, it was clear the Lord was ordering my steps to join the WCIU Board.

After 23 years in NYC, we moved to Northern Virginia and I became the Director of the Missions Ministry at our new church. I began looking to grow the mission program and learned about the Perspectives Course (www.perspectives.org). We mobilized leadership to complete the study program and I began coordinating Perspectives and helped the church take vision trips. Regional Perspectives leaders and Frontier Ventures staff members, Fran and Sue Patt, supported and encouraged our efforts. Sue asked me to become the Regional Director of Perspectives for the Mid-Atlantic area.

This led to a breadth of diversity, including gender, race, and ethnicity, to mission mobilization in our region—seeking to bring the whole church to the global mission of God. Our regional team grew and partnered with the Baltimore Washington Center for World Missions, the African American Missions Council and the Asian American Leadership Conference. We were one of the first regions to offer a Spanish bilingual class and recently started a class in Mandarin. I also traveled to Hong Kong to help train Coordinators there—knowing that participants would mobilize the church in Asia using Perspectives.

I am honored to serve as Chair of the Board of Directors of William Carey International University (WCIU). When I first joined the Board, I had stepped down from the Regional Director position of Perspectives as I had sensed the Lord was preparing me for another work and using me in my professional field in higher education. God opened doors for me to serve as a change agent in broadening participation in the sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) so that underserved communities can have access, opportunity, and experience success. With a heart and active involvement in mission, in addition to my professional work in higher education, it was clear the Lord was ordering my steps to join the WCIU Board. 📖

**BEYOND
CONTEXTUALIZATION:**
Crossing Religious & Cultural Boundaries

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The Music in My Soul

If you had the chance to ask anyone in Frontier Ventures who my favorite singer is they will probably say “Bob Dylan”. And that would be an understandable but incorrect answer! He is someone I quote often, and whose song writing I appreciate. But he is not my favorite *singer*.

I have a list of favorites and they are all women. That list includes Emmy Lou Harris, Judy Collins, Brandi Carlisle, Adele, Florence Welch (Florence and the Machine), and Patty Griffin. Many of them are also amazing songwriters, and I am enabled to see and feel their view of life and the world through their music.

As an example, Patty Griffin’s song “Careful” shows up regularly in my station. It is a plea for the world to be careful with what she refers to in various ways as “all the girls”: women, girls, daughters, mothers, wives and partners, leaders, artists, and more. I often use it to pray for the women in my life, and the women of the world, women in the movements I have the honor to work with, women who have started such movements in various places, and women who serve in leadership. I pray for women in our current national and global era, with its profound mix of an emerging awareness of what it’s like to be a woman in this context, while at the same time we also see more and more instances of systemic oppression, abuse, and harassment.

The Women I Have Raised

I have three daughters. Our oldest did a double major in history and women’s and gender studies as the other. She later combined the two fields in her MA work, in which her thesis compared the treatment of women by Christians, Jews, and Muslims in medieval Spain.

Our middle daughter majored in women’s and gender studies at Penn State before getting her master’s degree in social work. Our youngest was a Performing Arts major, but she also took courses in women’s and gender studies.

All three studied at so-called liberal institutions. I was sometimes asked by well-meaning friends, “How are you handling that?” My answer was simple: I asked my daughters to give me their favorite books or notes on a significant lecture. And, then we talked. In other words, I leaned in. I learned. A lot.

What I learned with my head, impacted my heart, and it affected what I did. But....

Sometimes Hearts and Hands Lag Behind Our Heads

Imagine a fish who learns late in life it is actually amphibious. It may now *know* it’s capable of living out of the water, but the shifts in how it feels when out of the water, or the length of time it feels comfortable, might take longer. There could be old habits that lag. The fish might suddenly panic, “I need to get back in to the...” and then realize, “oh right, I am ok out here.”

Sure, it’s a trivial, made-up example, but I use it to share that in some ways I feel like that fish. My inner world and actions are still catching up to what I “know in my knower.” I know that:

God made us, humanity, in God’s image; male and female God has created us.

My journey has convinced me of the so-called egalitarian view of women and leadership (to single out just one facet of our theme). However, I know that there are times I do not live fully from that mental knowledge. There are times when the systemic nature of things blinds me to ways I am not seeing (which is blindness, I know!).

To overcome this, I try to press in. I ask for feedback regularly about how I have contributed to the ways women colleagues of mine experience feelings of not being seen, not having a place. My colleagues are gracious, but I am grateful that they are also direct and clear.

And Our Theme?

First, the history of mission is full of wonderful and yet also paradoxical examples. One can find ample evidence of women leading the way in mission: as pioneers, as mobilizers, as examples of courage and sacrifice and creativity. They are wonderful examples.

And yet the paradox: in some cases women are “allowed” to do things in the field that they were prevented from doing at home. They could plant churches “over there,” but not pastor them “here.” I won’t comment here on the implied racism and cultural superiority this reveals except to name it.

However, my main point here is about how women were viewed in mission. Sometimes, more often than we will want to admit, that view has been something like, “go and lead, just don’t lead us.”

Now What

I pray you will read and digest the contributions in this edition. I pray you will absorb the profound mystery of all humanity made in God’s image, and what that mystery says about God’s way of seeing women. And I pray we, myself included, will continue to adjust ourselves, our heads, and our hands, and our hearts to be more aligned with God’s thoughts, actions, and heart. ❏

KINGDOM SINGLE

By **V.J. ALTHOUSE**

V.J. has worked cross-culturally for 17 years in New York City and now serves as the Training Director for International Students Inc. She is an adjunct instructor at Alliance University and serves at her church, New Life Fellowship. Contact valthouse@isionline.org

The taxi driver looked at me aghast in the rear-view mirror: “*YOU are SINGLE!?? What a WASTE!*”

I have spent a good amount of time riding in taxis around the world, especially in New York City where I live working among international people. Conversations with taxi drivers quickly turn to the topic of families, and arrive in that all-too-familiar location: *their absolute shock that I am single.* (Sometimes these conversations result in marriage proposals—so ladies, if you are looking ... !)

Yes, he meant it as a compliment, but ... is it a waste? On good days, I can usually laugh with my new-driver-friend and explain my choices in the light of Who Jesus is. On tough days, though, those words can linger after I leave the taxi and leave a sense of sadness in my heart. *While traditional cultures value family and marriage, and progressive cultures aspire to an ideal of independence and autonomy—how does the single, missional follower of Jesus hold this tension in light of the Kingdom?*

Waste or Worship?

Three times in the Gospels (Matt. 26, Mark 14, Luke 7) we read of the woman who was so overcome with love for Jesus that she poured an alabaster jar of perfume on His feet. His disciples were aghast that something so costly had been poured out rather than being sold to help the poor. Commentators believe that this was her dowry, her hope of future marriage, which in that culture and time period was also her future security. In essence, she poured out not so much a large financial

sum, but her whole life. Jesus received and honored her gift of worship—and not only that—indicated that her act of worship would be spoken of around the whole world wherever the Gospel would be preached.

Living a life of worship as single, cross-cultural workers can feel as if we have spilled all of our hopes for marriage out onto the floor. Others may see it that way as well. My friend Veronica, who is American Born Chinese and a former missionary in East Asia, received this comment from her pastor when she told him that she would be serving overseas: “OH! You will be placing marriage on the altar!” She hadn’t thought of it quite like that before, but those words stuck with her.

A Broken Jar or a Poured-Out-Life?

As I reflected on the task of writing about the unique challenges of singleness among Great Commission workers, I came to realize something: each challenge I have experienced, while difficult, has borne both personal and Kingdom fruit. Rather than seeing a broken jar, I began to see poured out perfume among the nations.



Each challenge related to singleness deserves to be named, felt, and wrestled with. The grief produced by each challenge should be given its proper space in our lives, and allowed to go through its messy, unpredictable journey towards our acceptance and healing. The purpose of this article is not to devalue the struggle, but to invite my single colleagues to *live in the midst of this tension with hope; to hold a Kingdom paradigm within which to understand their single status. A poured out life is not wasteful. It is worship. And it bears much fruit.*



The Challenge of Loneliness

Loneliness is not a challenge unique to single missionary women, it is a challenge for all humanity. Yet, for those serving in a cross-cultural context, loneliness can be experienced in complex ways. Cultural loneliness is only the beginning. Veronica explains,

Working and living in a different culture and language environment...I remember countless times when hanging out with local friends who would crack jokes, reference movies, or other things they grew up with (songs, people, events) and I had no clue. Earlier in my linguistic journey, I couldn't actually understand what was being said, but later on, even when I could understand the actual language a lot better, I couldn't catch the humor or significance. We can feel lonely even when surrounded by people in our same culture, but it does get compounded in a foreign environment.

Kristin, a Caucasian American serving in Europe, shares another example:

I remember once I went to a concert with some friends... I had to use the bathroom, so I went alone thinking that I would have to awkwardly find the group in the crowd. But when I came

out, one of the guys was waiting for me. It was such a simple act, but it really made me reflect on how my regular day to day is filled with me doing things alone and having no one to share the load, or even wait for me, so I am not alone. I often feel braver with even just one other person, so it is hard having to do most of life abroad alone. I have had to reach out more to strangers than I ever had to in America, and that can be emotionally exhausting...

Loneliness shows up sometimes when we least expect it: on your day off when you didn't get around to "planning companionship" for that day; on holidays when you are yet again the 5th wheel at someone's family gathering; in decision-making when you are exhausted by the idea that yet again another major decision rests on your shoulders. It shows up when there is no one there with whom you can share the hard days of cultural misunderstandings, or even when you sense your own vulnerability trying to just 'do life' in a context where being a woman alone brings risk.

I have experienced all of these. And in the moment, when it is strongest, loneliness looks a lot more like the broken jar than a life of worth, poured out and sweet-smelling like perfume. And yet, the experience of loneliness in my life has borne fruit.



The Kingdom Fruit of Loneliness

Loneliness has great power to produce Kingdom fruit in the lives of singles who are serving cross-culturally. A keen sense of loneliness produces a longing for

family, and when one isn't readily available we are forced (in a good way) to create one. This can happen in two ways: we lean more heavily on the formation of missional community wherever we are and/or we focus our efforts on creating that sense of family among the people we serve. In my own experience loneliness has produced in me a fierce bond with the missional community I serve with. I am deeply invested in their growth, health, and effectiveness and use my energies towards that end just as I perhaps would have done with my own family if I had had one.

My loneliness has also produced in me a passion for creating a sense of family among those who also have no family locally. I find that when I meet the needs of others, mysteriously, my own needs are met. Because of this, I have had the privilege of being an Auntie, Sister, and even Mother to young people from all over the world. And through those relationships, the Gospel has gone forth among unreached people groups.



"I love it when we get to live out God's Word," says Mendall, an African American cross-cultural worker. "I experienced family while serving on the field among the local people and my fellow workers in the field." She found strength in Mark 10:28-30 (ESV). She became a living testimony to the truth that whoever has left "house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children... for My Name's sake and for the Gospel's sake... will receive a hundred times as much... in the age to come."

Perla, a Mexican cross-cultural worker, shares about living with a family in her new country. They were downstairs, celebrating a family event together and she felt that she did not belong with them. The sharp pang of no biological family of her own hit hard. But, "When they were ready to eat, my friend's mom came to my room and told me 'Perlita, we are ready to eat, join us!' The rest of the day was just wonderful. My broken jar turned into a poured-out-life."

I have been personally changed by my experience with loneliness. Loneliness has taught my eyes to see people, to *really see them*. I notice more quickly, look into their eyes more deeply. I notice pain and loneliness in people around me every single day. Because of this, my own loneliness unites me with the people among which I live and work by our shared experience of this common human condition.

The Challenge of the Lack of Intimacy

The lack of intimacy in the life of a single person takes many forms. By remaining single, we choose to live without sexual pleasures available to those who are married. But there is a deeper layer: the physical act of sexual intimacy is (or ought to be) an outward function representing an even deeper kind of intimacy—the emotional and spiritual connection shared by two people who have committed their lives to one another. The lack of physical intimacy is hard, but the lack of emotional intimacy can be just as hard or harder.

For singles who remain within their own familiar culture, the lack of intimacy is still very hard, but there is a compounded experience of it for those living overseas. "The truth is, no matter how much we adapt to a culture or are accepted in said culture, we will always be foreign and often misunderstood," says Kristin. "That can get very lonely on all levels, especially emotionally."

While many of us began our young lives picturing our future idyllic family, prolonged singleness has brought that dream crashing into reality. In my experience, the loss of that somewhat simplistic ideal moved me to wrestle with, then recognize and embrace a whole new life in my single status. This movement from dream to reality allows me to bond deeply with others who have also found that life has not turned out the way they expected that it would. It is in that space that I can speak of my hope in Jesus.



The Kingdom Fruit of the Lack of Intimacy

My unmet needs have borne fruit in Kingdom ways. I found that I could live with joy, and that the “enoughness” of Christ for me was a testimony to the nations around me. For my Muslim and Hindu friends especially, my choice of chastity added weight to my words about following Jesus. My life spoke loudly to them. In the midst of a cultural message that tells us every desire must be satisfied now, a walk of sexual obedience is a prophetic witness to the world around us.

The second change I saw in me because of a lack of intimacy and unmet needs was my journey through grief and loss. To live life without what we were designed to experience is a loss, and losses must be grieved. While grieving the recent loss of my father, I most wanted to spend time with others who had also lost a parent. They “got me.” I knew they understood, and I was safe with them. Profound loss, while painful, becomes a bridge to those around us who have also experienced great loss. There is a form of beauty that only shines through those who have experienced great loss, and this beauty can produce great fruit. Our souls expand through grief and loss. In my own experience, *loss*, not some idyllic life, builds a strong bridge for the message of Jesus to flow across. In some form, singleness and the grief it can produce, does deep work in us that enables us to relate to the broken world around us.

Singles’ lives are a living testimony of the ‘enoughness’ of Christ. Robert Cunningham, in a September 2022 episode of the podcast *Every Square Inch*, speaks about fulfillment, “...in a world of erotic idolatry, [singles] are telling the world that the ultimate fulfillment of erotic

love is found in marriage to Jesus.It’s not an easy path, but it is a noble path.”¹ While earthly marriage illustrates this eventual fulfillment, single people are a living testimony to it right now. Singles “fast from the foretaste to savor the substance.” *Jesus* did the same.

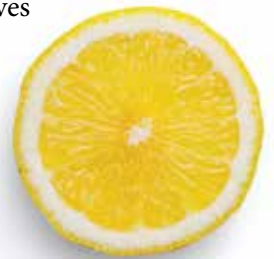
The Challenge of Unseen, Unmet Needs

Unseen and unmet needs cross a wide breadth of categories, from the emotional need of desiring to be loved and known, to practical, every-day sorts of needs. We all desire to be seen as significant in someone’s eyes and to experience that through their attention and service.



Single, cross-cultural workers often struggle to name their unseen, unmet needs. The busyness and intensity of cross-cultural life (and sometimes just survival) has a numbing effect. Even if these needs can be named, *meeting those unseen needs in legitimate and healthy ways is a challenge* while far away from home and familiar cultural norms.

Single workers experience marginalization in various ways on the field. While much of life for the team and for the host culture revolves around family and marriage, singles must create their own belonging and patterns of life. Single people often lack places to process team discussions or even just the day’s work. Other times, single are treated as if they are not yet adults, no matter what age they may be.



¹ *Every Square Inch* podcast. <https://www.kouya.net/?p=13879>



The Kingdom Fruit of Unseen, Unmet Needs

In ministry, if what we give away is really *who we are* (not our performance), then this struggle has rich rewards in the Kingdom. Our single, cross-cultural work is the crucible through which greater Christlike character is being formed in us. Fairly often, some of the people I work among have commented to me that when they are with me they feel peace. Doing deep discipleship work in my own life allows me to carry peace to others who have not yet found their peace in Christ.

My own unmet needs make me more aware of others' unmet needs, and because of that, I work hard to give others the gift of deep, focused attention. It is this kind of attention that becomes a bridge for the Gospel. When we feel that someone is seeing us deeply, we feel loved. Few of us receive this kind of gift from others, but my experience of singleness has taught me how to give the gift of focused attention to others.

As a single worker, I have the opportunity to love many. As I Corinthians 7 teaches, singles can live lives "without distraction," pouring out our worship-filled energy and time, bringing healing to a broken world. My own experience of marginalization pales in comparison with so many around the world, but I can choose to channel my hurtful experiences into identification with others and be moved to Christlike, responsive action.

The Challenge of Displacement

Often, the idea and feeling of "home" is an elusive one as a single missionary. A sense of displacement can result from a variety of sources. It is hard to feel at home when you don't feel understood: Mendall shares her experience,

My first experience overseas was as a Peace Corp volunteer (which God used to prepare for foreign missionary work). When I returned home, I went through reverse culture shock- emotionally (family friends were not interested in hearing about my overseas experience, and they thought it was strange that I wanted to leave the USA in the first place. I felt very alone at home; physically, I developed shingles due to the stress of returning to my home society, As a missionary, when I returned home , my church family understood and supported me emotionally, but most of my family and some of my friends (even the Christian ones) couldn't understand why I would leave the USA, and were not really interested in the work I did overseas. I was very much alone."

Feeling displacement can also result from not having a permanent physical home. Even though New York City is within the United States, it is in many ways its own culture and country. I went through culture shock when I moved here 17 years ago. I have been changed by living here and by my many international friendships. Because of that, home doesn't fit me the way it did before. I don't fit 100% anywhere anymore. My apartment is rented because I can't afford to buy one, thus even my occupied 'home' space is temporal.

Feeling displacement is experienced by many cross-cultural workers, not only singles. But again, a sense of home can be even more elusive for those who have no permanent family with whom home is wherever you are together, such as it is for those who are married.



The Kingdom Fruit of Displacement

This feeling of displacement has changed me and my single colleagues in several ways. One change is discovering the home that we have in Christ while

remaining, in a sense, ‘homeless.’ My friend Veronica explains this well:

I experience this a great deal in a culture (Chinese) that values marriage and family greatly, and people derive their identity from their roles as spouse, parent, child, etc. One way that being single in His Kingdom has changed me is that all through these years, I’ve noticed how many siblings, parents, children, and homes that God has invited me to enter and be a part of...in a physical sense, I got this impression on my furloughs when I might be sleeping at 10+ different places within a 4 month time span...displaced? Yes...but also a sense of “having a home everywhere”...and tasting what Jesus said when He said that the Son of Man didn’t have anywhere to lay His head...but also when he told his disciples that God would give us houses, land, siblings, etc.

Displacement has the potential to move us into a desire for proximity among the marginalized.

In my own life, it is like the pull of a strong magnet. In a sort of Kingdom paradox, I feel most at home when I am not in my comfort zone, cultural or otherwise.

Living in proximity also means living as Jesus did, incarnationally. To the best of my ability, I choose a life and lifestyle walking among those who have not yet experienced God’s love as I have been given the opportunity to do so.

Just as Christ did, I choose the discomfort of leaving my own culture in order to bear the discomfort of another culture—so that the message might have receptivity. Singleness affords me the freedom to make this choice without needing to wrestle with how it will impact my spouse or children.

Another change I’ve observed as a result of feeling displaced is that the American Dream has significantly lost its grip on me. While I still love my creature comforts, the ideal that I am chasing in my mind is not one of settled security, family and a picket fence, but one of Kingdom vision and expansion. I am then moved to live in a catalytic way: that those who already follow Jesus might be roused to live more intentionally for the sake of the

unreached and for eternity. My words only bear weight when my life also testifies to their truth. This poured out perfume of my life is a prophetic call to others to join the work of seeing all *ethne* reached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Leighton Ford, in his book *The Attentive Life*, mentions the two realities of heaven: place and personhood—a place to go and a person to be with; “where I am, there you may be.” Singles don’t have this now, but point toward future fulfillment as they live with this anticipation.

A Poured Out Life of Worship

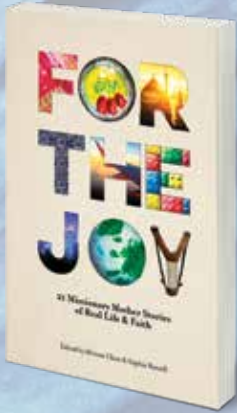


I reflect regularly on the phrase, “for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross.” Healthy Christianity is not flagellistic. We are not in pursuit of suffering for its own sake. Rather, the suffering that happens as we walk in the way of Jesus is embraced not for itself but for what it results in. In ways I cannot even imagine, all of the unseen, unmet needs I experience now will be met when I finally meet Him face to face.

In James K.A. Smith’s book, *You Are What You Love*, he reminds us that all of life is liturgy, all of life is worship. If we want to know who and what we love, simply look at our daily liturgies: what we do every single day. Every single day of our single lives is an act of worship. Just as Mary Magdalene did, kingdom singles can choose to love Jesus more than the promise of future marriage and demonstrate that through a poured-out life. While some see it as wasteful, Jesus *names* it and *honors* it as *worship*.

Are you single as a cross-cultural worker? Name the challenges, give space to the feelings, grieve all that you need to grieve. Then, name the blessings and fruit. Some fruit can be seen now, some we may need to wait to see. But the grain of wheat that falls into the earth and dies does not do so without hope. On Jesus’ authority we know that it bears much fruit. 🍓





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Miriam Chan & Sophia Russell (Editors)

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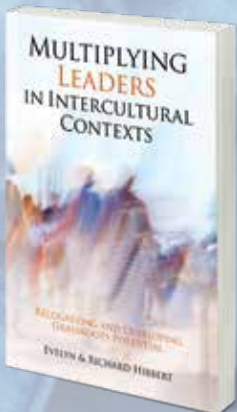
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Jolene Erlacher & Katy White

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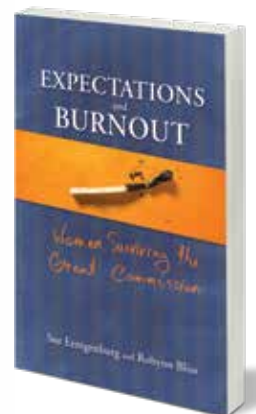
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Women Surviving the Great Commission

Sue Eenigenburg and Robynn Bliss

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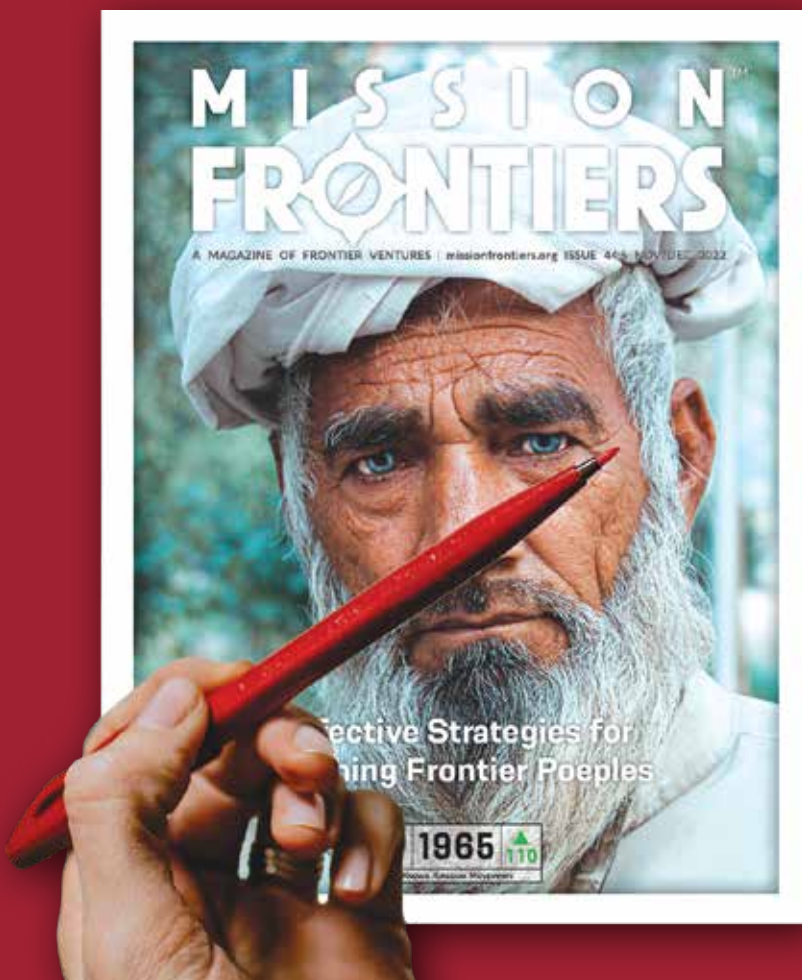
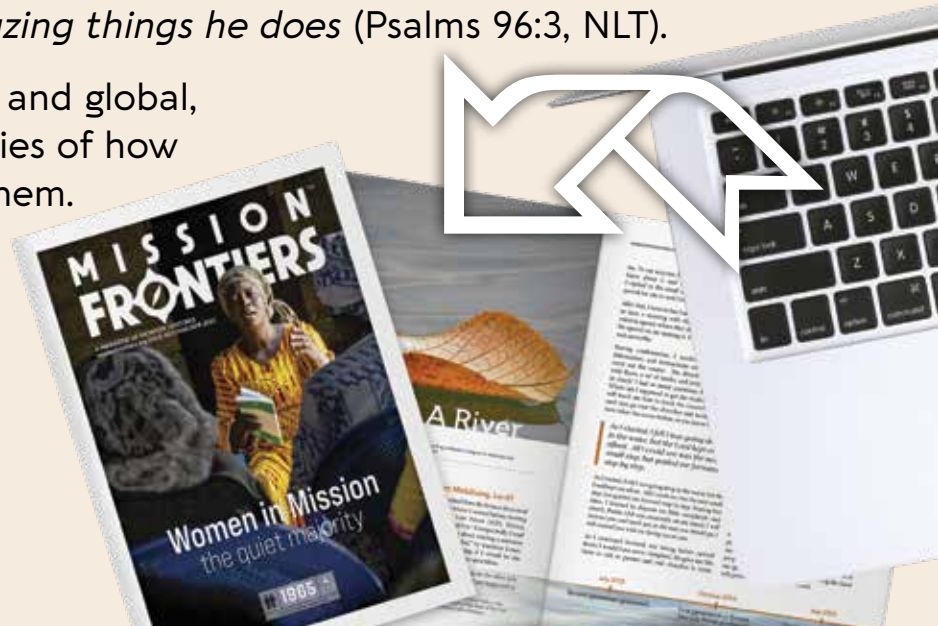
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MARCH

1 Karata in Russia

Rugged terrain, pride, and defense of religious traditions keep the Karata people from the sin-forgiving savior. They have a strong form of collective conformity that does not allow them to stray outside their norms. The Karata people have a deep, abiding hunger for unselfish love and true spiritual power that only Jesus can satisfy.

May the LORD give strength to his people! May the LORD bless his people with peace! —Psalm 29:11

- Pray for new believers among this people group to be blessed with strength and peace.
- Pray for a first “Cornelius,” “Lydia,” or “woman at the well” among the Karata to courageously respond to the resurrection power of Jesus.
- Pray that the Word of God will be infused into Karata culture.
- Pray that the translated Lord’s Prayer will have a strong impact on Karata culture.

2 Chamalal in Russia

The Chamalal live in 28 villages in the mountains of Dagestan and Chechnya. They are Sunni Muslims, and proudly so; however, their Islam is tainted with folk beliefs. Terrain, isolation, and religious and ethnic pride are mountainous obstacles between them and Jesus. So, too, is the lack of Scripture.

For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my iniquity, and my bones waste away. —Psalm 31:10

- Pray that this people group will understand that sin drains and destroys, but the Lord offers forgiveness and spiritual refreshment.
- Pray for Christian linguists to work among them.
- Pray for openness to Dagestani believers seeking to reach them.
- Pray for any who are won to return to rural areas with the gospel.

3 Kist in Russia

In the 1700s, ethnic Vainakh Chechens from Caucasian Chechnya came to be called Kist by the Georgians. In time, they adopted Georgian surnames and learned Georgian along with Chechen. The vast majority are Muslims, not open to the gospel.

Blessed be the LORD, for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me when I was in a besieged city. —Psalm 31:21

- Pray that this people group will be drawn to the unfailing love of the Lord, our eternal Heavenly Father.
- Pray that the Kist people will become spiritually hungry and begin to seek salvation in Jesus alone.
- Pray for an interest in the New Testament.
- Pray the Holy Spirit will guide these people into a movement for Christ.

4 Kantarure in Brazil

The Kantarure of Brazil became a people more than a hundred years ago and have an indigenous religion. Brazilian laws seek to reduce contact between outsiders and the indigenous peoples. Many in the church are ignorant of the Kantarures’ existence.

I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you. —Psalm 32:8

- Pray for this people group to accept the Lord’s guidance and salvation.
- Pray that the church will come to know of the Kantarure’s existence and be willing to reach them for Christ.
- Pray churches in Brazil will adopt them for evangelism and church planting, sending missionaries to them.
- Pray the Kantarure people become spiritually hungry and open to Jesus Christ.



5 Kuruaya in Brazil

There are writings about the Kuruaya of Brazil dating to the seventeenth century. They have had problems with raiders, and they were almost extinct in the 1960s. As a consequence, they and other indigenous Brazilians are now protected by the government. Outsiders are not allowed into indigenous areas. Agriculture is their main work.

Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds the one who trusts in the LORD. - Psalm 32:10

- Pray for many from this people group to notice this stark difference and turn to the Lord.
- Pray that any nearby indigenous churches will be led by God's Spirit to evangelize these people.
- Pray for dreams and visions of Jesus to open the people to the gospel.
- Pray that the chiefs and leaders among the Kuruaya will come to Jesus Christ and lead the others to salvation.

6 Paiaku in Brazil

The Paiaku were once a large group of indigenous people who lived in east central Brazil. They refused to submit to the Portuguese colonizers. Almost all the Paiaku were wiped out by disease, war, and slavery. Today, the Paiaku are a tiny group of people who have lost their original language and now speak Portuguese. They make their living by agriculture, fishing, and hunting-gathering.

He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD. —Psalm 33:5

- May this people group seek and find the Lord's unfailing love!
- Ask the Lord to preserve the Paiaku along with their culture and traditions.
- Ask the Lord to send workers to the Paiaku to tell them about their Savior.
- Pray the Paiaku would be successful in their legal battles to retain their lands.

7 Idaksahak in Algeria

The Idaksahak have been Sunni Muslims for over 1,000 years. Being Muslim is a part of their personal and group identity. There are few, if any, Idaksahak followers of Jesus, so they need to hear from those outside their community.

Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage! —Psalm 33:12

- May this nation choose the Lord, and no other!
- Pray for an intense spiritual hunger among the Idaksahak people that will lead to many coming to Christ.
- Pray for loving believers to go to the Idaksahak and tell them of their Savior.
- Pray for the Lord to provide the Idaksahak people with adequate rainfall as an example of His goodness and power.
- Ask the Lord to raise up a growing church among the Idaksahak.

8 South Asian Jew in India

The Jewish state of Israel was founded in 1948. Since that time, most of the Jews of India have migrated to Israel. The Jews who remain in India live in large cities like Mumbai and Kolkata. Very few Jews remain in India.

Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name. —Psalm 33:20-21

- May this people group rejoice in the Lord always.
- Ask the Lord to send Holy Spirit anointed workers to the Indian Jews.
- Pray that the JESUS Film will effectively reveal the glory of Jesus to Jews in India.
- Ask God to open the spiritual ears of the Indian Jews as they listen to Christian radio broadcasts.
- Ask the Lord to raise up a movement to Jesus among the Jews of India.

9 Brahmin in Bhutan

A small Brahmin group makes their home in the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan. Since Bhutan is primarily a Buddhist nation, the rights and privileges of being a Brahmin are not as pronounced as they are in Hindu parts of South Asia. The Brahmins are well-educated, and they are landowners and businesses.

Let your steadfast love, O LORD, be upon us, even as we hope in you. —Psalm 33:22

- Pray for this people group to give their love and devotion to the Lord and be rewarded with hope and joy forever.
- Ask the Lord to send loving workers to the Brahmins of Bhutan.
- Pray that the Brahmins would be open to reading the Assamese Bible and investigating the claims of Jesus Christ.
- Ask the Lord to raise up a disciple making movement among the Brahmins of Bhutan.

10 Kharga in Egypt

The Selima Kharga are Bedouins who live in Egyptian desert areas. Bedouins live nomadic lifestyles, leading their camels, goats, and sheep to sources of water and food. Governments discourage this type of life as it makes collecting taxes difficult. Some Kharga young people are moving to cities looking for a better life. Nomadic peoples are some of the most challenging to reach with the gospel. Missionaries would have to follow the Kharga in their seasonal travels throughout the desert.

I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. —Psalm 34:1

- May many from this people group praise Him at all times!
- Ask the Lord to send loving workers to the Kharga of Egypt.
- Ask the Lord to open the hearts of Kharga leaders and elders.



11 Siwa Berber in Egypt

The Siwa people mostly live in the Siwa oasis, a very remote, arid desert location in the far west of Egypt, close to the Libyan border. They live in a compact, walled town and in several outlying villages. Although the Siwa observe Islamic fundamentals, many pre-Islamic traditional beliefs persist. Tourists visit the Siwa Oasis.

Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. —Psalm 34:5

- May there be many from this people group who look only to the Lord for help, and may they be filled with joy and peace.
- Pray for the Lord to use visitors to the Siwa Oasis to share Christ.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to soften the hearts of Siwa Berbers and Egyptian leaders towards the gospel.
- Ask the Lord to raise up a network of strong local churches among Siwa Berbers.

12 Chinese in Angola

Thousands of construction workers, engineers, doctors, cooks, and petroleum engineers have migrated from China to Angola. They are extracting oil and developing Angola's damaged infrastructure. Angola is one of China's largest suppliers of oil. The Chinese companies are using local materials, but hiring Chinese employees. The Angolans resent this situation, and there has been a lot of crime against the ethnic Chinese.

Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast you save, O LORD. How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings. —Psalm 36:5–7

- Pray for this people group to understand the vastness of the Lord's faithfulness and righteousness. May they be drawn to Him.
- Pray for protection for the Chinese.
- Pray that Chinese believers will worship the same Lord with Angolan believers as an example of unity and love.
- Pray for a disciple making movement to grow among the Chinese in Angola.



13 Swahili in Zambia

The Swahili in Zambia identify with Islam; however, many of their traditional pre-Islamic beliefs and practices still exist. The Swahili have folk explanations for natural occurrences. By African standards, the Swahili are economically prosperous, and this prosperity can render God “unnecessary” in their minds.

For I am ready to fall, and my pain is ever before me. I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin. —Psalm 38:17–18

- Pray that this people group finds peace and salvation when they confess their sins to the Lord.
- Pray for the Lord to give the relatively prosperous Swahili people the humility to come as beggars to the only one who can save them from sin and spiritual death.
- Ask God to raise up Christian businessmen who will boldly share Christ with the Swahili.
- Ask the Lord to raise up a network of strong local churches among the Swahili.

14 Bathari in Oman

Bathari is a language of southern Oman, but fewer than 20 people speak it. The others from this people group have moved on to speaking Omani Arabic, Oman’s trade language. The Bathari people need to put their identity in Christ, especially as they are in the process of losing their identity as a distinct people group.

As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. —Psalm 42:1

- Pray for this kind of longing for the Lord among today’s people group!
- Pray they will have a spiritual hunger that will open their hearts to the King of kings.
- Pray for workers who are driven by love and by the boldness of the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for a disciple making movement among them to begin soon.

15 Aguri in India

The Aguri are a cultivating and trading caste. They are mostly located in West Bengal. The Aguri only know about Hinduism. They believe that by performing rituals and good works, they will attain freedom from the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Their basic needs are education, medical facilities, and water wells. By meeting some of these needs, missionaries can build relationships with them.

By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. —Psalm 42:8

- Pray for many from this people group to find the Lord’s unfailing love and respond with praise and worship.
- Pray for improved schools, roads, water, and medicine for the Aguri.
- Pray for good harvests for farmers so that they can provide for their families and see God’s provision.
- Pray for a disciple making movement.

16 Ahom in India

Ahom people have intermarried with other people groups. Most Ahom people practice the Hindu religion, but some are Buddhists. Some follow their old Furalung religion. They worship ancestors, believing they will keep them safe. They believe that when a dead person goes to heaven, he becomes a god to be worshiped. The complete Bible has been translated into the Ahomese language.

Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling! —Psalm 43:3

- Pray that this people group will respond to the Lord’s light and truth.
- Pray that God will give the Ahom dreams and visions, leading them to salvation.
- Pray the Indian Christians will help them begin their own movement to Christ that will bless their community for eternity.

17 Pinjara in Bangladesh

The Pinjara derive their name from the term pinjala meaning “cotton weaver.” Their traditional occupation is cleaning and reeling cotton to make pillows, quilts, and mattresses. They can be Muslim or Hindu. Very little ministry activity has been focused on the Pinjara people.

The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted! —Psalm 47:9

- Pray that the Lord will find honor and worship from today's people group. May they understand that they belong to Him.
- Pray for many from this large unreached people group to understand both God's judgment and his majestic glory.
- Pray for faithful intercessors to rise up among Pinjara people until there is a strong movement to Christ among them.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger that will lead them into a disciple making movement.

■ **18 Tamboli (Muslim) in Bangladesh**

The Tamboli derive their name from the Sanskrit term for "betel leaves" (tambula). Tambul or betal leaf packing is their primary source of their income. Many Tamboli people work as small business traders and hardware shop owners because of their higher or "clean" caste status.

The Mighty One, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. —Psalm 50:1

- Pray that today's people group will respond to God's summons to come to Him!
- Pray that the betel leaf and areca nut industry could be penetrated with the gospel so that many Tamboli, whether Muslims or Hindus, could know the God who gives abundant life.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will give opportunity for the JESUS Film to be shown to the Tamboli people.



■ **19 Rangrez (Muslim) in Bangladesh**

Rangrez people traditionally dye cloth. They were originally Hindus worshiping many gods, but Muslim missionaries converted this people group to Islam many centuries ago. Christian businessmen could find a way to purchase Rangrez-made goods for the world market. This effort would give them regular contact with this spiritually needy Muslim community in Bangladesh.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. —Psalm 51:2-3

- Pray for true heart-felt repentance to come to leaders of this people group.
- Pray that Almighty God will give Rangrez leaders dreams and visions leading them to opening their community to salvation through Christ alone.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to give Rangrez leaders a hunger and thirst for true righteousness that will lead them to Jesus Christ.

■ **20 Balinese in Malaysia**

Many Balinese people live on the nearby Indonesian islands of Lombok, Lampung, Sulawesi, South Kalimantan, Sumbawa and Papua, and Malaysia, a beautiful country near Indonesia. Close-knit societies make it especially difficult for a member to find their way to the cross.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. —Psalm 51:4

- Pray that leaders among this people group will understand the depth of their sin just as King David did.
- Pray that Balinese elders in Malaysia will experience dreams and visions of Jesus that will open their hearts to him.
- Pray that Balinese Hindus embrace Christ and turn completely to him alone.
- Pray for a disciple making movement among the Balinese in Malaysia that will spread to their communities in Indonesia and Australia.

21 Baha'i in Nepal

Three principles form basic Bahai doctrine: the unity of God, the unity of religion (that all major religions have the same spiritual source and come from the same God), the unity of humanity (that all humans have been created equal). People need to know and love God through prayer, reflection, and being of service to humanity. Jesus is but one of many divine messengers. The religion was initially seen as a sect of Islam.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. —Psalm 51:7

- May members of this people group be broken, and willing to repent and follow the Lord.
- Pray for the hearts of the Bahai to be open to God's truth.
- Pray for them to understand that Jesus stands far above all others.

22 Arghun in Pakistan

As Sunnis, the Arghun believe that God has predestined their fate. Because Allah is considered distant and unapproachable, they also believe in the spirits and seek to appease them. They have no concept of a sin-forgiving savior.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. —Psalm 51:10

Pray for leaders among this people group to have hearts that seek to be clean before the Lord, and that they will teach others His ways.

- Pray the Arghun communities of Pakistan will have a growing interest in Jesus the Messiah.
- Pray they will be captivated by Jesus and that He will draw the Arghun to himself.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Arghun people.



23 Arora (Muslim traditions) in Pakistan

The Arora of Pakistan are a resilient people, having endured severe persecution during both the Arab and Moghul invasions. Though some practice Hinduism, approximately 255,000 follow Islam. Though known for religious tolerance, few, if any, have accepted Christ. They think they are spiritually satisfied, not looking to the only one who provides life to the full.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. —Psalm 51:12

- Pray that when some from this people group accept the ways of God that they will be refreshed with joy and share it with others.
- Pray for the Arora to be open to the good news and respond to God's invitation to salvation.
- Pray prominent Arora will find Jesus, the only way to eternal life.
- Pray that God will raise up Arora believers as his ambassadors to those without Christ.

24 Harni in Pakistan

The Harni have a history of mercenary work, crime, and burglary that has followed them to the present day. They continue to struggle with this reputation. They are Sunni Muslims. The Harni people need to find ways to earn a good, constructive living. They need to be able to support their families.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. —Psalm 51:17

- Pray for the Lord to break the spirits of members of this people group and bless them with joy of salvation and mercy.
- Pray for the Lord to raise up workers who will help the Harni people find good ways to make a living.
- Pray for the Harni culture to be renewed.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to move among Harni family and community leaders and give them a desire to seek his face.

25 Bashgali in Pakistan

For hundreds of years, the Bashgali have lived in a place filled with conflict and war: Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province. Since ancient times, many groups have invaded this region, making peace in the area rare. It can be highly dangerous for any Christian presence in the area. Anyone who wanted to share the ways of Christ would have to live as a lamb among wolves.

You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book? —Psalm 56:8

- Pray for members of this people group to turn to the Lord with their sorrows and trust Him to wipe away their tears and replace it with eternal joy.
- Pray for the Bashgali people to have peace in their households and communities.
- May the Bashgali people find the answers of Christ and may the fragrance of Christ spread throughout Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province.

26 Assamese (Muslim traditions) in Bhutan

The Assamese people in Bhutan are mainly Muslim and speak Bengali. They are generally less orthodox than most Asian Muslims and are involved in many Hindu festivals and customs. They live in Bhutan, a Buddhist country. Most depend on agriculture for a living.

For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken. —Psalm 62:1-2

- Pray that many from this people group will make Christ the rock of their salvation this decade.
- Pray for those who follow Jesus to live lives filled with grace and kindness.
- Pray the Assamese people find ways to let the peace of Christ rule in their families and communities.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Assamese Muslims to spread throughout Bhutan and India.

27 Kyrgyz in China

The Kyrgyz (Kirgiz) in China called that land home since the first century. Maintaining unique cultural tribal identities, many exist in China's northwestern province of Xinjiang, where minority tribal members "disappear" at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party. The greatest ministry obstacle to reaching the Kyrgyz points to the Chinese government. Another ministry obstacle is their combined long-held allegiance to Islam and their belief in black magic. Because the

Kyrgyz respect demonstrations of signs and wonders, believers who call on God for the demonstration of his power and healing would be effective.

Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah —Psalm 62:8

- Pray that the Holy Spirit will draw many from this people group to trust the Lord at all times and share their hearts with Him.
- Pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to cause a massive movement to Christ among the Kyrgyz.

28 Paxi in China

Strictly adhering to the Sunni Muslim way of life, the Paxi follow Islamic teachings and traditions. A small number follow Christ.

O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. —Psalm 63:1

- Pray that hundreds from this people group will earnestly seek God and find Him.
- Pray for believers to go to the Paxi, testifying to Christ's power and love.
- Pray for the spiritual blindness and bondage to the evil one to be removed from the Paxi people, so they can understand and respond to Christ.
- Pray that the Paxi people will have a spiritual hunger that will open their hearts to the King of kings.
- Pray for an unstoppable movement to Christ among them.

29 Northern Uzbek in China

The name Uzbek probably came from Ozbeg Khan, a Mongol ruler of the Golden Horde who spread Islam throughout many parts of the empire in the fourteenth century. Those who remained in the area under Ozbeg Khan's rule became known as Uzbeks. There are an estimated 50 Uzbek Christians in China today.

Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. —Psalm 63:3

- May many from this people group understand this and act upon it.
- Pray for Uzbek believers to allow the Holy Spirit to permeate all aspects of their lives.
- Pray for obedience when the Lord tells them to go.
- Pray for the authority of Christ to bind hindering spiritual forces and lead them from darkness to light.



30 Nanga Dama Dogon in Mali

The Nanga Dama Dogon cannot understand the tongue of another subgroup. The Dogon people live in a dry, remote savannah area in central Mali. It will be difficult for Christ's ambassadors to adapt to their environment, but Muslim missionaries once did it.

So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, —Psalm 63:4–5

- Pray that much praise reaches the heavens from this people group.
- Pray for Holy Spirit led workers to go to the Nanga Dama Dogon people of Mali.
- Pray for spiritual receptivity and an understanding of their need for a righteous savior.
- Pray for Nanga Dama Dogon disciples who will make more disciples who will make even more disciples.

31 Jahanka in Mali

The Jahanka are descended from the larger Soninke people group. Because of their prestige, they exercise a high degree of economic and religious influence among Soninke groups. They value education and are successful in business. They have become more urbanized through the decades. They are far more orthodox and committed to Islam than just about any other people group in Africa. That means they are not open to ideas they seem to contradict Islam.

Blessed is the one you choose and bring near, to dwell in your courts! We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple! —Psalm 65:4

- Pray for many from this people group to find joy in the Lord.
- Pray for Jahanka elders to open the door for the gospel.
- Pray the Jahanka tribe will increasingly be drawn to Jesus when they see what he can do for their families and communities.

APRIL

1 Dendi in Niger

While the Dendi were traditionally traders, they are currently farmers. They also raise livestock. The Dendi are almost all Muslim. The New Testament has been translated into Dendi, but the vast majority have never had the opportunity to hear the gospel. While it is difficult to reach the Dendi people, many of Jesus' parables speak into the lives of farmers and shepherds.

By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas; —Psalm 65:5

- Thank the Lord that He is the hope of all the earth and the hope of all nations!
- Pray that these stories would connect with the hearts and minds of the Dendi.
- Pray for the Lord to bless Dendi crops as a testimony of his power and goodness.
- Pray for a church planting movement among the Dendi people in Niger.

2 Ganja Balanta in Senegal

The Ganja Balanta people have lived in southern Senegal since the 1800s while some also live in Guinea Bissau. The Balanta have a council of elders who make the decisions for the community. The Ganja Balanta follow both animism and Islam. They believe that God is far away, uninvolved in their lives.

So that those who dwell at the ends of the earth are in awe at your signs. You make the going out of the morning and the evening to shout for joy. —Psalm 65:8

- May many from this people group stand in awe of the Lord's deeds and joyfully follow Him.
- Pray Christ followers would rise up to boldly share Christ's love with their neighbors and families.
- Pray that the council of elders come to Jesus Christ and lead others to him.
- Pray for the God of power to provide abundance for the Ganja Balanta people as a testimony of his mercy and power.



3 Jola-Mlomp in Senegal

If you live in the US, you likely know some descendants of the Jola-Mlomp people, many of whom were taken as slaves. Many of the Jola-Mlomp use charms and sacred objects in an attempt to find protection.

Shout for joy to God, all the earth; sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise! —Psalm 66:1-2

- May there be many from this people group doing just this very soon!
- Pray that the Lord will raise up many African believers to go to the Jola peoples and use music and skits to teach of Christ.
- Pray for discipleship to become a way of life for them.
- Pray for Jola communities to be transformed by the holiness of Christ in a way that will amaze nonbelievers.
- Pray that fear of the spirits will give way to faith in Christ.

4 Palestinian / Israeli Arab

Some Palestinian Arabs are fully integrated into Israel's industrial economy while others live as Bedouins and farmers who lack adequate clean water and electricity. Christian believers can build bridges of trust by helping Palestinian villages to get the clean water and electricity they need.

Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard, —Psalm 66:8

- Pray that today's people group will loudly sing His praises to other nations.
- Ask God to give Palestinian Arab believers opportunities to share the love of Christ.
- Pray that they would carry the fragrance of Christ in such a way that the Savior will be irresistible.
- Pray that their traditional culture would soften, creating open doors for the good news to be preached.
- Ask the Lord to raise up a movement to Christ among Palestinian Arabs.

5 Tunisian Jews in Tunisia

Though many Tunisian Jews remain in Tunisia, Tunisian antisemitism has led many others to emigrate to Israel since the end of World War II. In Israel, they continue to practice their traditional Tunisian ways, and periodically they return to Tunisia for festivals.

For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried. —Psalm 66:10

- Pray for the Lord to test and purify today's people group.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will prepare these Jews to open the eyes of their hearts to Jesus.
- Pray for Christ followers to befriend them.
- Pray for wisdom for agencies to focus on Middle Eastern Jews and for the establishment of Tunisian Jewish-Christian congregations.
- Pray for a people movement among Tunisian Jews.

6 Romanian Jew in Romania

During the Middle Ages, Jews went to Romania from elsewhere in Europe, and during the Renaissance, more arrived, fleeing the Spanish Inquisition. Today's Romanian Jews are of Romanian, Spanish, Greek, Italian, and Middle Eastern descent. The younger generation's ignorance of Judaism prevents them from having a foundation for the gospel.

Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul. —Psalm 66:16

- Pray for bold testimonies of the Lord's deeds to come from today's people group.
- Pray the church in Romania will seek to win Jews in hopes of starting a movement to Christ.
- Pray that the church in Romania will publicly apologize for its anti-Semitism.
- Pray that Jewish leaders will be more open to the gospel and its advocates.





7 Judeo-Persian Jew in Iran

Today, most Jews in Persia live in Tehran, Isfahan and Sharaz. In these cities, they have synagogues, cultural centers, kosher markets and restaurants. They do not openly express support for Israel, and they avoid contact with Christian believers. Their goal is peaceful survival. Their self-preservation as a people closes them to gospel advocates, as does Iran's persecution of Christians. Iran is a creative access country, but the gospel can expand with the help of the Holy Spirit.

That your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. —Psalm 67:2

- Pray that His ways will soon be known by today's people group.
- Pray that the Iranian church will be strengthened in its faith and outreach.
- Pray for them to reach out to Jews.
- Pray for a people movement to Christ among Iranian Jews.

8 Syrian Jew in Lebanon

Jews have lived in Syria since ancient times, possibly as far back as the time of King David. The majority left in 1967, and those that remained have suffered rounds of violence. Jews in Lebanon understand their connection with the Abrahamic Covenant. Ironically, they have rejected Jesus Christ, the one who has fulfilled that covenant.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah —Psalm 67:3-4

- Pray that this day will come soon!
- Pray that when the gospel is shared with them it will not be viewed as anti-Semitic, but rather as fulfillment of what God promised humanity through Abraham.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger among the Jews who view their "Jewishness" as an ethnic identity which is often devoid of spiritual meaning.

9 Judeo-Moroccan Jew in Morocco

Most of the remaining Jewish people in Morocco are elderly. They are trying to maintain their traditional culture and language. It's very possible that there won't be Jews in Morocco by the end of this century.

God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him! —Psalm 67:7

- Pray for fear and worship to rise up from all peoples in the 2020s.
- Pray for the Lord to give the Jewish people in Morocco hearts that will want to please him.
- May they look to the Lord for guidance and truth, and not be satisfied with cultural traditions.
- Pray for Jewish people in Morocco to begin a movement to Jesus Christ, finding ways to exalt him while honoring their culture.

10 Georgian Jew in Georgia

In Georgia, Jewish culture is integrated into the mainstream culture, but it still retains its distinct character. They are very Zionistic in their hearts and love Israel, but they see Georgia as their homeland. Family members are very close-knit.

Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts; his name is the LORD; exult before him! —Psalm 68:4

- May today's people group feel His holy presence when they worship Him.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to soften the hearts of Georgian Jews, so they will be receptive to the gospel.
- Ask God to anoint the gospel as it goes forth via radio.
- Ask the Lord to call loving Messianic Jews who will take the gospel to Georgian Jews.
- Ask the Lord to save key leaders among Georgian Jews who will boldly declare the gospel.

11 Mountain Jew in Azerbaijan

After World War II, they lived in the Caucasus Mountains of the Soviet Union. Today, they are known as the "mountain Jews" and remain scattered in the mountains of Azerbaijan. Although they have much in common with other Jews around the world, Mountain Jews have a very distinctive lifestyle. Some continue to follow the Law of Moses while others have intermarried with Muslims.

Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation. —Psalm 68:5

- May the widows and orphans among this people group become part of His family.
- Pray for the Jews of Azerbaijan to be open to hearing about their Messiah.
- Pray for Holy Spirit anointed laborers who will invest themselves in reaching this precious people group.

12 Turkish Jew in Turkey

Jews have inhabited Turkey for about 2,400 years. They form one of the main non-Muslim communities in that nation. Many began migrating to Israel when it was established in 1948. Today, the majority of the Jews in Turkey live in Istanbul and Izmir. Most continue to practice their faith and are not open to outside spiritual answers.

Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears us up; God is our salvation. Selah —Psalm 68:19

- May today's people group allow the Lord to carry them in His powerful arms.
- Pray for the hearts of the Jews to be open to the gospel and for them to respond to God's invitation to salvation and eternal life.
- Pray for a Messianic movement to Christ among the Jewish people in Turkey.

13 Russian Jew in Russia

Since the dissolution of the USSR, Russian Jews no longer have to deal with government-sponsored oppression. Anti-Semitism is still a concern, but Jewish life has been revitalized. European Jews are strong supporters of "Zionism," a revival of Jewish culture and support of Israel as a secure Jewish homeland. Those who practice their faith have rejected Jesus and continue to look for another messiah to come.

O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God; sing praises to the Lord, Selah to him who rides in the heavens, the ancient heavens; behold, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice. —Psalm 68:32-33

- May all the nations praise Him!
- Ask the Lord to send loving workers among the Jewish communities.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to grant wisdom and favor to the mission agencies that are focusing on European Jews.
- Pray that the Jewish people will understand that Jesus is the Messiah and eagerly follow Him.



14 Banten in Indonesia

The Banten people are officially Muslim, but many participate in a variety of mystical arts. Religion is a large part of the Banten's lives. In fact, they are so known for some of their religious practices that people from surrounding areas go to them, hoping to be benefitted by their rituals. It is a staple in their community. Tourism is active on Java. Because of this, there are many ways to spread the word in the community. Outreach could also come from nearby Javanese believers.

Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel, and whose power is in the skies. Awesome is God from his sanctuary; the God of Israel—he is the one who gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God! —Psalm 68:34-35

- Pray for many from today's people group to tell of God's power and goodness to others.
- Pray that they are uplifted by each other and God's word.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit guides them into an unstoppable movement to Christ.

15 Yutian Uygur in China

The Yutian Uygurs are known for being culturally distinct from other Uygurs. Certain clothing and unique hairstyles separate them. Today, the Uygur peoples are being persecuted by the Chinese government. There are no known believers among the Uygurs.

You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will receive me to glory. —Psalm 73:24

- Pray that today's people group will seek God's counsel and be led to His glorious destiny.
- Pray for a hope and a vibrant future for the Yutian Uygur people.
- Pray for protection against discrimination and injustice from the Chinese government.
- Pray for Holy Spirit sent Chinese believers to take Christ to the Yutian Uygur people.
- Pray for spiritual hunger and discernment for the Yutian Uygurs in China.

16 Manasir in Sudan

The Manasir people are one of many Afro-Arab tribes of Northern Sudan who pursue small scale agriculture in the immediate vicinity of the Nile. Research suggests that the Manasir community is a combination of indigenous, mostly Nubian groups, descendants of emigrating Arabs, and tribal minorities. Caring for the material and physical needs of the Manasir is essential if anyone wishes to do outreach. There must be genuine concern for their needs.

Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. —Psalm 73:25–26

- Pray for many from today's people to know that they must have no other God but the Lord.
- Pray that the Manasir have what they need to live healthy, fulfilled lives.
- Pray for the Manasir people to find their way to Christ, so they can learn from him and accept his shalom.

17 Ouargla in Algeria

The Ouargla are a Berber people who live in and around the oasis city of Ouargla in central Algeria, which has a major university as well as being a center of oil production. They have their own language and culture that pre-dates the Islamic conquest of North Africa in 670-700. Nearly all recent church growth in Algeria has occurred within Berber communities. Those who minister the gospel can accelerate their efforts for the Ouargla. This may be their time!

When the earth totters, and all its inhabitants, it is I who keep steady its pillars. Selah —Psalm 75:3

- Pray that many from today's people group will allow Him to be their firm foundation in times of trouble.
- Pray for the Lord to move among the Ouargla in such a way that they spread Christ's ways of peace and mercy to other Berber tribes.



18 Crimean Tatar in Ukraine

Crimean Tatar dress and language make it difficult to distinguish them from Russians or Ukrainians. Many of their traditions are falling away, especially among the younger generation. Islam is an important part of their identity. Challenging Islam is viewed as a challenge to their identity.

But I will declare it forever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. —Psalm 75:9

- Pray for many from today's people group to tell of God' wondrous deeds to their families.
- Pray for them to overcome this spiritual obstacle.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to move through Ukraine and the Crimean Peninsula during this time of trouble and war.
- May Christ's light dispel the darkness in Ukraine and bring beauty from ashes.

19 Waigeli Nuristani in Afghanistan

The eight Nuristani people groups have common threads: religion, ethnicity, and remnants of customs pre-dating their collective conversion to Islam a little more than 100 years ago. The Waigeli pastoralists and farmers have critical infrastructure needs. As recently as 2007, reports indicated that healthcare is virtually non-existent, and schools are few in most of Nuristan.

Glorious are you, more majestic than the mountains full of prey. —Psalm 76:4

- Pray that this people group will realize the eternal majesty and glory of the Lord, and give Him praise.
- Pray for the Lord to come to their rescue for their physical and spiritual needs, leading them to praise Him.
- Pray that a movement to Christ will propel a church planting movement that will thrive and bring peace to their communities.

20 Karachay in Turkey

The Karachay have often lived in a no-man's land during times of war. After being brutally relocated by the Soviets 80 years ago, many returned to their homeland and have been repopulating their southwestern Russian home area. Some live in Turkey. A small number of Karachay Christ followers exist with at least one church.

Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and atone for our sins, for your name's sake! —Psalm 79:9

- Pray that many from this people group will call out to the Lord as desperately as the psalmist did in this verse.
- Pray that Jesus followers will multiply among the Karachay as they model joyful lives.
- Pray that the Karachay in Russia and Turkey will turn to Jesus, not for political power, but for spiritual deliverance.

21 Semnani in Iran

Like many rural Iranians, the Semnani suffer from unsanitary conditions, disease outbreaks, illiteracy, and severely underdeveloped services. The Semnani people need schools, medical clinics, and personnel with eternal hope to staff them. They also need Iranian believers to take Christ to their communities.

Hear, O my people, while I admonish you! O Israel, if you would but listen to me! —Psalm 81:8

- Pray for this people group to heed God's warning and listen to Him!
- Pray for loving Christ followers in Iran to reach the Semnani people, resulting in a movement to Christ.
- Pray for the Lord to meet all their physical needs, leading them to praise Him.
- Pray for the Semnani people to have a hunger and thirst for truth and righteousness that will soon be satisfied by a relationship with Jesus Christ.



22 Shahari in Saudi Arabia

Speakers of the Shehri language reside in southwest Oman, on the border with Yemen, which is a mountainous area. A small number live in Saudi Arabia. Ministry obstacles include their nomadic lifestyle, illiteracy, and their lack of access to gospel materials. Many of their youth have moved to cities.

But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels. —Psalm 81:11-12

- Pray that this will be the year when this people group stops following their own stubborn desires and begins to follow the Lord.
- Pray for Christ-centered mobile health care units that can serve these nomads.
- Pray for mission groups to specifically reach out to the young people in cities and start disciple making movements, with the hope that new believers will return to their nomadic communities and share Christ in Saudi Arabia.

23 Mahra in Yemen

The Mahra are one of the smaller groups of Arabs who live near the borders of Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Oman. They are classified as semi-nomadic warriors, often forgotten by the other communities in Yemen. No Christian resources such as recordings or videos are available in their Mehri language, but many of the people speak Yemeni Arabic, which does have resources.

My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. —Psalm 84:2

- Pray that the Lord will raise up many from this people group who have this kind of heart for being in the presence of the loving Lord.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to call people who are willing to share the love of Christ.
- Pray that a network of strong local churches will be raised up among the Mahra.
- Pray for peace and justice to reign in Yemen.

24 Bole in Nigeria

The region where the Bole people reside includes the terrorist group Boko Haram, which seeks to unleash mayhem, fear, and ethnic cleansing. The presence of terrorist groups in the home area of the Bole brings an extra measure of danger and difficulty in taking the gospel to the Bole people. It can also be an impetus for the Bole to seek the Lord's protection and blessing.

O LORD of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you!
—Psalm 84:12

- Pray for many from this people group to find joy and hope in trusting the Lord Almighty.
- Pray for peace throughout the homeland of the Bole tribe, as well as all of northeastern Nigeria.
- Pray that gospel radio will become increasingly available, and that these broadcasts will include the language of the Bole people.

25 Durbet in Mongolia

Like other Mongols, the Durbet are known for their love of fine horses and horse racing. Favorite pastimes include storytelling, singing, archery, and wrestling. Medical facilities among the Durbet are inadequate. Limited water supply, poor hygiene, deficient diet, and alcoholism are all common problems. There are about 1,700 Jesus followers among the Durbet.

Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly. —Psalm 85:8

- Pray that those who follow the Lord among this people group will never return to their old ways.
- Pray for local churches to organize medical clinics to care for people's spiritual and physical needs.
- Pray that God's church in Mongolia would grow in deeper discipleship and greater mission vision.



26 Alagwa in Tanzania

The Alagwa are farmers, and their principal crops are maize and millet. They work cooperatively to cultivate fields, raise livestock, build houses and roads, and dig wells. The Alagwa are slow to receive outsiders. Their quiet reserve extends to their religious lives. Christian missionaries, whether expatriates or Tanzanian, have historically left in discouragement from lack of response.

Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. —Psalm 85:9

- Pray for the land of this people group to soon be filled with His glory and mercy!
- Pray for encouragement for those attempting to take Christ to this people group.
- Pray that the Alagwa people will have a spiritual hunger that will open their hearts to the King of kings.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among them to begin this decade.

27 Lak in Russia

Starting in the 1990s 50 urban Muslim background Lak people started coming to Jesus. The New Testament books of Mark and Luke were translated for them. After that, Bible work stalled due to a lack of team leadership.

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you. —Psalm 86:5

- Thank the Lord that He is eager to offer love and forgiveness to peoples who turn to Him for help!
- Pray for a strong Bible translation team to rise up and finish the project of producing an accurate Bible.
- Pray for the few Lak believers to shine as bright lights in the midst of their families and clans, leading to a movement to Christ.
- Pray for spiritual hunger and discernment among the Lak people.

28 Kreda in Chad

The Kreda people have been Muslims for hundreds of years. There are currently no known believers among them. The Kreda have challenging lives trying to find water and green plants for their herds. Being a Muslim is a part of the Kreda's personal identity. If a Kreda person becomes a follower of Christ, he or she will be shunned by the community.

All the nations you have made shall come and worship before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God. —Psalm 86:9–10

- Pray for many from this people group to understand this.
- Ask the Lord to send loving workers to help the Kreda people have adequate water and healthy livestock.
- Pray the Kreda to develop a hunger for spiritual truth.
- Pray that efforts to reach the Kreda people will result in a disciple making movement.

29 Tai Kao in Laos

The Tai Kao or “White” Tai receive their name from the color of their women’s clothing. They live in northern Laos and Vietnam. The Tai Kao are known for being polite, respectful of others, and hospitable. They mix Buddhism with folk religion. Christian believers among the Vietnamese Tai Kao can share the good news with their neighbors in Laos.

A God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around him? —Psalm 89:7

- Pray that many from today’s people group will understand that the only God is the Lord, and they must turn to Him. Pray they will be in awe of His might.
- Ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into Laos to minister to the needs of the White Tai.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to soften the hearts of the White Tai towards Christ and his work on the cross, so they will put their faith in Him alone.



30 Awan in Pakistan

Many Awan serve in the Pakistani military. Violence and feuds are common in north Pakistan, where the Awan live. Many resources are available in the Awan’s primary language of Western Punjabi, including the New Testament and the JESUS Film. Radio programs in Western Punjabi are also available.

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you. —Psalm 89:14

- Pray that today’s people group will seek and find His righteousness and justice. Pray that they will be thankful for His unfailing love.
- Pray that Awan are led by the Holy Spirit to listen to radio programs and find Christian resources on the internet.
- Pray for peace in the area where the Awan live.
- Pray for the Lord to do miracles and raise up a multiplying body of believers among the Awan people.



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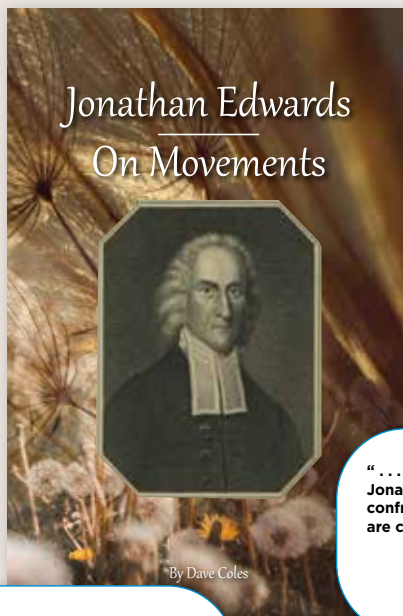




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