

MISSION™ FRONTIERS

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Innovation in Missions



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After Sadia experienced Jesus' grace, she chose to be baptized. Then she couldn't stop sharing about God's love with her Muslim friends.

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A Winding Road to Innovation

By **DUKE DILLARD**, Editor

Duke Dillard served overseas for 18+ years before settling in Denton, Texas, in 2019 with his wife, Laurie, and their seven children. He helps people and organizations become fully who God created them to be. He loves spending time with his wife, children, and grandchildren.

Let me bring you into the messy process a bit on this one... about a year ago, someone wrote me to ask about doing an issue on tools being used to reach the least reached. I liked the idea and agreed to do it for a future issue. Fast forward six months and we reconnected on a Zoom call to discuss the idea. I thought we came away from that call with a clear path forward; my collaborator had a totally different idea. Neither of us realized it. Ahh, the joy of human communication!

Jump ahead another few months, and I'm thinking he is gathering authors and preparing them to write for the issue. Can you see where this is going?

When I contacted him a couple of months before articles were due, expecting him to have the issue set, he barely remembered our conversation and told me he was happy to have one of his people write an article. What?!

There I was, less than two months before articles were due, and we didn't even have a theme for the issue, much less a list of authors. In our next team conversation, we decided to pursue an issue on innovation and to ask our colleague, Paul Dzubinski, our Innovation Catalyst at FV, to help us invite authors. He went to work and the result is this excellent issue which will take you on a powerful journey through "Innovation in Missions." What a kind and gracious God we serve who generously overlooked my failings and provided more articles than we could print!

Some people think of innovation as synonymous with technology like phones and computers and other mechanical gadgets. Having just done an issue on AI a few months ago, we wanted to take a more expansive perspective on the concept of innovation.

With this issue, we are inviting you to make space to encounter God as you prayerfully read each article. We begin with Beth Gill, one of Dr. Ralph Winter's

four daughters, describing the values that have defined Frontier Ventures (FV) for 50 years. The US Center for World Mission, now FV, was an important innovation in missions, and Dr. Winter introduced many more innovations along the way.

Next, we dive into the theme with a warning. God is our foundation. All the innovations in the world can't transform a single heart. Read Dr. Savage's words and let them act as our base assumption throughout this issue. Innovations can be wonderful gifts from God, but they come under the Spirit; they don't replace him. This is easy to forget.

Dr. Pickett runs us through a brief history of mission innovation followed by two articles that give context for a baseline of effective innovation. Following this, we consider specific, practical ideas among nomads, children, apps, and contextual Hindu communities.

Then, don't miss two more online-only articles covering the need to consider big-picture systems innovation (Edmiston) and the importance and dangers when mixing innovation, Scripture, and formation (Chiang).

We close with our excellent columns covering books, mobilization, life on the field, and Gen Z calling. Lastly, our Final Reflection invites you to marvel in the beauty of God's creation and our coloring page allows you (or your kids or grandkids) to slow down. As always, we hope you choose to pray for the unreached each day over the next couple of months.

With that, we bring you across the globe and to the edges of innovation while keeping you grounded in Christ. May you walk in humility, full of God's creative Spirit, as you seek innovative ways to see his glory realized in whatever context you find yourself.

Duke Dillard 

Letter to the Editor



Mr. Dillard, Editor,

With the risk of sounding anti-AI, I found a striking lack of references to the spiritual nature of missions in the latest edition on AI. Like a footnote on 56 pages of text, I could only find one short paragraph addressing the spiritual ramifications of using AI.

As the author of the book, *Innovation in Missions*, some may find it odd that I am providing such a critique against what some think is the most innovative thing to happen in our lifetime.

I'd like to ask your readers to pause and consider: Where does AI fit within the context of listening and following the voice of our Father God? What are the guardrails? What are the cautions? What are the dangers?

Today, we can ask AI to create articles, songs, music, presentations, podcasts, and even full-length videos. AI can be a tremendous tool for shortcutting accomplishing individual tasks, but we must ask ourselves, are we managing the inspiration of the Spirit of God, out of his mission?

When we ask AI to create a video or a song for us, does AI stop to pray and ask God, "God, what do you want me to communicate through this song/presentation/talk?" If the mission task is fulfilling God's plans to redeem this lost world, we must fully rely on God and his leading for the accomplishment of his task. The leading of the Spirit must be center in everything that we do.

AI is a tool, but it is entirely different than simply using grammar check. It's capable of building

incredible things. However, we must remember, AI is nothing more than a statistical language modeling tool. It has no soul; it is not capable of following Christ. Meanwhile, God is wanting, waiting, yearning, expectantly waiting to speak to us and inspire his children. His inspiration sometimes challenges us into doing the most seemingly absurd things in carrying out his will.

We must remember, following the inspiration of God is our central task in everything that touches Christian mission.

Where is the inspiration of the Spirit in writing sermons or trainings? What about writing a worship song for an unreached people group? We all would say these are "spiritual" tasks. While we can relegate these to a statistical Large Language Model (LLM, the technical name for AI programs), we need to ask, "Should we?"

Significant amounts of time chatting with LLMs has shown to create what is being called "LLM Psychosis," in which delusional, paranoid, or manic beliefs in users are induced, amplified, and even polarized. This results in users experiencing intense, sometimes reality-distorting beliefs, often resulting in a number of emotional and attachment-based issues.

With all the introduction of AI, we should probably pause for a moment and as expressed through God's Spirit to Haggai, "Give careful thought to your ways."

Should we really be relegating spiritual tasks and the creation of "spiritual content" to statistical models that have clearly shown to end in delusional, psychotic beliefs? And what of "non-spiritual" tasks, like marketing and accounting? Is the marketing for new missionaries or fundraising any less of a spiritual task? What of accounting? God has ordained all kinds of tasks within Christian mission as "spiritual work." We must remember, within all these tasks, God is at work within our minds, to guide us and lead us.

In my book, *Innovation in Mission*, I wrote about how God is the most creative being in the universe, and he created us to be creative. Letting AI be creative for us, keeps us from doing the very work that God ordained for us to do.

Should we really be relegating spiritual tasks and the creation of "spiritual content" to statistical models that have clearly shown to end in delusional, psychotic beliefs?

Gene Veith, in *God at Work*, talks about how Christian vocation is a spiritual exercise. The creation of jobs which provide ethical, meaningful work that betters our world, while providing workers with wages to adequately provide for their families, is a God-ordained institution. Might we need to consider to what extent does giving "spiritual tasks" requiring "divine inspiration" to a statistical Large Language Model end up going against the very will of the Father?

Romans 8:6 itself says that "the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace." These LLM's are not governed by the Spirit. They are governed by statistical processing of whatever input they have been given. Their "minds" have been fed by the totality of the internet, which we know includes a majority of very ungodly content. And we're ready to relegate tasks to statistical models based upon... "this?"

There's increasing research showing that a significant proportion of AI responses are incorrect or wrong. Part of the reason is the whole "garbage in, garbage out" problem. AI models are fed everything, including Reddit posts and other chat rooms, which are essentially just online idea popularity contests governed by upvotes. Reddit "subs" "TrueChristian" has a shocking amount of ungodly advice that's surprisingly upvoted, especially when marriage problems are shared. You'd be surprised how quickly "divorce" is suggested and upvoted, compared to other suggestions.

The answer to these AI models isn't to simply control the inputs. *Mission Frontiers* briefly touched upon the challenge of hallucinations, which is the propensity for AI to completely make stuff up. The statistical nature of these LLMs often results in answers that have no basis in reality. There are numerous cases where AI even creates its own fake research papers that back up false claims. The challenge is related to the very basis for how AI works as a statistical model, simply predicting what thoughts and words should follow next.

The Christian community should give pause to consider if, when, how, and where AI should be properly utilized. As 1 Corinthians 10:23 states, "Everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial. 'Everything is permissible,' but not everything is edifying" (Berean Literal Bible). There's increasing research that shows that excessive AI usage leads to cognitive atrophy, reduced critical thinking, and even critical decision-making errors.

All said, my biggest caution with AI goes back to the fact that our God is the most creative being in the universe, and he created mankind in his image to likewise be creative. His Spirit guides us and inspires us as we use the faculties which he has endowed to us. And I believe it brings him joy when we do so.

Peace,

Derek Seipp
Executive Director, Korea Reconciliation Initiative
and Network (KRIN) 

FV: 50 Years of Values

By **ELIZABETH WINTER GILL**

Beth Gill (BA Linguistics UCLA) grew up in the highlands of Guatemala with her missionary family. She and her husband helped launch the USCWM. They then spent 12 years in North Africa in ministry to Muslims. She serves on the editorial team of the *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* and is on the board of directors for Frontier Ventures. She has four adult children.

Fifty years ago, my dad and mom, Ralph and Roberta Winter, founded the US Center for World Mission (USCWM), now called Frontier Ventures (FV). We four daughters asked my dad, before he died in 2009, not to burn his 50 journals but to let one of us go through them and choose what might be worth saving.¹ Since I was the one who had the journals, when I was asked to write this article, I asked myself what were the values and convictions of my parents that gave birth, personality, and character to this organization?



Ralph & Roberta just after they were married in 1951.

Let the Youth Lead

Memories and vivid images crowd into my mind. My dad grew up in a home with parents who had come to vibrant faith through Christian Endeavor,² a youth movement begun in the 1880s. Christian Endeavor (CE), patterned after the YMCA and the Boy Scouts of America, emphasized leadership by the youth and meaningful service to the wider community.

These values became instinctive for my father through his own participation in CE and were later reflected in Frontier Ventures (FV). It began with a seminary professor, his family, and a ragtag group of volunteer students trying to raise \$15 million for a campus focused on people groups with no access to the gospel. The young people had to step into leadership roles because we had no one else. Over the last 50 years, FV has consistently given leadership roles to passionate, energetic, creative, and faith-filled young people.

Do What Others Are Unable or Unwilling to Do

One example of the kind of community service modeled by CE was when my grandparents hosted an Afghan exchange student for two years in their home in South Pasadena, California. My father was still in high school and there were perhaps only five Afghan students in this country at that time.³ Because of this, my father and his older brother had an early awareness of a remote Muslim country and a desire to serve there.

¹ Thirty-five of Winter's journals are already housed at the Ralph D. Winter Research Center (RDWRC), and another 15 will be joining them shortly. The RDWRC is jointly sponsored by William Carey International University and Frontier Ventures. Their website: rdwrc.wciu.edu/

² "The society grew rapidly and soon spread to all the states of the United States and many other countries as well." asburyseminary.edu/elink/the-christian-endeavor-collection-1/. See also this 1925 article in *Time Magazine* about the influence of Christian Endeavor: time.com/archive/6818810/religion-christian-endeavor/.

³ www.library.illinois.edu/slc/illini-everywhere/afghan-illini/.

World War II erupted during my father's engineering studies at Caltech. The US Navy was losing fighter pilots at an alarming rate in the Pacific, so my dad enlisted and volunteered for the Navy V-12 Pilot program while finishing Caltech. He based his decision on something he learned in the Navigators:⁴ when choosing between two valuable, even crucial courses of action, do what others are either unable or unwilling to do. This has been characteristic of the vision of FV.

Prayer and a Love for the Word of God

When my dad married my mom, he benefitted greatly from her Wesleyan holiness upbringing. My mom grew up a devout Nazarene and learned from her mother to hear and obey the voice of God. A midnight time of urgent prayer on my grandmother's part turned out to occur at the exact time my mom's brother's navy ship in WWII had been torpedoed—it narrowly missed his ship. This conviction—that we can hear even specific details from the Lord as to what to pray, and that he answers those prayers, sometimes spectacularly—continues to be a major value of FV.

A value that dad brought to FV was his love for the Word of God and his commitment to discipleship. When he enlisted in the US Navy, he joined a Dunamis Club of the Navigators which met in the home of Dawson Trotman (founder of the Navigators) in South Pasadena. After my dad died, we found tiny boxes of cards with memorization verses and small notebooks from the early 1940s filled with Navigator Bible studies and lists of people to disciple.

After Caltech, dad spent a semester at Prairie Bible Institute in Alberta, Canada, where he was captivated by L. E. Maxwell's emphasis on the simple lifestyle and the Inductive Bible Study Method.⁵

The focus on discipleship, as well as the simple lifestyle, and the Word of God, were also front and center in the beginning of FV. We started every workday—the daily morning meetings—in the same small group, sharing from our personal quiet times in the Bible. My parents and the young staff were struck by the Moravian

⁴ www.azquotes.com/author/24943-Dawson_Trotman.

⁵ www.thefreelibrary.com/The+legacy+of+Leslie+E.+Maxwell.-a0119613646.



Ralph Winter's Navigators Bible Study and Discipleship Notebook, 1945, from the collection of his private journals.

commitment to prayer⁶ and launched a 24/7 prayer discipline that staff would sign up for in four-hour shifts. Some of those profound, quiet moments in the middle of the night are still sacred memories for me.

Today, FV carries on this commitment to growing in Christ—we meet weekly in covenantal and contemplative communities. We also offer the Second Half Collaborative (2HC) program⁷ to our own staff, as well as other career missionaries, bringing them into small online communities with a spiritual director and a cohort who draw closer to Jesus together. I'm so thankful our organization makes it a priority to help people serving in mission to grow deeper in the Word of God and to experience the fullness of Christ both spiritually and emotionally. A vision and purpose without the water of life overflowing in our souls can simply become a yoke that is too heavy to bear.

Seize Unusual Opportunities

After the war was over, dad went to Princeton Theological Seminary with his best friend, Dan Fuller, son of the future founder of Fuller Theological Seminary. Fellow Princeton Seminary students and good friends included Bill Bright, founder of CRU and J. Christy Wilson Jr., a missionary kid from Iran who spoke fluent Persian and later served in Afghanistan.

⁶ "As is so often the case in church history, the onset of revival only deepened the Moravians' commitment to the power of prayer. As amazing as it seems today, the Moravians kept up their round-the-clock prayer ministry for over a century." Nathan A. Finn, "The Hundred-Year Prayer Meeting," *Desiring God*, www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-hundred-year-prayer-meeting.

⁷ 2hc.life/

Many years later, in 1977, CRU was one of the first organizations, along with Wycliffe Bible Translators, to donate \$100,000 to help launch FV.

One day my Dad woke up to read that the country of Afghanistan had put a full-page ad in the *NY Times* asking for 100 English teachers. Right away, he saw the potential for sending devout believers to Afghanistan to take up this task. In 1946, he and Christy Wilson attended the first Urbana Missions Conference of the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in Toronto,⁸ full of ideas for recruiting 100 English teachers, themselves included.



Poster advertising the first Urbana Student Missions Convention in Toronto, 1946.

⁸ “Finally, on Friday, December 27, 1946, the first IVCF missions conference began. Approximately fifty-two denominations were represented by 576 students from 151 colleges, universities, and seminaries. Long after the conference concluded on January 2, Stacey Woods noted that more than half of the participants had indeed gone to the foreign mission field (including Jim Elliot, David Howard, and Ralph Winter), with the other half actively supporting missions from home.” www.cslewisinstitute.org/resources/life-of-j-christy-wilson-jr-1921-1999-and-his-worldwide-discipling-ministry/. See also Wilson’s biography *Where No One Has Heard: The Life of J. Christy Wilson, Jr* by Ken Wilson.

Later Daddy would tell us four girls that this type of a high-level request from a remote country had happened centuries before as well: Kublai Khan, Emperor of the Mongols, whose land stretched from China to Iran, had a Nestorian Christian for a mother, and he sent word to the Pope asking for 100 teachers of the gospel to come to his empire.⁹

By this time, Dad and Mom were married and assigned to go to Afghanistan as teachers of English. But the Personnel Director for the Presbyterian Mission Board called them one day and said, “We’ve had a request from the highlands of Guatemala for a man with a PhD in Linguistics and Anthropology who is also an ordained minister and a wife who is a registered nurse. We don’t have anyone else who fits the bill. Would you be willing to reconsider your placement?” And so, they did.

Need for a Holistic Gospel and an Indigenous Church for Marginalized Peoples

The first two of Dad’s journals were in Spanish, written while our family was in Guatemala. As I translated them, I realized that many of his instincts and the values of FV came from my parents’ experiences in Guatemala—a beautiful country with volcanic lakes, heavily forested mountains, colorful handwoven costumes, and 22 super-complex Mayan languages. But it was also a country afflicted by the most extreme poverty we had ever heard of. Children were stunted in their growth for lack of protein. Some of the causes of this extreme poverty included the severe soil erosion and depletion but also the rampant alcoholism,¹⁰ seemingly devastating every single Mayan family in our region. It was a country in despair.

My dad started 17 different small businesses and taught the double-entry system of accounting to the pastors-in-training.

⁹ Go to this link to read the story: www.getreligion.org/getreligion/2019/7/18/8h7gtewx966sc2433fbyjvdtnejh1k.

¹⁰ “Guatemala reportedly has the 4th highest rate of alcohol-related deaths in the world, even though it has one of the lowest rates of consumption in Latin America.” medium.com/@samdunlopdoyle/alcohol-abuse-and-violence-against-women-in-guatemala-338ca5842a2d.



Indigenous woman wearing the traditional handwoven *traje* characteristically different village by village.

The journal entries made one thing immediately obvious: You couldn't teach the Bible when people were starving to death. You couldn't train Mayan men for the pastorate when their communities couldn't support them financially. You couldn't train farmers to be pastors when they could barely read. Kids were pulled out of school at third grade to help their families survive.

Pastors would need to be bi-vocational. What was needed was overwhelmingly complex: jobs, vocational training, deliverance from alcohol addiction, agricultural innovation, investment in small businesses, rural health care, and access to education for children and especially for adults that would not pull them out of their communities. My dad started 17 different small businesses and taught the double-entry system of accounting to the pastors-in-training.

My father had become convinced that the western highlands needed pastors who were Mayan—men who knew and understood their own languages and cultures. They needed Bibles in their own languages and parishioners who could read. Along with two of his Presbyterian colleagues, Jim Emery and Ross Kinsler, my dad started extension elementary and high school classes with itinerant teachers and, later, Theological Education by Extension.¹¹

This understanding of the need for a contextually sensitive and holistic gospel led not only to the founding of a unique mission agency (FV) but also

¹¹ "The Origin of Theological Education by Extension," teenet.org/blog/origin-theological-education-by-extension/.

the William Carey International University (WCIU), originally a secular university established to look at the deep holistic needs of those people groups being highlighted by FV. To this day, even though FV and WCIU are separate institutions, they share similar goals and collaborate.

Missiological Innovation Through Collaboration

In 1966, my family moved back to southern California so my dad could take up the role of professor at Fuller's new School of World Mission (SWM). Many of FV's values emerged at that school. These included an emphasis on unreached people groups, an understanding of movements to Christ, a focus on the anthropological study of culture, and the need for contextualization.

None of these values arose in a vacuum and none of them should be credited to my father alone. They were developed in a spirit of collaboration, especially hearing from people on the field—what was working and what wasn't. Many of the SWM professors were engineers; others were outstanding anthropologists. It was a heady combination. This emphasis on innovation and collaboration is still evident in FV.

One example of innovation through collaboration came from a journal entry. In 1965, my father was sitting in an adult Sunday School Class at Lake Avenue Congregational Church in Pasadena taking notes on a talk about peoples of the world with no access to the gospel given by Ted Engstrom of World Vision and MARC (Mission Advanced Research and Communication). He painstakingly copied all of this data and concluded three facts: 87% of the world's people lived in groups and languages which had no missionaries, no indigenous churches, and no access to the gospel; 90% of the world's missionaries were working with already existing churches; and most of the frontier or 'hidden' people groups were Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or Tribal.¹² Fifty years later, the 87% has fallen to 25%, which shows wonderful progress, but the other two facts are still true.

¹² See "Major Concepts of the Frontier Missions Movement" by Alan Johnson in the *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, 18:2, pp. 89–96.

These conclusions caused Billy Graham to invite Donald McGavran and Ralph Winter to speak at the 1974 Congress on World Evangelization held in Lausanne, Switzerland. My father and his fellow engineer colleagues at the SWM began to ask why peoples in these cultures hadn't come to faith. What were the barriers? What might be some of the solutions?

Fifty years later, the 87% [of the world's people lived in groups and languages which had no missionaries, no indigenous churches, and no access to the gospel] has fallen to 25%, which shows wonderful progress, but the other two statistics are still true.

These startling statistics were emerging in the mid-1960s when it had been widely believed that missionaries were no longer needed anywhere in the world. A decade earlier, much of Africa and other countries had thrown off their colonial overlords and declared independence. The prevailing conclusion was that there was no longer a need for missionaries, and that, in fact, missionaries had been agents of oppressive colonialism—something that was regrettably true in some cases. However, this view lacked an understanding of the immense good that had come to indigenous peoples with the translation of the Bible¹³ into their own vernacular languages, according to African missiologist Lamen Sanneh¹⁴ and was looking at the world strictly through a political lens instead of the Revelation language of “every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.”

13 Andrea Palpant Dille, “The Surprising Discovery about Those Colonialist, Proselytizing Missionaries,” *Christianity Today*, Jan/Feb 2014, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2014/01/world-missionaries-made/>.

14 The most salient point Sanneh makes is that vernacular Bible translation outdistanced and outlasted the ephemeral forces of colonial rule. More importantly, vernacular Bible translation and all the structures that support it effectively empowered local peoples against their colonial overlords.” Yancy W. Smith, “Lamin Sanneh’s Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture,” in *MisioDei’s Book Review*, Winter/Spring 2018, <https://missioDeijournal.com/issues/md-9-1/authors/md-9-1-smith>. See also Lamin Sanneh’s, “Christian Missions and the Western Guilt Complex,” *The Christian Century*, April 8, 1987

This was a defining moment. It led to collaboration on a much bigger scale. Afterwards, my father would say that he wasn't sure people listened or understood. But it changed him forever and gave birth to FV. Today FV has extended this vision to identifying barriers and seeking solutions that lead to multiplying communities of Jesus Christ followers among the least-reached (or frontier peoples) especially those among Muslims, Buddhists, or Hindus.

“I will also...”

FV was birthed out of a passion to see Revelation 5:9 come to fruition:


You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased for God
persons from every tribe and language and
people and nation.

My father's personal life verse was Isaiah 49:6:

It is too small a thing for you to be my servant
to restore the tribes of Jacob
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that my salvation may reach to the ends of
the earth.

Imagine the prophet Isaiah saying that to a vanquished, enslaved people in exile. Despite the longings of their heart to return to the promised land, to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, and to rebuild the temple, God was saying that was too small a thing.

But God added, “I will also.” That's the key. He's not saying the first things that come naturally to our hearts are not valid prayers. He's saying to enlarge our hearts because his heart is larger; he has other lost sheep, other lost children, other lost pearls that need to be rescued and restored to their families.

Can we still hear that today? In addition to all the needs of our own families, our local communities, our own nations, God still wants to send us—some from every fellowship of believers all around the world—as a light to the nations so that his salvation may reach the ends of the earth. 



Rooted Innovation When Faith Fuels Lasting Impact

Dr. LIAM SAVAGE

Liam Savage serves a community of global kingdom innovators through The Innovation Launchpad as the Director of Innovation for OneHope, an international nonprofit that reaches the next generation with God's Word.

“So, you’ve had 600 people take your innovation class, so what? What impact did that have on their ministry?” my leader asked me at our year-end review. I was confused. What impact was I creating? Over my 12-year career in global missions, I had painstakingly sought out, learned, and applied innovation best practices, tools, and skills. But what had I really accomplished? Was I really serving people? These questions haunted me because I did not have good answers.

I had made the mistake I so often taught against: I made assumptions that impact was self-evident, and innovation tools are inherently valuable. I did not have proof or measurements. I had only my personal experiences and some encouraging stories from ministry practitioners.

So, of course, the natural next step to tackle this uncertainty was to go back to school, get a doctorate, and rid myself of the unpleasant ignorance, once and for all, through painful years of study and research.

I had an amazing group to learn from: 628 incredible global leaders, learners, and brothers and sisters in Christ have taken the innovation course to date. They represent 64 nations and 53 different ministries and

churches! I had originally designed the Innovation Launchpad¹ to onboard people to my innovation team, teaching them what would have saved me years of effort and thousands of dollars. But God had other plans. COVID-19 shut down the first cohort, so we opened it up to the broader network of partners OneHope serves. Instead of growing my team’s capacity to do innovation for them, we trained ourselves out of a job. We raised up innovators who were soon building their own prototypes, doing interviews, learning and doing better ministry for their context. The numbers were clear and momentum felt high. But now I found myself asking: Was all this resulting in more fruitful ministry?

For my doctoral research, we conducted interviews with Launchpad alumni and spent hundreds of hours analyzing the transcripts. What I found was both encouraging and discouraging in equal measure. Going into it, I really wanted my area of expertise to matter—to hold the keys to transformation and success for the Church. I wanted to find out that ministry innovation had the ability to adapt us to changes in the world and accomplish God’s purposes

¹ www.theinnovationlaunchpad.com/

for his kingdom. But really, I think I wanted to feel essential and valuable. Innovation holds a core attraction of power and agency. If you do A, B, and C, you will be guaranteed successful ministry.

But what I learned was that if you have a high reliance on innovation tools and a low reliance on God, you are on the fastest path to failure and frustration. If you have a high reliance on God, it does not really matter if you use innovation tools or not; God will bring fruit and flourishing to your ministry. The research had demonstrated empirically the truth of these verses:

Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain (Ps 127:1a).

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:5).

It is not that we do not build our ministry and seek to improve. This verse is saying that when we build apart from God, the results are dismal at best. We cannot tap into ourselves, our techniques, and toolbox of innovation best practices and think those things will enable us to bear fruit. We quickly realize that they are not an adequate replacement for the true vine.

You could easily assume that everyone in ministry is, of course, remaining close to God in prayer and relying on him. But I realized I personally was quite far from him. I was increasingly comfortable relying on innovation tools and my own efforts to try to solve problems. As I wrestled with God, my pride, and the research findings, I spent a lot of time with the story of Martha and Mary hosting Jesus in Luke 10. Martha, who is described as “distracted with much serving,” scolds Jesus saying, “Aren’t you going to tell her to help me?” Martha was focused on Mary’s apparent laziness as she sat at Jesus’ feet listening to his teaching. But Jesus responds, “Only one thing is necessary, and Mary has chosen it.”

The phrase *distracted with much serving* hit me hard. I had found myself neglecting Christ while working *really* hard to serve him and his people. But notice this—just one chapter before Mary and Martha’s story, Jesus miraculously feeds thousands of people with a little bread and fish. Jesus did not need Martha’s

help to make lunch. Sometimes, we deny ourselves a miraculous innovative breakthrough by working within the constructs of what we imagine to be possible in our own strength. What would happen if we instead looked to Christ and sat at his feet for a while?

One of the most amazing experiences I have had was when I arrived in Kyrgyzstan after flying all day and night. It was 3:00 a.m. A man I had never met before was waiting to pick me up at the airport. I apologized profusely for the inconvenience of the late hour. But in his broken English, he immediately and enthusiastically replied, “I’m happy to pick you up! You’re my brother! I love you!” That one earnest declaration spoke the gospel to me more clearly than a thousand long-forgotten sermons. A man with no innovation training showed me what innovation truly is.

If you have a high reliance on innovation tools and a low reliance on God, you are on the fastest path to failure and frustration.

Innovation is valuable. It gives us tools and language to structure our work, helps us learn intentionally, and allows us to communicate the gospel more clearly. But the tools and techniques themselves are only a weak stand-in for love. At their best, they point us back to the two greatest commandments: Love God and love your neighbor. Everything we do should be motivated by love.

Innovation is hard. Doing new things in new ways often means leaving behind the things you are best at. You might need to abandon the practices that once made you successful in response to a changing world. You must step out of your comfort zone and become a student again and again.

I think of the man who picked me up on that cold, early morning. He could have run a design sprint, interviewed weary travelers, and tested dozens of approaches to discover what made people feel most cared for when stepping off a long flight. That would be the innovation approach I learn and teach. Instead, he simply loved his neighbor as himself. He loved me. He came to pick me

up and was joyful and kind about it. The shortcut to innovation is love. The most loving thing you can do will likely be the most innovative also.

At OneHope, we have dozens of stories of God miraculously opening doors for us in ways that completely defied our wildest dreams. I'm sure your ministry does, too. One of my favorites is how we were invited into post-Soviet Russia just as the Iron Curtain came down. We were given permission to distribute our *Book of Hope* in public schools across the country. That was a miracle. But God had even more in mind. As teams of Americans went from school to school to minister to the children, we caused chaos in the community. Parents were so eager to see Americans for the first time that they were leaving work to get a look at us.

The government officials called us in and told us we had to do some sort of event in the evenings for the adults. But where would we host it? They had a solution: They would give us access to use sports stadiums. When we asked, "How will we get the word out?" they offered to promote it on national television! The message

went out, "Don't go to the schools, go to the stadium, the Americans will be there." And we were there with God's Word and a message of hope. As he has done so many times across history, God used atheist human rulers to spread the good news. Through this, we witnessed massive revival and unthinkable open doors. Today, Russia has a strong church-planting movement that grew from the seeds planted in those stadiums and schools. I can tell you *confidently* that no innovation technique could accomplish anything close to what we experienced there.

The beating heart of ministry innovation is reliance on God so that every word, every thought, every step we take, is in him. **My best advice on innovation is this: If you want a breakthrough, take your walk with Jesus ten times more seriously than you are today.** If you feel stressed, weary, or burned out, it is a sign that you are not fully relying on him. We are all vulnerable to carrying pride, seeking power, and becoming distracted with much serving. While busyness is inevitable, fight to not forget the "one thing" that matters. 📖

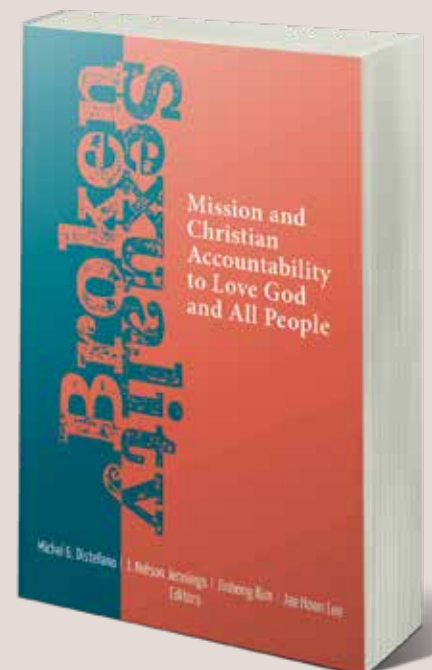
NEW RELEASE!

Broken Sexuality

Mission and Christian Accountability to Love God and All People

Michel G. Distefano, J. Nelson Jennings, Jinbong Kim, and Jae Hoon Lee, editors

Mission today is both polycentric and multidirectional, resulting in a Christian witness amid diverse—and often conflicting—sexual values. Regardless of the beliefs held by missionaries, agencies, and sending churches, they must discern and apply biblical teaching, despite legal, economic, and international challenges. *Broken Sexuality* addresses these issues directly, affirming that the gospel of Jesus Christ remains good news for people burdened by sexual shame, guilt, confusion, and loneliness.



The Gospel's Advance Ever Innovative, Always Evolving

By **DR. IAIN PICKETT** | All Scripture references are from the NIV.

For the last 30 years, **Dr. Iain Pickett** (UK) has lived and served cross-culturally with Operation Mobilization. He became OM's International Director in September 2025. www.om.org

Those who have engaged with Christian mission in the last 30 years could be forgiven for thinking that concepts such as people groups, integral mission—even the language of the 10/40 Window—are how we have always operated. But they are not. Each concept is an innovation that emerged to circumvent a particular obstacle, and today's emphases—church planting, disciple making movements, polycentric mission—are no different. They, too, are responses to “bottlenecks” that developed after prior innovations.

This isn't a modern phenomenon. The history of Christian mission has never been a linear expansion of a fixed model; rather, it has been a story of interactive innovation. Repeatedly, the advance of the gospel has encountered structural, theological, cultural, and logistical constraints, and in response, the Church has innovated. Some innovations were overtly pragmatic solutions to problems of access, scale, coordination, or sustainability. Others emerged from fresh biblical reflection. Often, both restriction and revelation have driven innovation. And when one bottleneck clears, at some point another is likely to appear.

This cyclical pattern of constraint, innovation, then ensuing constraint has marked Christian mission across history.

Mission Agencies: Innovations of Their Time

Even the existence of mission agencies is an innovation. In the late 18th century, William Carey faced a double barrier: Theologically, he was told that God would save “the heathen” if he wanted to without human help. Logistically, there was no effective mechanism for ordinary churches or individuals to send missionaries across cultural and geographical boundaries. Carey's formation of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 was born of necessity. It enabled small churches to pool resources, mobilize people, and bypass slow or indifferent ecclesiastical structures. Carey grounded this innovation in the Great Commission, arguing that confidence in God's sovereignty should propel, not paralyze, missionary action.¹

This isn't a modern phenomenon. The history of Christian mission has never been a linear expansion of a fixed model; rather, it has been a story of interactive innovation.

¹ Carey, William. *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (1792), internet archive: www.archive.org/details/bim_eighteenth-century_an-enquiry-into-the-obli_carey-william_1792.

Carey's voluntary missionary society model spread rapidly. Organizations that followed included the London Missionary Society (1795), the Church Missionary Society (1799), the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1810), and a thousand more since. What feels normal to us in mission today was once radical and pioneering, and these specialized mission agencies—innovative solutions to specific bottlenecks²—dramatically accelerated global witness.

Yet success brought new pressure. Rapid expansion led to fragmentation and duplication. The World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh (1910) was itself an innovation responding to problems caused by the previous century's mission boom. It reframed mission as a global, cooperative, research-informed enterprise. Mission could be studied, planned, and coordinated across institutional and national boundaries in pursuit of "the evangelization of the world in this generation."³

Yet success brought new pressure. Rapid expansion led to fragmentation and duplication. The World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh (1910) was itself an innovation responding to problems caused by the previous century's mission boom.

The Edinburgh Conference sought unity amid expansion but that, too, generated new tensions. Edinburgh's legacy contributed to the formation of the International Missionary Council and, eventually, its integration into the World Council of Churches. Growing centralization and ecumenical structures led to concerns about theological drift and waning evangelistic urgency. Out of these concerns, a new generation sought fresh clarity and drive.

² Walls, Andrew F. *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Clark, T and T, Orbis Books, 1996); Stanley, Brian. *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Apollos, 1990).

³ Stanley, Brian. "The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910," in *Studies in the History of Christian Missions*, World Missionary Conference (Eerdmans, 2009).

The Lausanne Movement, beginning in 1974, can be understood as an innovation in this lineage. Rooted in Edinburgh's global convening and strategic cooperation, it reasserted evangelical conviction around world evangelization.⁴ It was a new global forum for mission strategy distinct from older structures and a parallel heir to the spirit of 1910.

Bottlenecks Required Adaptive Thinking

One of Lausanne's enduring contributions was its diagnosis of a critical missional bottleneck: Despite centuries of expanding missionary work, entire peoples were effectively untouched by the gospel. Ralph D. Winter's articulation of "hidden" or "unreached" peoples reframed the missionary task. He argued that vast populations lived in cultures without an indigenous church presence and that the most urgent priority was crossing cultural and linguistic barriers. Within a few years, many mission agencies and networks shifted from thinking primarily in terms of nation-states to mapping people groups.

This innovation did not arise in a vacuum. The specific bottleneck Winter was addressing emerged after Edinburgh, which itself had been responding to bottlenecks from Carey's Protestant mission society model. This is the pattern of innovation in mission.

Nineteenth-century articulations of the "three-self principles"—self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating churches—by Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson were responses to Carey-era dependency structures in a colonial context with Western funding dominance. In the post-colonial world, "tentmaking" emerged, in part, as a creative workaround to political restrictions that earlier models had not anticipated.

Bible translation efforts accelerated during the post-World War II period, building on Carey's Bible translation impulse as well as responding to linguistic barriers overlooked by earlier mission expansion. In the same period, mass-reach media evangelism scaled up gospel proclamation beyond the dominant model of missionary residency.

⁴ "The Lausanne Covenant," 1974, www.lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant.

In the late 1950s and early '60s, youth-propelled movements like Operation Mobilization and Youth With A Mission challenged institutional rigidity in missionary societies, Edinburgh-era bureaucratic structures, and the clergy-dominated approach. By accepting people who hadn't been to Bible college and were still discerning their precise calling or long-term commitment, these startups radically circumvented traditional mission-sending formalities and bridged the inherent clergy/laity divide. Both organizations' ministry from ships was innovative, even revolutionary, amplifying the gospel's reach beyond the inherited models, even to this day.

Each innovation addressed obstacles, yet each has sown seeds of new complexity. At times, indigenous partnership rhetoric has masked persistent financial inequalities. Data-driven goals can reduce mission to measurables. Media evangelism may drift toward personality-centered appeal. These consequences do not negate the innovations but demonstrate the global need for constantly refreshed thinking.

Identifying Where and How to Innovate

Lausanne 1974 converged many of these streams. Winter's call intensified focus on unreached peoples, but also raised a new question: If the gospel is for every people group, how can the global Church ensure none is missed? AD 2000 & Beyond Movement and Joshua Project have sought to operationalize this vision through increasingly refined metrics, demographic research, databases, and strategic frameworks⁵ to tackle the persistent bottleneck that Winter exposed.

The growing emphasis on church planting from the 1980s on is a response to this framework. If the goal is an indigenous church within every people group, then the planting of churches becomes the primary indicator of success. Agencies such as Frontiers emerged. Contextualization debates intensified in this period, as practitioners wrestled with how to faithfully take the gospel across cultural and religious boundaries.

This led to another bottleneck issue: How could the gospel spread rapidly enough, with sufficient churches being planted, to keep pace with population growth?

5 Johnstone, Patrick J., *Operation World*, 5th ed. (WEC, 1993).

Church planting movements (CPMs) and later disciple making movements (DMMs) emerged as intentional strategies, emphasizing lay leadership, reproducibility and multiplication, and removing the dependence on trained outsiders in order to catalyze organic expansion from within communities themselves.⁶

Are these innovations all Western? No. Long before Western missiologists defined indigenous church theory and expansion strategies, local believers in Majority World settings had been leading, funding, and contextualizing: multiplying communities of faith through dynamic relational networks. Some of these lived examples were later mapped, abstracted, packaged, branded, and exported as innovations that would go global—sometimes gaining scalability, sometimes losing contextual depth.

Integral mission illustrates this point. At Lausanne 1974, Latin American leaders C. René Padilla and Samuel Escobar challenged the separation of evangelism from social responsibility. The resulting Lausanne Covenant affirmed that evangelistic and social action are both essential to the Church's mission. But this was not new. From the earliest Christian communities, the Church had embodied integrated patterns of witness, social care, and community transformation.⁷ Lausanne's contribution was to give theological language and global legitimacy to what many Majority World churches already modeled. Still, even this affirmation carried new risks: Integration could become a program rather than an embedded way of life.⁸

Each innovation addressed obstacles, yet each has sown seeds of new complexity.

6 Garrison, David. *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (WIGTake, 2004); Watson, David L. and Watson, Paul D., *Contagious Disciple-Making: Leading Others on a Journey of Discovery* (Thomas Nelson, 2014).

7 Bosch, David Jacobus. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, American Society of Missiology Series, no. 16 (Orbis Books, 1991); Escobar, Samuel. *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone* (InterVarsity, 2003).

8 Ababa, Rizalina L. "Principle Three: The Gospel Impacts the Whole Person and People's Whole Contexts," in *Undivided Witness: Jesus Followers, Community Development, and Least-Reached Communities*, ed. David Greenlee, Mark Galpin, and Paul Bendor-Samuel (Regnum, 2020).

Today, we serve in the long lineage of innovation that has responded to bottlenecks. Each shift, whether structural (e.g. mission societies, conferences), strategic (unreached peoples focus, church planting movements), or theological (integral mission, indigenous principles) will naturally require further recalibration.

Mission societies solved mobilization challenges but fragmentation followed. Cooperative conferences fostered unity but raised new theological tensions. People-group thinking clarified neglected gaps but demanded new data that risked becoming reductionist. The church-planting emphasis sparked multiplication movements, addressing the bottleneck of scale and speed, yet raised questions about long-term resilience. And behind many “Western” strategies lay practices that had come from the Majority World which, once systematized and exported back, created tensions that new voices are now seeking to correct.

Innovation Hasn’t Stopped—and Shouldn’t

Innovation in mission is not a modern obsession. Evangelism to the ends of the earth has been characterized by the iterative process of innovation, critique, and adaptation; it has never been a static endeavor. Today’s frontier-mission landscape is the product of two millennia of faithful innovation.

Innovation does not mean abandoning Scripture. Many innovations are pragmatic responses to real constraints, yet they are frequently shaped by an instinct to reach back to biblical precedent and historic practice. It may be that, at times, theological reflection has followed practice rather than preceded it, and occasionally scriptural support has been somewhat stretched, but this pragmatic streak should not be mistaken for theological carelessness. The interplay between practicality and biblical reflection has long characterized the Church’s missionary life. Constraints lead to prayer and reflection. Prayer births innovation. Innovation opens new pathways. And when obstacles arise, the process begins again.

This cycle should temper both triumphalism and despair. No advance—however effective—permanently resolves the challenges. There is no “silver bullet.” Each breakthrough begins the path to the next roadblock. This is not failure; it reflects the dynamic nature of the mission enterprise, and of our missionary God who continues to work with his people, calling each generation to renewed obedience, creativity, and dependence on him.

We are now at another threshold with the dense convergence of further innovation possibilities. The present moment is marked by overlapping pressures, including rapid acceleration of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, the continued shift toward a polycentric and post-Western global Church, unprecedented patterns of migration and urbanization, intensifying religious pluralism and secularization, shrinking funding and access for traditional mission models, and growing instability shaped by conflict, climate stress, and political fragmentation.

As in previous eras, these pressures are exposing bottlenecks in inherited mission structures and assumptions. They will compel fresh innovation—our persistent pattern and necessity in the Church’s obedience to Christ’s Commission.

It is in this relentless pursuit that we continue to move forward—ever reforming and ever renewing—until that day when innovation gives way to fulfillment and the great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language stands before the throne, crying out: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb” (Rev 7:10). ❏





Appropriate Technology and the “Harmony Way” in Frontier Missions

By **BRANDON** | All Scripture references from the NRSV.

Brandon has spent more than 15 years involved in frontier mission work. He’s worn a lot of different hats but is most passionate about helping people think strategically. He currently works with Ethnē. ethnē.tech

The apostle John saw something breathtaking in a vision, which he described in Revelation 5:9, “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation.” This scene is striking. It’s not about uniformity but diversity. This is not a mass of people who look the same, talk the same, and worship the same. Rather, it is a gloriously varied chorus with distinct voices contributing something irreplaceable to the song.

This vision drives and empowers the work of frontier missions; it’s why it exists! And yet, it also raises a

question that those of us working in this space must take seriously: If the Kingdom of God is meant to include every tribe and tongue in their diversity, does our technology actually reflect that?

The Paradox of Modern Missions

Take a moment to consider the technology that shapes much of your frontier mission work. The platforms we use to work, to train, and to distribute resources were more often than not built in Western spaces with Western assumptions. They typically assume reliable high-speed internet access, a deep literacy in a globally dominant language, and organizational

structures modeled on Western ideals. They are often powerful tools with good purposes, but they carry embedded assumptions about how people learn, how communities make decisions, and how knowledge should be organized. These assumptions don't always map neatly onto the diverse contexts where the gospel is still taking root.

Put simply, we pursue a vision of dazzling diversity with tools designed to treat and make us the same. We dream of Revelation 5 while building with the logic of Babel. This is not a matter of bad intentions. It is a matter of unexamined defaults. And if we want our technology to truly serve the kingdom vision, those defaults must be examined.

Babel and Pentecost: Two Models of Technology

Scripture gives us two interesting paradigms for thinking about technology, innovation, and culture. The first is Babel. In Genesis 11, all of humanity gathers around a shared technological project and in doing so, collapses all diversity into a single language, a single agenda, a single center of power. That project was a tower designed to reach into the heavens all the way to God. Babel speaks implicitly to the impulse to standardize and erase difference in the name of efficiency and control. Babel tends to be the default position for technology.

The second paradigm is Pentecost. In Acts 2, the Spirit descends and the result is not one language imposed on all, but every language spoken simultaneously. The miracle of Pentecost is that the gospel goes out in the native tongues of all of the listeners, whoever they are! They each get to hear the good news in their own voice. Pentecost does not eliminate diversity; it amplifies it and dignifies it.

Technology can serve either paradigm. Platforms that require every community to adopt the same interface, the same language, the same workflow build towards Babel. Platforms that are designed to meet people in their own context and distribute power rather than concentrate it, build towards Pentecost.

The Harmony Way

Keetoowah Cherokee scholar Randy Woodley offers a framework that enriches this theological vision. What the Hebrew Scriptures call *shalom* (peace, wholeness, flourishing), Woodley describes through the indigenous concept of the "Harmony Way."¹ Where Western thinking tends to define progress as a linear march forward, the Harmony Way understands flourishing as interconnectedness—right relationship between people, between communities, and between humanity and creation.

This distinction matters profoundly for how we think about missions and technology. The Western progress narrative assumes that newer is better, that scale equals success, and that efficiency is the highest virtue. The Harmony Way asks different questions: Does this tool strengthen relationships within a community? Does it allow the kingdom to flourish within a culture on its own terms, in its own voice, through its own leaders? Or does it quietly replace local ways of knowing with imported ones?

Platforms should be flexible. They should distribute rather than concentrate power. They should intentionally create space for the Harmony Way. When it is rigid and centralized, we don't achieve the Harmony Way, no matter how good our intentions.

Small Is Beautiful: Schumacher and Appropriate Technology

The practical framework for this kind of thinking already exists. In his landmark 1973 work *Small Is Beautiful*,² economist E.F. Schumacher introduced the concept of "appropriate technology."³ Drawing on the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, Schumacher argued that the best technology for any context is not necessarily the most advanced but rather the most fitting. He identified three core principles:

1 Randy S. Woodley, "The Harmony Way: Integrating Indigenous Values Within Native North American Theology and Mission" (PhD diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2010), 20. digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/gfes/72.

2 Schumacher, E.F. *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), chaps. 2, 10, 12.

3 *Ibid.*, 130.



1. **Accessibility:** Appropriate technology must be cheap enough to be available to virtually everyone, not just those with institutional budgets or Western donors. If the person at the furthest edge of a network cannot afford or access the tool, it is not appropriate for the work of reaching “every tribe.”
2. **Scale:** Schumacher argued that small-scale application is more human than industrial-scale deployment. Small operations respect both human dignity and local context in ways that massive, centralized systems cannot. In a missions context, this means empowering local leaders to build, adapt, and own solutions rather than handing them platforms designed for mega-organizations.
3. **Compatibility with human creativity:** The right tool enhances what people can do; it does not replace them. Gandhi framed this as “production by the masses” versus “mass production.”⁴ In missions, this translates to a clear principle: Technology should make local leaders more capable, not more dependent on Western expertise.

The Shadow of Inappropriate Technology

When we fail to apply these principles, the consequences are real. High-cost and high-maintenance technology—like software that requires expensive licenses, hardware that needs specialized repair, or systems that need constant connectivity—quietly centralizes power in the hands of those who

can afford it. The tech-literate become gatekeepers, and local leaders become consumers rather than creators.

There is also the subtler problem of cultural erasure. When the platforms we use don’t support local scripts, can’t accommodate oral traditions, or impose individualistic decision-making structures on communal cultures, something is lost. The content may be translated, but the way knowledge is shared, discussed, and lived remains foreign. The gospel arrives, but it arrives in someone else’s packaging.

An indigenous leader once lamented to me about how their team and colleagues weren’t trusted to make and maintain their own training material. Instead, they were expected to use material created elsewhere, full of examples and metaphors and visuals that made little sense in their culture. And they were expected to access it all using a file tool that no one used and few had access to, which left them either dependent on outsiders or scrambling to make things work. What they asked me for left a deep impression—space. They desired a place of their own to collect and access and share and celebrate who they were as a movement and a people. That conversation has stayed with me. It captures what’s at stake when we get this wrong. The issue isn’t just inefficiency, it’s dignity.

Imagining Kingdom Innovation

So what does appropriate technology look like in practice? At Ethnē, we are learning that the answer lies primarily in holding two commitments: flexible platforms and distributed power.

⁴ Ibid, 112.

Consider the challenge of Scripture access. Data from internetpoverty.io reveals a staggering reality: In many regions, downloading an audio Bible can cost 10 percent of a person's monthly income. Offline-first applications (tools that work without constant connectivity and allow audio Bible sharing through locally created, on-device networks) can address this directly. They don't require the infrastructure of the Global North. They meet people where they are.

Or consider the rise of no-code tools that allow local leaders to build their own solutions. Rather than waiting for a Western development team to design an app that may or may not fit their context, leaders on the ground can create platforms that prioritize their own content, adapt to the forms and structures that make sense in their culture, and integrate the resources they actually need: Scripture in local languages, security protocols appropriate to their setting, and communication tools shaped by their community's patterns. The platform becomes a servant rather than a master.

At Ethnē, one significant way we are working toward this is through what we call "Channels."⁵ Channels is our effort to democratize the process. Cost is based on ministry budgets rather than typical industry metrics, because accessibility has to start with pricing. Local leaders need little other than their own material and resources—whether WhatsApp audio, Word documents, or hand-drawn illustrations. We work with people to build custom, accessible channels of their content for their people in the languages they want and need. Channels adapt to the form and structure of that content to create a small-scale app within an app, with the added benefit of integrated Bibles, professional security management, and more. The point is that the platform serves the content and the community, not the other way around.

We should be honest, though: At Ethnē, we aren't immune to these struggles ourselves. Technology and innovation carry a cost and the tension between what's ideal and what's sustainable is real. Channels has been built specifically with this tension in mind. It's designed to lower the barriers that make appropriate technology so hard to sustain over time. But the work is ongoing, and we are learning as we go.


And notably, this is not a call to abandon sophisticated technology. It is a call to reorient it. The role of the innovator in missions is not to arrive as the "bringer of solutions," parachuting in with a finished product. It is to serve as a co-creator. We should all be people who listen carefully to both the king and the culture simultaneously, building tools in genuine partnership with local communities. The best missionary technologists are not those who export their expertise but those who multiply the capacity of others. The posture matters as much as the product.

Through the Eyes of the King

The history of missions is marked by moments of profound faithfulness and moments of painful blindness. Some of our greatest missteps have come not from malice but from failing to question the tools we carried. The modernization narrative told us that progress meant adoption, whether adoption of Western languages, Western institutions, or Western technology. We are still reckoning with the cost of that assumption.

But reckoning with the past is not enough. We must also imagine the future, and we must imagine it through the eyes of the king whose vision we serve. That vision is gloriously diverse. It does not flatten. It does not homogenize. It gathers every tribe and tongue and people and nation and it seats them all at the same table.

Technology is never neutral. Every tool carries assumptions about who matters, how knowledge works, and where power belongs. A platform that centralizes control, builds a tower. A platform that distributes power, respects local creativity, and meets people in their own language and their own context sets a table.

The question before us is not whether we will use technology in frontier missions, because of course we will. The question is whether we will use it thoughtfully enough to serve the kingdom as it actually is: breathtakingly diverse, rooted in the Harmony Way, flourishing in every culture on its own terms. Let us build tools that set the table for every tribe. 

⁵ See ethne.tech/channels

Through the Roof

The Heart of Innovation at the Frontier

By **TRACY DAHDOUH** | All Bible references taken from the NIV.

Tracy Dahdouh serves as a Lead Digital Ministry Specialist for the MENA region at New Heights Ministry in Beirut, Lebanon. She works alongside a team of dedicated individuals, collaborating to develop innovative, gospel-centered strategies for engaging frontier communities.



Rethinking How We Talk About Innovation

When we think of innovation, we tend to picture new platforms, new strategies, and new methods. And in the world of frontier mission, this conversation is very much alive: How do we use media, digital tools, and creative approaches to reach people where the gospel has not yet taken root?

These are very good and necessary conversations. But there is an embedded risk: that we begin to believe the innovation itself—the new tool, the clever strategy, the fresh idea—is what opens hearts and brings transformation.

The gospel, however, has always told a different story about what moves mountains. And there is one story that I think paints a beautiful picture of what innovation in missions can look like.

When the Conventional Path Is Blocked

In Mark 2, we read about a man who cannot walk. He cannot carry himself anywhere, cannot push through crowds, and most importantly, cannot get to Jesus on his own. What he has, however, are four people in his life who cared enough to carry him. They pick him up and bring him to the house where Jesus is, only to find it packed, with no way to get him through the door. And so, they made an opening through the

roof and lowered the paralyzed man down to Jesus. Jesus looks up, sees their faith, and heals the man.

It is a remarkable scene of early missional innovation. The conventional path was blocked. The door was not an option. These four men had to find a new way, so they created one. They went up, over, and in through the roof.

What drove them was not necessarily cleverness, access to resources, or a superior strategy but rather love for their friend and an unshakeable conviction that Jesus was the only one who could heal him. Their innovation flowed from the heart.

Urgent Need, Locked Doors

Anyone working in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region, among people groups and communities where the Church is barely a whisper and where the name of Jesus cannot be openly proclaimed, understands what it feels like to be caught between the urgency of the gospel and doors that will not open.

Consider the religious, societal, and familial barriers that have stood for centuries, cultural and religious fabrics that are tightly woven around an identity that leaves no room for Jesus, at least not on the surface. Consider

families in which a single conversation about faith could cost someone everything. Consider doors that simply do not open. As Paul asks, “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” (Rom 10:14). Paul’s challenge remains relevant in the context of the MENA region today.

And yet, in this very context, God is at work. He does not wait for doors to open. He has never needed them to. And when people have faith in that truth and are motivated by love for those they are carrying, they stop looking for the door and start digging through the roof.

The Heart Behind the Tool

There is a natural pull toward novelty, especially in missional conversations. A new framework or technology emerges, and it’s hailed as the thing that will finally unlock the unreachable world.

And honestly, there is something right about that excitement. Every generation of ministry workers has been given tools and opportunities unique to their moment. Digital access to closed countries today is nothing short of extraordinary. People in the most restricted regions on earth can now encounter Scripture, testimony, and community through a screen in ways that were unimaginable a generation ago. These are gifts, and God is using them.

But what makes a tool come alive is not the tool itself. It is the heart holding it. A genuine, stubborn desire to get a person to Jesus—that is what makes someone pick up a new platform or try something that has never been tried before. That is the heart that produces real innovation. Not institutional pressure. Not the excitement of novelty for its own sake. Just a love that looks at a person and cannot imagine leaving without getting them to Jesus.

That is what those four men teach us: What brings innovative solutions is a costly, inconvenient, and persistent commitment to laying someone down at the feet of Jesus.

Love-Driven Innovation

Innovation in frontier mission is not about being the first to use a particular app or adopt a specific model. It is about standing at a blocked road, a closed door,

or a crowded entrance, feeling the weight of what’s at stake, and asking: *How can I bring this person to Jesus?*

That question, asked sincerely, will produce creativity. We’ve already seen it happen. It is what leads a team to share Scripture through storytelling in places where literacy is low. It is what leads an online missionary to engage in a conversation with a stranger on the other side of a screen, in a country they can never visit. And it is what leads a young man living in Yemen who quietly discovered Jesus online to conduct secret Bible studies in his car because there is no other safe place to gather.


What we are seeing today in the MENA region is not innovation for the sake of innovation. It is a dedication to gather around God’s Word, with whatever tools or approaches are available, born out of a love for the region and a desire to bring people to Jesus.

What It’s All About

As four men tore through clay and timber and mud brick, dust falling onto Pharisees and onlookers alike, in what can be described as an audacious, socially disruptive scene, what did Jesus see?

“When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven’” (Mark 2:5).

Jesus responded to their faith. It was a stubborn, active, inconvenient faith that believed if they could just get their friend to Jesus, he would do something. That is still the engine behind every act of missional innovation in the MENA region today. We try new things not because we believe in the tools, but because we believe in him.

In the end, the roof was just the means. The tools, the methods, the platforms, the approaches—all of them are just the means. What matters is the moment a person who could not get to Jesus on their own finally stands before him. That is what those four men were after, and that is what every act of genuine missional innovation should be after. After all, the paralyzed man’s friends did not celebrate the hole in the roof. They celebrated when their friend stood up and walked. 



Church-Centric Innovation for Finishing the Task

By **GILLES GRAVELLE**, PhD & **ERICH RAMSEY**, JD

Gilles Gravelle is an independent researcher with a PhD in Linguistics and over 40 years of experience in Bible translation. A certified translation consultant, he has supported numerous translation projects worldwide.

Erich Ramsey serves as a founder and Chairman of the Board of Beyond Translation, having retired from being a lawyer and business entrepreneur.

A team of Christian college students in Burkina Faso are working with their church to produce a full Bible in a Fulani dialect that is barely 1% Christian. They recently dedicated their consultant-certified first 12 books of the Bible, translated using artificial intelligence (AI). Now that the AI model they trained is producing good quality drafts, they are on pace to likely finish the full Bible translation within 3 to 4 years. As each book has been finished, it has already been put into use by the Church, enabling rapid Scripture distribution and engagement.

A Strategic Turning Point in Frontier Missions

Over the last 50+ years, the unreached people group (UPG) movement has significantly reshaped evangelical missions by shifting the focus from

geographic regions to distinct ethnic and linguistic communities with little or no access to the gospel. It emerged in the late 20th century through the influence of missiologists such as Ralph Winter and others who helped popularize people-group thinking and contextualized church planting and strategic engagement among populations, especially in Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist contexts, where no viable indigenous church existed. Building on this foundation, the Finishing the Task movement mobilized networks, research data, prayer, and partnerships to concentrate global mission efforts on the remaining unreached groups. However, this movement has been largely conceived, funded, and operationalized by Western mission agencies, even as it has increasingly called for deeper partnership with churches and leaders from the Global South.

For decades, Bible translation has been carried out primarily by Western translation agencies and national Bible societies, and less so by churches. Today, however, we are seeing a growing surge in capability among Global South churches, not only to help finish the remaining translation work but also to take primary responsibility for reaching the unreached within their own regions and countries. This represents a large-scale force multiplier for the Great Commission. Even so, Global South churches may not frame the unreached people group task, or define frontier missions, in quite the same way Western missions traditionally have.

The Frontier of Lostness and the Innovation It Requires

Frontier missions are often defined by geography or statistical categories such as unreached or unengaged people groups. While these measures remain useful, Scripture locates the frontier more fundamentally in lostness itself, wherever people remain separated from the saving knowledge of God (Luke 19:10). The frontier, therefore, is not only about where the church goes, but about whether people can hear and understand the gospel when it reaches them.

For this reason, Scripture access has always been central to frontier mission. The gospel cannot take root where it cannot be clearly heard (Rom 10:14–17). Across history, one of the most enduring barriers between lostness and discipleship has been the absence of God’s Word in a person’s heart language. Innovation in Bible translation is thus not a modern distraction, but a missional necessity shaped by God’s heart for the lost.

If lostness defines the frontier, then mission begins with formation before strategy. God entrusts every believer with L.I.F.E.—labor, influence, finances, and expertise—to be stewarded for his purposes (Ps 139:13–16). Yet knowledge of this calling alone does not produce engagement. Scripture warns that hearing without obedience leads to self-deception (Jas 1:22). Only when understanding moves from the head to the heart does it result in creative, sacrificial action.

The most significant innovations in Bible translation have emerged from this kind of formation within the global church. As believers began to see lostness with God’s compassion (Matt 9:36), the question shifted from whether Scripture could reach frontier peoples to how the church itself could become the primary agent of that work. This shift has given rise to what is now described as the church-centric movement in Bible translation where innovation serves not speed alone, but obedience to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18–20) and the Great Commandment (Matt 22:37–39).

The Emergence of the Church-Centric Bible Translation (CCBT) Movement

Rather than external organizations driving translation and evangelism, local churches themselves are positioned as the primary agents of Scripture access and gospel multiplication.

This CCBT movement is marked by several key innovations, such as:

- Open-licensed Scripture resources
- AI-assisted translation
- Digital tools
- Reaffirmation of the church as the central locus of mission



Together, these innovations dramatically accelerate both translation timelines and gospel impact. Scripture is no longer merely delivered to churches; it is produced by them, for them, in their heart languages.

Translation, Discipleship, and Multiplication

Up until recent times, Bible translation required approximately 24 years for a full Bible, often with limited immediate impact. Within the church-centric framework, this paradigm has shifted. Translation timelines have been reduced to eight years—and in some cases less—while gospel impact begins with the very first translated verse.

Local believers, including new converts, participate directly in translation, discipleship, evangelism, and church planting. This simultaneous engagement creates a ripple effect: Scripture shared within families, communities, and neighboring regions long before a full Bible is completed. Acceptance rates of translated Scripture rise dramatically when churches translate their own texts, reinforcing ownership and trust.¹

Moreover, countries that adopt this model increasingly move toward self-sufficiency, supporting neighboring nations and unreached people groups within a few years. This is happening now with CCBT-oriented church networks in Myanmar introducing the model to church networks in neighboring countries. The same is happening in Nigeria. Frontier mission thus becomes exponential rather than additive.

A Movement Strategy for Whole Countries

Beyond Translation is a church networking organization that serves to catalyze CCBT country-wide movements, and provide translation and biblical training. They begin by engaging as many churches and church networks as possible. From the start, the goal is not a small project but a larger vision for entire countries. Each country is invited to envision two outcomes:

1. Every people group receives the Word of God in their heart language—by the church and for the church.
2. The Great Commission being completed within their own country—by the church and for their own people.

By the end of this envisioning process, churches consistently arrive at two shared convictions:

- *It is possible* for every language group to have God's Word in a language they prefer.
- *It can be done*—the Great Commission can be completed within our lifetimes at the country level.

In the most recent countries where this envisioning process took place, churches and denominations that had never collaborated before came together. Despite their differences, they were united by two shared desires: access to Scripture in every language and collective responsibility for completing the Great Commission in their nation.

Beyond Academy Training: Where the Church Is Weak or Absent

In places with few or no Christians, the entry strategy begins with adoption. A nearby church language group adopts an unreached language group. Open-licensed Bible stories can be translated even with non-Christians involved, using interpreters. During the translation process, people often encounter Christ for the first time.

A basic language team can be formed with just four people: two mother-tongue translators (who do not need to be Christians) and two Christian quality checkers. This simple structure makes Scripture engagement possible even in the most difficult contexts.

Training Where Churches Exist

When churches or networks are present, their members are trained simultaneously to:

- Translate Scripture into their preferred language, gaining deeper biblical understanding through nonformal theological education.
- Evangelize and disciple others who disciple others and plant healthy churches.

¹ Gravelle, Gilles. *Bible Translation Impact Report. Measuring Bible Translation Impact Through Community Dialogue*. (Colorado Springs: Friends of Agape, 2025).

The Ripple Effect

Each day, translators and disciples return home and share what they learned with their families. Families share with churches, churches with neighbors, neighbors with communities, and communities with neighboring communities. This creates an ever-expanding ripple effect.

Toward Self-Sustaining Movements

As countries envision completing Scripture translation and the Great Commission, they are trained to become self-sufficient, similar to a franchise model. Within two to four years, many countries reach the point where they can fulfill their vision largely on their own, needing only limited financial assistance. As momentum grows, they begin helping neighboring countries and people groups.



Two Accelerants for Finishing the Task

CCBT represents a significant innovation in the translation process, increasing speed and reducing cost while maintaining high quality. Compared to the traditional Western model, which is often centered on a single expatriate translator supported by a small team, this approach functions as a powerful accelerator.

The advent of the digital age of translation has been a major disruption in how translation is done and by whom.² Now advances in AI-driven natural language processing has further disrupted the way translation is done by changing roles and adding new roles.³ By leveraging small-language models that can rapidly learn a language and generate high-quality draft translations, AI enables translation teams to work more efficiently and move through the process at a much faster pace.

The convergence of AI with the church-centric movement marks a new phase of acceleration in frontier missions. AI can improve translation accuracy, lower costs, and support parallel workflows across multiple language teams, further compressing full Bible translation timelines, sometimes to as little as two to four years. Going beyond Bible translation, AI also enables the development of contextualized biblical and community resources in heart languages, including health, education, and economic materials. Together, AI + CCBT embodies the integration of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.

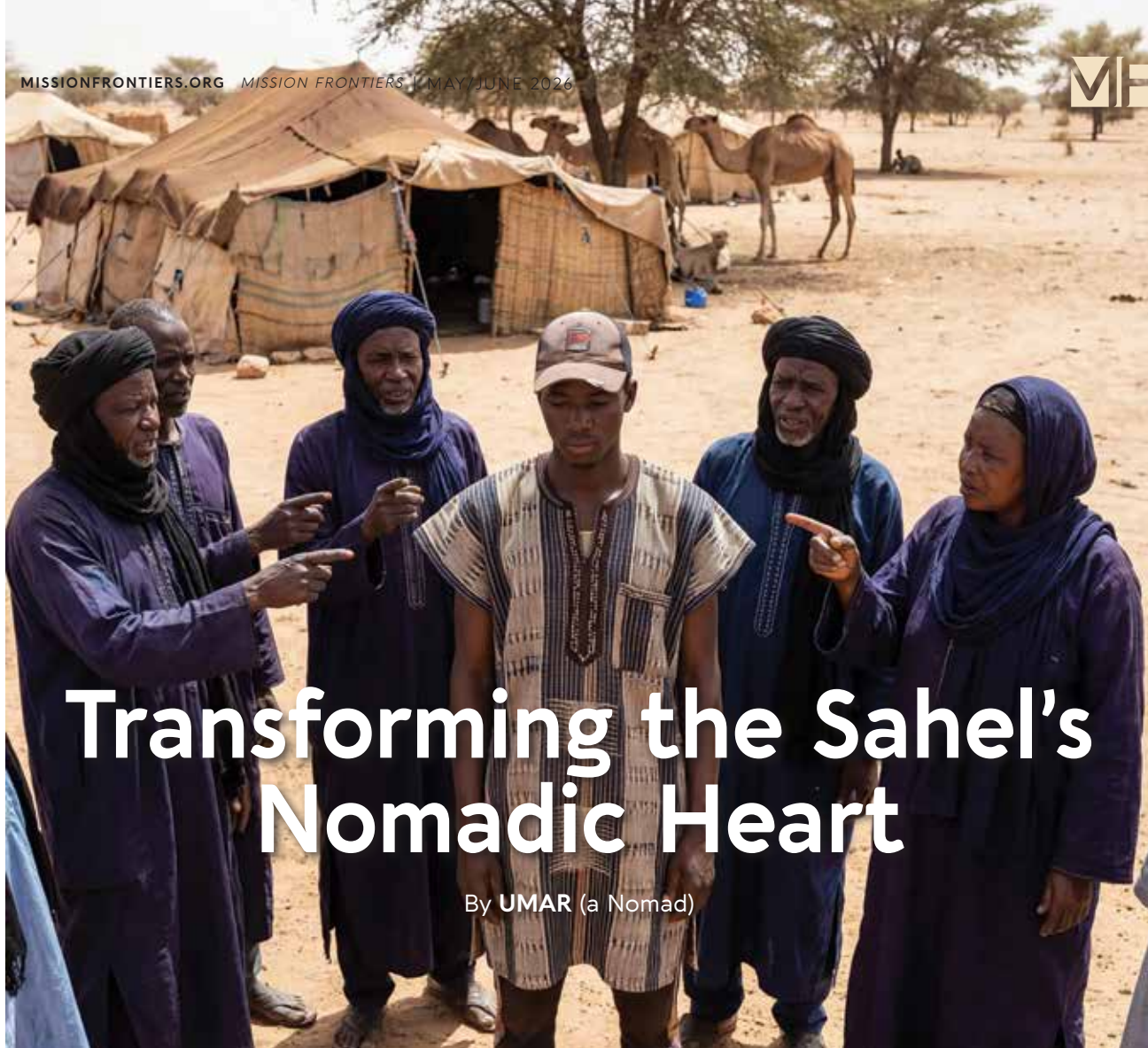
The Trifecta of Mission: Word, Witness, and Works

At its core, frontier mission reflects the ministry pattern of Jesus himself: proclaiming the Word of God, advancing the gospel, and doing tangible good. Scripture translation fuels evangelism; evangelism fuels discipleship; discipleship fuels community transformation. This integrated approach is not innovative for its own sake; it is faithful to the gospel.

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2 Gilles Gravelle, "Bible Translation in the Digital Age," *Mission Frontiers*, 37:5, (2015): 34–36

3 Gilles Gravelle, "Today's AI NLP. A Game Changer for Minority Language Translation." Paper given at the Bible Translation 2023 Conference, October 12–17, Dallas TX.



Transforming the Sahel's Nomadic Heart

By UMAR (a Nomad)

Umar was born in West Africa and is serving with SIM Canada and NPN. He founded a local NGO to address poverty. He has an MA from Regent College (British Columbia).

“Respect everyone and let them believe what they believe. Faith is a personal choice.” These phrases may seem ordinary or commonplace in some contexts, but they are more than revolutionary in certain circles. They are the fulfillment of prayers offered for decades by believers who were determined to break through what seemed like impenetrable concrete. Our Lord, in his grace, answered for his own glory.

Our ministry in Niger with nomads was begun by SIM a century ago, and I am personally a product of this work. I must admit the soil for the gospel seems hard in the Sahel and might feel like “pouring water on sand” or “preaching in the desert.”

Decades ago, when I encountered the Lord, I was the second person in my region to convert and openly confess Jesus. Today, through our ministry and by the Lord’s hand, we count about 20 believers in my immediate family and several others in our region. It was difficult, as people felt entitled to judge, insult, and mistreat me. It was as if people assumed that someone who was no longer Muslim would understand being insulted and humiliated because they would be acknowledging their wrongdoing. That was the persecution I experienced. Even those closest to me would make signs at me, as if I were defiled. In our nomadic community, this manifested as a practice of not using the same dishes as non-Muslims.

Everything we touch is *immiḍas* (unclean). But today we can say that, by the glory of God, many of these practices are decreasing.

If I were to list the different approaches that lead to fruit, I could on for pages and pages. For this article, I will briefly focus on the following two: The approach that aims for the specific or immediate (although this approach also has the whole as its ultimate goal), and the approach that aims for the whole. As for the former, I would like to count Frontier Venture's (FV) innovative projects for nomadic initiatives. These projects are time-limited and specific, aiming through an innovative idea to connect the nomads with the shepherd. This approach is effective and very satisfying because it meets a precise need that might be the key to opening doors for the people group we are praying for. In the case of the Vocational Training Centre for Nomadic Youth, this initiative meets the needs of young people to learn a trade and become independent in society without giving up their nomadic lifestyle. The boys were trained in welding and received a kit at the end of their training to start their own activity. The girls receive a non-electric sewing machine after course completion, and they can work from their own house or tent. The time together at the center of learning and the sense of community allowed for the gospel to be sown in their hearts.

The second approach, which I consider myself part of, focuses on the general mentality of the context: How are Christians perceived in the community? How can we dismantle certain preconceived and persistent negative ideas about Christians? These are the types of conversations I like to kindle in the community as I envision lasting change and openness for the gospel. These conversations cannot be pursued without getting involved directly, being insulted, or provoked to the brink of anger. The reputation of Christ becomes our shield rather than reacting to protect ourselves.

A few years ago, I started WhatsApp discussion groups to talk about these issues. People who were supposed to respect me decided to disrespect me, and others I didn't even know threatened to kill me. Through these groups, I certainly got involved, but the Lord used them to break through the barriers

in our region. On several occasions, and each time it was after long debates within our group where imams and others threatened me, provoking strong reactions on my part to defend the gospel, I began receiving a constant stream of private messages. Dozens of people in the group (groups are usually 300 members or more) sent me private messages saying they completely understood my point of view and that it was simply difficult for them to express it publicly. Each time, the Lord inspired me to give the same response in the form of questions: Why hate someone because they don't believe what you believe? Is that truly what God, our creator, wants? Over time, these discussions led us to introduce a new expression into our local vocabulary: "Respect everyone and let them believe what they believe. Faith is a personal choice." This expression, unimaginable in our context just five years ago, has become commonplace and accepted even in discussions among Muslims today.

Changes over time have been possible by meeting the immediate needs through our work with NPN, CS, and FV. The realization of these projects played a crucial role in solidifying our relationships, preparing the ground, and ultimately sharing the gospel. Through our gardening projects, refugee assistance, youth training, care for the sick, and through our presence and participation in the community's daily challenges, we have built a relationship strong enough to withstand the debates. We can now challenge cultural perceptions and foster acceptance for the Shepherd's teaching. As a nomad who grew up Muslim, I believe following Christ does not mean leaving the "camp of Muslims who hate and despise Christians" to join "the camp of Christians who hate and despise Muslims." Following Jesus in this context is mostly loving Muslims enough to help them discover and live this unconditional love of the neighbor. Our job is simply to contribute to preparing their hearts so the Lord will build his presence where he will, as written in Proverbs 24:27, "Prepare your land, get your fields ready, and then build your house."

All the glory belongs to the Lord, for he and he alone is in control of everything and is the ultimate Shepherd.

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Child-focused Mission that Forms Disciples, Leaders, & Movements

By **DR. LYDIA WONGET** | All Scripture references are from the NIV.

Dr. Lydia Wonget serves as Chairperson of the Africa Assemblies of God Alliance Children's Ministry Commission (AAGACMC) and Director of Research, Innovation, and Extension at Kenya Assemblies of God East University. She equips leaders across Africa to reach, disciple, and empower children through contextualized training and missional leadership development.

The deep question in frontier mission is not whether we should innovate, but how we innovate without losing spiritual depth, discernment, and lasting fruit. Frontier people groups often have challenges like distance, language, spiritual resistance, or political pressure against engaging Scripture. One of the overlooked frontier communities is children. Jesus made this community a priority when he said, "Let the little children come to me ... for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matt 19:14). If frontier innovation ignores actively engaging children, then we have set aside Jesus' priority in this text.

Focusing on frontier mission requires that we realize the gospel moves faster along relational lines, for example, in homes, through friendships, and in communities where children are often in the center of these pathways. In many cultures, children are curious and socially connected. If well-disciplined, these

children can become bridges of peace and openness in spaces adults cannot access. Thus, developing the leadership capacity of people who serve children becomes a strategy for frontier mission.

Background of the Problem

The innovative ways we use with children depend on forming disciples who can endure and multiply under pressure. If this is not assessed, innovation without spiritual formation becomes activity without depth. The Church must seek reproducible pathways that produce disciples who endure, in churches that multiply, raising leaders who disciple new believers faithfully. The early Church rapidly expanded, though it faced frontier challenges. They witnessed across cultures, languages, and political territories. The book of Acts records a Spirit-led and strategically adaptive community. In Acts 10, frontier mission crosses barriers through household networks. In Acts 17, it is contextual communication.

Acts 13 describes team-based mission expansion, while Acts 14:21–23 pictures discipleship structures that engage communities.¹

Biblical Foundations: Children as Kingdom Participants and Household Catalysts

In Deuteronomy 6:4–9, the Shema instructs Israel to diligently teach children as a daily lifestyle. Psalm 78:3–7 emphasizes that one generation must not hide the Word from the next. This is discipleship structured in ordinary life. This pattern is mirrored when discipleship is strategized in households. Frontier mission engages a foundational biblical theology of children. Jesus welcomed and blessed children (Mark 10:13–16). In Acts 2:17, we read, “Your sons and daughters will prophesy.” This text clarifies that children are not only recipients but Spirit-empowered active participants. Children are in relationally connected environments like families, schools, and other social circles, where they share experiences naturally, asking honest questions. The gospel firmly planted in their hearts can travel to other relationships.

Leadership Development as Frontier Innovation

Leadership development for those discipling children has not been discussed widely as a frontier innovation. Most frontier efforts focus on gospel presentation and initial contacts, but a strong frontier church cannot emerge without trained disciples who consistently sustain formation. Within the African context, many faithful children’s ministry leaders are undertrained. They engage in theological exercises without theological grounding, skills, and discipleship tools. This gap is not only an internal church weakness but a frontier vulnerability. Weak discipleship gives birth to weak and untransformed churches. Discipling children well is opening a frontier pathway into households and communities, taking the gospel not only farther but deeper.

The Africa Assemblies of God Alliance Children’s Ministry Commission (AAGACMC) leadership development is a pathway that emphasizes training

rooted biblically, Spirit-sensitive, context aware, practicum-driven, and reproducible.² Leaders learn to faithfully contextualize Scripture and disciple children holistically by engaging both the left and right brain during formation.³ AAGACMC builds ministries that are accountable and safe. The project is not seeking to professionalize children’s ministers but to awaken spirit empowered competencies to strengthen missions. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul encourages Timothy not only to teach but to produce leaders who reproduce. Following this pattern is a small door that leads to a great impact.

OneHope is committed to reaching children and youth in every corner of the globe, including the hardest-to-reach nations of the world, through leadership development. Their innovative digital programs, print resources, multimedia strategies, and church-planting initiatives ensure that God’s Word is delivered to children, wherever they are across the globe. They push the boundaries of what’s possible, ensuring that no child is beyond the reach of the gospel through the training and sending of leaders.⁴

Innovation Through Orality Discipleship for Oral Cultures

Most people in the African context come from oral cultures, needing an orality-first discipleship. Learning in these cultures is relational, communal, and story-based. Frontier innovation will include strategic Bible storytelling, songs that foster theology, drama for biblical narratives, and testimony sharing for strengthening faith. This method follows what Jesus did with his disciples and the multitudes. The early Church relied on teaching and public reading (Col 4:16). Children flourish in oral learning and oral discipleship support. An example of innovation is seen in one of our villages, where a trained team organized a football competition of adolescents from different village quarters. During each match, these young people were ministered to. During the finals, they were invited to attend church on Sunday, and a new church was planted in that village. (This writer coordinated

1 Keener, Craig S. *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*. Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 420–430.

2 AAGACMC, *Training and Coaching Framework*, 2024

3 Katie Marciel, *Train Up to Not Depart: Holistic Discipleship for Children*, Unpublished dissertation, 2025.

4 OneHope, *Brand Messaging Guide: Working Draft*, Unpublished, 2026.

that church plant.). Well-trained children's ministers will guard doctrinal foundations, theological clarity, and protect the gospel from syncretism by practicing a discipleship grounded in the Word.

Innovation by Multiplying Coaches, Not Only Students

AAGACMC develops coaches who walk alongside the learners who directly interact with children in the field. This coaching method treats training as formation and accountability, not just content delivery.⁵ The coaches follow-up learners, assess their assignments, encourage spiritual health, pray with the learners, and model servant leadership. Learners report practical work in the field while learning from each other. A trained coach disciples several learners who, in turn, minister to children, who serve and influence their households to become seeds of new communities. This reflects Paul's model, where he revisited communities, strengthened leaders, and built teams (Acts 20:17–38, 2 Tim 2:2). Coaching builds resilient leaders. In AAGACMC, selected members of the first cohort are now coaching a new cohort that started in January 2026. This model multiplies coaches and grows the ministry. Quiet maturity is often the most strategic witness as coaching provides deep growth without being a public show.

Innovation through Micro-Training That Matches Frontier Realities


Frontier leaders constantly lack time; they face travel limitations, economic challenges, and many are unable to do long residential trainings due to work and family constraints. One of the innovations is micro-training with short modules implemented locally by well-trained children's leaders. Another very effective innovation in the AAGACMC model is that it is asynchronous and totally online. The learners work at their convenience, within their family settings, without needing to travel. They are given practical exercises as part of their learning, which are implemented, reported, and reviewed by the coach, and given timely feedback. This model aligns with Jesus' pattern of training where he taught, sent the disciples out, reviewed what they did, and saw how it deepened their love and calling (Luke 10:1–20). Paul and his team also repeatedly visited churches,

strengthening them (Acts 14:21–23). AAGACMC learners regularly meet on Zoom to share insights, testimonies, and grow together as they study.

A Security-Sensitive Case Example

In one of our African nations in a strictly Muslim area, a locally trained children's ministry leader, supported through a structured leadership development pathway, began meeting with children in the area in his house using Bible stories, prayer, songs, and real discipleship with the children. A very stubborn Muslim boy was invited to the Hope club, and he enjoyed the stories and found out he was accepted by Jesus. He significantly changed his behavior at home. The father, who was a practicing Muslim, noticed the change but did not comment. He suddenly became very sick, and his son, who attends the club, pleaded with the family to bring him to their Hope club, where Jesus heals. The man could not walk, so he was carried against his will to the Hope club in the children's workers' house. On the way, the little boy rallied other members of the club to come to his aid by praying for his father. As he was brought into the Hope club, where the children and their leader gathered, they started praying, and the man who was carried got divine healing, and he went home walking. At home, he told his wife to take all the other children to the Hope club, but he would not come because he would be killed if the community found out. That is how a church was planted in that community, and many more have been planted through children in that Muslim environment. We are innovating frontier missions through leadership development in work with children.

Conclusion

Frontier practitioners are encouraged by this approach of investing in training those who disciple children, instead of focusing exclusively on proclaiming the gospel. Those trained then steward the mission within their own cultural framework. Innovative leadership formation provides sustainability in unreached frontiers. In places where church structures are limited or restricted, household-based discipleship facilitated through children becomes a missional bridge. This recenters leadership formation at the earliest stages of discipleship. This recognizes that resilient movements are built through long-term formation instead of short-term results. 

⁵ AAGACMC flyer, 2024.



Miracles, Dreams & Apps

A Missions Innovation Case Study from Waha

By **A.K. AMBERG**

A.K. Amberg is a church planter and missiologist researching contextualization in church planting movements. He is a director at Waha, a company dedicated to empowering people everywhere to multiply disciples. Find out more at www.waha.app.

The Dream

Miriam woke up in a cold sweat. The image of a man dressed in white and shining like the sun was scorched in her mind. It was far from the first dream she had ever had, but this was different. It was like the dream reached out from her sleeping mind right into the real world.

“Find this book,” the man in white had said, handing her a strange tome. “It will show you the Way.”

What could the dream possibly have meant? She needed some tea. Groggy, she lumbered from her bedroom and into the common area of her apartment. But before she could flip on the kettle, something

stopped her in her tracks. There, on the coffee table was the exact same book from her dream. She could tell because of the strange, golden letters printed on its spine: B-I-B-L-E.

There’s an App for That

At Waha, we love Miriam’s story, because it reminds us of all the ways God works. He reveals himself through miraculous dreams and visions, but also through human innovation.

Waha is a not-for-profit whose mission is to empower people everywhere to become disciples who multiply disciples among the unchurched and unreached. We do this through technology. Our app facilitates

a Discovery Bible Study and disciple-making course with the push of a button so anyone can lead one with almost no training or expertise whatsoever. It's easy to see why we get excited about God meeting people through technology.

Take Miriam, for example. As a refugee in a Middle Eastern city, she had little access to gospel materials. But when she saw her roommate's Bible on the table, she knew she had found something real. Before long, she was sitting in her roommate's house church, discovering God's Word herself.

"We have always been told this book is only for Christians," she said once. "But it's not. It's for everyone!"

She wanted to share with all the Muslims she knew but struggled to communicate clearly. That's when the leader of her house church told her how to download Waha on her phone. All she had to do was invite friends to join her for a meeting and then push the play button. The app read a story from the Bible, asked a question about the story, and made a tone, signaling for her to press pause and discuss the answer with her group.

A Theology of Technology

Technology has a role to play in missions, but many can be forgiven for suspecting its trustworthiness. We live in a time when technology meant to connect us has instead sown deep division in our societies,¹ even to the point of inciting violence.² When we innovate new technologies to aid missionaries, how do we avoid unintentionally creating something that does more harm than good?

Writing on the topic for the Lausanne Committee, Swiss theologian Stefan Lindholm offers a helpful theological framework. Because we are fallen yet made in the image of God, he says, "we must reckon with both the dignity and depravity of human beings

due to the enormous impact technology can have."³ Technology reflects our depravity when it isolates us, dehumanizes us, or molds us "according to the patterns of this world" (Rom 12:2). Technology reflects our dignity, however, when it creates community, encourages wonder, and helps conform us to the image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18).

Technology is an extension of ourselves but can also shape us. To better understand how it does, those who study media suggest we think in terms of *hot* or *cold* media. Hot media is high-information and requires less of the user, while cold media is intentionally low-information so the user is encouraged to take an active role in its use.⁴ When we innovate technologies for the mission field, we should ask ourselves: Is this hot or cold? Does it encourage active participation in the life of God or passive receipt of biblical truth?

Miriam learned about this when her movement exploded across the Middle East. It began one night when she was scrolling TikTok and came across a video of another Muslim woman sharing the exact same experience as her; a dream of a man in white telling her to follow him. Before she knew it, the algorithm had figured out she wanted similar videos and introduced her to young men and women across the Muslim world all talking about the same dream.

Miriam decided to reach out. She created a Whatsapp group and invited as many of the people behind these TikTok videos as possible. Before long, she had assembled an array of people from multiple countries in the Middle East and North Africa. When she told them how this mysterious figure is Jesus, they wanted to know more. So, she sent them a link and told them to download Waha.

She could easily have sent a YouTube video, a podcast, or even a sermon from one of the best teachers in

1 David Herbert and Stefan Fisher-Høyrem, eds., *Social Media and Social Order* (Warsaw: De Gruyter Open, 2022), 111. doi.org/10.2478/9788366675612.

2 Samuel Musa and Samuel Bendett, *Islamic Radicalization in the United States: New Trends and a Proposed Methodology for Disruption*, Defense & Technology Paper no. 77 (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, September 2010). www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GOVPUB-D5_400-PURL-gpo55900/pdf/GOVPUB-D5_400-PURL-gpo55900.pdf.

3 Stefan Lindholm, "Technology and Missions: How Technology Is Changing Our Lives and Why It Matters for the Great Commission," *Lausanne Occasional Paper* (Lausanne Movement, 2025), lausanne.org/occasional-paper/technology-and-missions-how-technology-is-changing-our-lives-and-why-it-matters-for-the-great-commission#a-brief-theology-of-technology.

4 Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, 5th printing (New York: Signet Books, New American Library, 1964), 36–38.

the world, but these hot media would have required little of those in her Whatsapp group. The Waha app is intentionally designed to require a group of real people to sit together, read, discuss, and challenge one another to obey and share the Word of God. Not only does it require a great deal of participation from users, but it encourages the formation of communities around being and making disciples of Jesus. In this way, Waha lays the foundation for perhaps the most powerful form of cold media: the Church.

How Waha Makes It Easy to Catalyze CPM

David Garrison lists five key principles that contribute to the formation of church planting movements. They are:

1. Reproduction
2. Multiplication
3. Indigeneity
4. Churches Planting Churches
5. People Groups⁵

The people in Miriam's Whatsapp group found it easy to replicate DBS with Waha because of its plug-and-play design. Each lesson asks how the group will obey and share what they have learned, so it encourages multiplication from the start. This eventually leads to house churches that plant other house churches, until a movement overtakes an entire people group. Perhaps the biggest challenge for an app is to encourage indigeneity, but that is why Waha has been localized into over 40 languages with nearly 50 more on the way.

Over time, Miriam's groups matured. They made decisions to identify with Christ as a Jesus community, undergoing baptism as a mark of their faith. The disciples in these churches shared their faith and made other disciples until they, too, established themselves as churches. Before she knew it, Miriam found herself leading a multi-ethnic church planting movement spread across many nations in the Middle East and North Africa.

⁵ Garrison, David. *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (Monument, CO: WIGTake Resources, 2004), loc. 245.



There is one city, she said, where virtually all immigrants are involved in some form of DBS, whether using Waha or not. Another of her stories tells of an Islamic extremist who began reading the DBS content in Waha in secret. One day, he was discovered by his comrade, but instead of facing consequences, he led his comrade to faith. Another story from the movement tells of a witch doctor led to faith by her grandson and planting a church with everyone she used to curse.

Conclusion

Innovation doesn't just happen because we use a fancy new technology. It is a part of a continuous process of collective intelligence that brings the Body of Christ together to access the mind of Christ for the nations.⁶ We believe Waha is made better by users just like Miriam, who send in stories from all over the world and provide precious insights into new ways the tool can be made more effective. Some of the best ideas have arisen from the field among local believers like Miriam, who cannot reveal their actual identities due to security concerns, and for them we are truly grateful.

If you or your organization is looking to innovate new ways to use technology in Great Commission work, we hope our experience has provided meaningful insight. When we approach innovation with a healthy theology of tech, understand its formative effects on all of us, and encourage living discipleship communities as its bedrock, we are confident that the Body of Christ will see the most exciting and effective breakthroughs in our work to share the good news. MF

⁶ A.K. Amberg, "Success, Failure and the Mind of Christ: How Collective Intelligence Turns Our Losses into Victory," *Seedbed Journal* 36, no. 2 (August–September 2025), 118.



Bridging Faith, Family, and Culture

Redefining Community in a Hindu Ekklesia

By **SATYA CHAKRAPANI & ANDY BETTENCOURT**

Satya Chakrapani is a first-generation devotee of Christ and serial entrepreneur in Delhi, India. He engages deeply with Interserve Fellowship and is pursuing a doctorate in Hindu Christology at Fuller Seminary.

Andy Bettencourt is the Managing Editor of the *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* and co-host of the Missions Drop Podcast. Andy's passion is to research deeply to better understand the challenges of demonstrating the gospel.

My friend Satya shared his experience and journey with Christ and community on the Missions Drop Podcast and at the Rethinking Forum last year.¹ His testimony should be brought into conversation with Scott Walker's article "Between the First and the Next: The Dividing Line of Faith Within Hindu Families," which discusses the challenges of someone coming to Christ from a Hindu background.² Another friend of mine has also written about this challenge among Buddhists, "when our church gets one weak Christian, we get two hundred strong enemies from the new convert's social networks."³ Another colleague

quoted a Kabyle believer, "the presence of one [of my brothers] makes the other uncomfortable," stating the challenge of balancing relationships with the global body of Christ and one's community from another religious heritage.⁴ This challenge impacts most people from non-Christian religious communities, especially those with a more collectivist mindset. It is often brushed away as the suffering required to honor Christ, or the church is considered the new believer's new family, with the addition of a passage about the division that Christ brings to families.⁵

It is also assumed that when a person comes to follow Christ, they must begin attending a local "church," stop attending festivals and family celebrations, and publicly share their new identity with all their family.

1 Frontier Ventures, The Missions Drop Podcast, Episode: Indian Challenges in Following Christ with Satya Chakrapani, published July 25, 2025.

2 Scott Walker, "Between the First and the Next: The Dividing Line of Faith Within Hindu Families," *Mission Frontiers* 47, no. 5 (September/October 2025): 10.

3 Manuel Becker and Sila Sukcharoen-kittikhun, "Detoxifying Christianity Through Reimagining Ecclesiology: How Frontier Missiology Can Reform Harmful Practices and Cultivate a Healthier Global Church," *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 42, no. 1-4 (Forthcoming): 4, Quote's origin found here: Mejudhon, U. 2010. The ritual of reconciliation of Thai culture, in De Neui, P. (ed.): *Family and Faith in Asia: the Missional Impact of Social Networks*. (Pasadena: William Carey Library), 101.

4 From a PowerPoint Presentation by Patrick J.S. Brittden on his book: Brittden, Patrick J.S. *Algerian and Christian: Christian Theological Formation, Identity and Mission in Contemporary Algeria* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2025).

5 Luke 12:51-3 NIV, Matthew 10:32-8 NIV. These verses certainly deserve more attention than I can give them. I would recommend reading chapter 10 of the following book for an account of how one might approach these verses and concerns about faithfulness to God and family. Duerksen, Darren T. *Christ-Followers in Other Religions: The Global Witness of Insider Movements* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2022), 145-63.

The family receives this news with a mix of shock, anger, frustration, and grief. Is this mere rebellion, a short spiritual sojourn, or a deep betrayal of one's family, community, and heritage?

Oftentimes, the convert means none of these things but is stuck trying to understand their new reality, trying to communicate with their family and friends, and dealing with centuries of colonialism, miscommunication, and rash decision-making. Christians typically assume the family or other religious community simply wants nothing to do with their child, sibling, or cousin, but how do we respond when someone from our own community or family converts to something different from our heritage?

In Satya's story, we find someone who faithfully listened and continues to listen to God, the Scriptures, and family. Satya's journey to faith in Christ began with his agnostic Hindu father sharing his library with him and speaking wonderfully of the person of Jesus Christ.⁶ Satya eagerly read about this figure and came to trust him as his Lord. Thus, he began his journey into the church. Satya did not fit well there, though. The church required a change of habits and practices, as well as foreign terminology. There were even suggestions made that he should change his name due to its connection to Krishna.⁷ Satya refrained from this step but stayed present in the church, until his father approached him.

His father expressed appreciation for Satya's desire to follow Jesus but also requested that Satya would make room for family members who would visit him on Sundays.⁸ Satya agreed and began to explore ways of following Christ in community, while maintaining connection to his family and friends. He sought to love God and neighbor while honoring his familial and cultural heritage.

Satya's family is used to meeting in the evening or morning for something like a worship service, which was led by his father and grandfather. These are his people, and although they may not all follow Jesus, they have this sustained rhythm of coming together to celebrate and look to things higher than themselves.

So, what does one do when other people may lay claim to this time? And what does one do when their view of this higher reality changes?

Interestingly, the term *ekklesia*, which we commonly refer to as "church," initially was not a religious term. It reflected people gathering as a community for a collective purpose.⁹ For the early church, this allowed people to gather for worship, teaching, fellowship, food, and mutual support.¹⁰ It allowed people to gather for this new movement that sought to put Christ at the center of Jewish teachings and traditions. Our practices of *ekklesia* have evolved over the centuries, and many traditions have developed, but what does this mean for persons and groups where the *ekklesia* of Christ is not well known? How do they gather and bring their traditions of worship, fellowship, and support with them? What can they bring with them and what must be left behind?

Hindu communities are ripe with differences in culture, gathering styles, and traditions. Devotional gatherings are common in the morning, in the evening, and on other occasions. Thus, community and connectedness are closer to their hearts than the hearts of Western churchgoers. Traffic, work schedules, and individual preferences often prevent members of my church in Los Angeles from meeting with their brothers and sisters more than once every couple of weeks. Even the most committed gather together only twice a week in community, aside from those employed by the church. Therefore, this Hindu pattern of gathering is more frequent and communally centered than many Western church traditions. However, some may still wonder what exactly goes on in these Hindu gatherings? Can it qualify as "church"?

Satya's attempt at Hindu *ekklesia* does not stand alone. Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, among others, advocated for an expression that was both authentically biblical and authentically Hindu.¹¹ Muktipanth Sampraday gathered informally in the home and was led by senior devotees while maintaining social participation in

6 FV, *The Missions Drop: Indian Challenges in Following Christ*.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 www.ministryvoice.com/ekklesia-in-greek/

10 Acts 2:42–7, 4:32–7 NIV.

11 Boyd, Robin. *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1975), 58–85.


Hindu society.¹² K. Subba Rao envisioned an ekklesia modeled on New Testament principles but expressed within an Indian, Hindu cultural context.¹³ Others, too, have attempted this type of journey, but it has yet to be the mainstream form of following Christ in India. More popular forms often include conversion and adoption of the term “Christian,” followed by various challenges with navigating familial and communal relationships, including name change, no longer attending festivals, disassociation from the family, and even loss of vocation.

These examples helped provide Satya with fodder for how to have his community gather with him in the home. For Satya, there are distinct challenges in navigating this in north India (a less church region), as opposed to south India, where church traditions have existed for millennia. Along with these examples, Satya sought to examine early church practices from Acts 2, which included learning, fellowship, communal meals, prayer, freedom of cultural expression, in-home and public meetings, and combining worship, fellowship, and daily life.¹⁴

Satya further compared the early ekklesia in Acts to modern representations of Hindu ekklesias. Both gathered in homes, used local vernaculars, sung according to their people’s style (psalms and bhajans), supported one another socially, were led by respected elders, and had an expectant feel for the transcendent.¹⁵ Satya also spoke about how his *bhakti* (devotion) gift was given by his grandfather, even though he didn’t worship the God of the Bible. The same was true of his father who helped him develop the morning meditation. Thus, Satya received forms of worship from his community and family but steadily worked out ways to follow them after coming to faith in Christ. This Hindu ekklesia has kept Satya connected to his sociocultural surroundings and heritage, respecting the heritage that God gave him and other Hindus.

Lots of people in Satya’s community come to these *prabhat pheries* (early morning devotional processions), which are communal, participatory, and centered on singing devotional songs. This mirrors the early Christian ekklesia’s emphasis on communal worship, public witness, and shared spiritual life. This creates a more meaningful and useful life for the community of those hosting. In addition to the *sandhya sangati* (evening gatherings for worship or fellowship), Satya and others also host occasional gatherings in their homes. The occasional gatherings happen when people have extra time, or there is a festival, so there is both a consistent practice of communal worship, as well as a more occasional one.

For Satya, a Hindu ekklesia is a culturally Indian devotional expression that focuses on communal and personal spiritual experiences and reflects both early Church principles and the vision of pioneering Indian devotees. This devotional expression witnesses to Christ and represents dialogue and union with the divine simultaneously. It dissolves the distinction between self and the source of self, as Christ permeates every aspect of one’s being in this shameless *bhakti* of surrender. These Hindu ekklesias are born out of much struggle, pain, and discernment as most of their attendees try to walk the narrow road of loving both God and neighbor through honoring their parents and broader communal heritage in Christ.

One may ask what makes this practice an innovation. Although there are prior examples in history, building a community centered on Christ in India that does not fracture relationships with community and family is abnormal. Also, as mentioned previously, Hinduism has so many diverse traditions under its umbrella that many varied types of ekklesia ought to be formed. Some will have different patterns, practices, and rhythms, and use different instruments, languages, and songs, but what matters most is the local resonance. Does the family recognize this as something that represents and reflects who they are? Obviously, to some degree, this involves hearing from those who are not yet in Christ, as well as collective discussion and discernment from those in the community who are in Christ. Not every Hindu ekklesia will look like Satya’s, but there is much in this form, practice, and reflection for others attempting to practice authentic Hindu ekklesias in their contexts. 

12 Referenced by Satya Chakrapani in a presentation at Rethinking Forum, July 12, 2025.

13 Boyd, Robin. *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1975), 273–9.

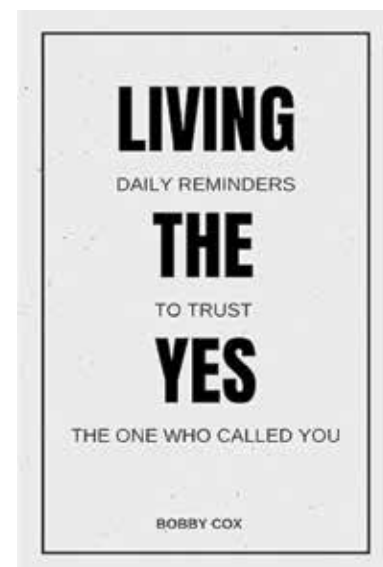
14 Acts 2, NIV. The notation of Acts 2 notes the speaking in other tongues as a part of the freedom of cultural expression. This continues with Philip’s sharing with the Samaritans and Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8, Peter’s sharing with Cornelius and his household in Acts 10, and the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15.

15 Acts 2, NIV.

Book Review: *Living the Yes*

By **MARK MATLOCK** | All Scripture references used are from the NIV.

Mark Matlock was the Executive Director of Urbana 2025 for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and a Senior Fellow at Barna. He is the founder of WisdomWorks. Mark coauthored *Faith for Exiles* with David Kinnaman and, most recently, authored *Faith for the Curious*.



A Devotional for the Long Haul

Bobby Cox’s *Living the Yes: Daily Reminders to Trust the One Who Called You* is written for people who have already crossed the first threshold—those who have said “yes” to God’s call—and now find themselves facing the quieter, more demanding work of sustaining that yes.

As the Executive Director of Urbana, I find myself constantly surrounded by first “yesses”: students who feel God tugging on their lives, sensing that obedience might be larger than a major, a job, or a ZIP code. Urbana exists to help the next generation discern God’s call and respond with faith and courage. But I also carry a quieter burden: I want them to be able to live that yes when it stops being cinematic.

This book is pointed at that exact problem.

Cox names that shift with disarming clarity: “You’re discovering that the missionary life is really about living the yes, every single day.”¹ That sentence alone captures a pastoral realism many of us learn the hard way. The “yes” is not a single heroic moment. It is a thousand ordinary choices made in kitchens, language lessons, team meetings, and seasons when the story feels like it is moving too slowly.

What the Book Is and How It’s Built

Living the Yes is written as a devotional anchored in eight themes that map closely to the terrain of mission life: Calling, Surrender, Learner, Perseverance, Suffering, Isolation, Discernment, and Unanswered Prayers. The format is straightforward: daily readings with Scripture, a short reflection, and prompts for prayer and journaling, supported by group-session guides that make the material easy to use in small groups.

That simple structure is part of the book’s strength. It keeps returning the reader to Jesus with enough specificity that the words land in real life, not just ideal life. Cox calls the chapters “rhythms to return to again and again,” not boxes to check.¹ As the director of Urbana, that language resonates. Many young leaders want a linear path—step one, step two, step three—while real discipleship is often cyclical. This book refuses to pretend otherwise.

The Daily Yes and the Spirituality of Small Obedience

If there is a heartbeat chapter, it may be “The Daily Yes.” Cox frames surrender not as a one-time altar moment, but a repeated act of trust that continues after the adrenaline wears off. He writes, “You are not responsible for the results—only for the response.”² That line is both freeing and confronting, because it names a temptation that shows up everywhere in ministry: the subtle belief that our outcomes justify our obedience.

At Urbana, we regularly talk about calling in terms of faithfulness, discernment, and next steps. Students are hungry for meaning, but they are also wary of hype and manipulation. A devotional that re-centers obedience over optics, and presence over performance, is a gift. Cox’s “daily yes” is not romantic. It is pastoral. It dignifies the kind of faith that looks unimpressive to an audience but precious to God.

¹ Cox, Bobby. *Living the Yes: Daily Reminders to Trust the One Who Called You* (Phoenix, AZ: Bobby Cox Self-published, 2025), 1.

² Cox, 22.

Faithfulness, Fruitfulness, and the Tyranny of Metrics

One of the most helpful tensions Cox addresses is the desire to see fruit. In missions and ministry, numbers can become the basis of our worth—sometimes without anyone ever saying that out loud. Cox does not demonize evaluation, but he does re-order it: “Your assignment is faithfulness. The fruit is God’s.”³

As a conference leader, I am not allergic to measurement. We count registrations, track engagement, and evaluate outcomes because stewardship matters. But if we are not careful, we form leaders who can only endure when the dashboard looks good. Cox pushes against that formation. He reminds the reader that God’s timelines and definitions are not ours, and he pulls examples from Scripture to normalize long obedience in obscure places.

For sending churches and mission agencies, this is not just a personal spirituality issue—it is a culture issue. We must build ecosystems that celebrate faithful presence, not just visible wins. Cox’s framing can help re-humanize workers who feel like they are failing simply because their labor is hidden.

Rejoicing Anyway and Worship as Defiance

The section on unanswered prayers is especially strong, because it does not rush to resolve pain. Cox acknowledges that there are seasons when the only honest move left is worship—not because things improved, but because God remains God. In one of the closing readings he writes, “Rejoicing anyway is the missionary’s act of defiance.”⁴

That phrase captures something I have seen repeatedly among resilient leaders: Worship becomes a form of resistance against cynicism, despair, and self-protection. Cox is careful here. “Rejoicing anyway” is not denial; it is not spiritual bypassing. It is a decision to anchor joy in the character of God rather than in the kindness of circumstances. For leaders in hard places—or leaders carrying grief while still showing up—this is the kind of language that can keep someone from feeling ashamed of their lament.

³ Cox, 42.

⁴ Cox, 96.

“Keep Saying Yes” and a Theology of Continuance

The closing charge is simple and fitting. Cox writes, “Keep saying yes—not because it’s easy, but because He is worthy.”⁵ It is not a pressure tactic. It reads more like a blessing spoken over someone who is tired, faithful, and still on the road.

From an Urbana vantage point, I can imagine this book being used in at least three settings:

1. Pre-field formation (students, interns, apprentices) to translate calling from an idea into practices.
2. On-field team rhythms (weekly or monthly) because the group sessions are already built.
3. Sending communities who want to understand what they are actually asking of workers when they celebrate “the call.”

Why This Book Matters Right Now

We live in a moment when many leaders are deconstructing unhealthy models of ministry, questioning motivations, and trying to rebuild trust without losing conviction. *Living the Yes* is not a manifesto, and it is not an academic work. It is a companion for the road—a steady voice reminding workers that discipleship is often ordinary, repetitive, and deeply shaped by the presence of God.

If Urbana exists, in part, to help students discern where God is at work and what he is asking them to do, then devotionals like this help ensure that the “yes” we celebrate on the front end becomes a “yes” that can be lived with integrity on the back end. Cox has offered something simple, sturdy, and timely.⁶

Note: You can find *Living the Yes: Daily Reminders to Trust the One Who Called You* on Amazon. 📖

⁵ Cox, 117.

⁶ Portions of this article were developed with the assistance of generative artificial intelligence (OpenAI’s ChatGPT). The author reviewed, edited, and assumes full responsibility for the final content.



Perspectives Student Questioned by the FBI!

By **GREG H. PARSONS**

Greg H. Parsons and his wife have been on staff with Frontier Ventures since 1982. They live in Southern California.

I recently returned from an international trip at the invitation of a mission agency. I serve on their corporate board, and they are launching new leadership training for field leaders.

It is always a joy to meet these field-based, experienced leaders. Over the years, I've met many of these folks at events or when they joined the mission.

My wife and I have served with Frontier Ventures since 1982 but have not lived cross-culturally. These brothers and sisters teach me so much about least-reached peoples where they serve. Much of what I write here in each issue of *MF*, grows out of experiences with people like this. Because of that, I often tell people I know a little about a lot of peoples and places. Field workers, like those I was with recently, know a lot about one place or people. The folks here this week have served in the Middle East, North Africa, or Türkiye for decades.

One of the brothers here is a younger leader who I had met briefly when he joined the mission as a single. Later, he married. Now, they serve in North Africa.

We were talking at a meal and he turned to me and blurted out, "I'm here because of Perspectives!" Here's his story:

In the early 2000s, he was working with a pharmaceutical company and was attending a large, well-known church in the American South. Wanting to get more involved because of his faith, he went to the missions pastor and said, "There must be something more," meaning, "What can I do to reach people for Jesus?" The pastor told him to take the Perspectives course.

The one thing that stuck with him from the class was when someone said he should reach out to refugees—go and be a friend. He said, "OK," and started to meet with several Muslim men.

A little later, the FBI called him at work. They wanted to talk to him in the next hour! He wondered if something

with his pharmaceutical company was not right. Soon, several nicely dressed, armed agents greeted him and gave him their FBI business cards. They wanted to know why he was meeting with these Muslim men. He said he wanted to share Jesus with them, which he proceeded to do with the agents (as he does with anyone he can). Apparently, the men he was befriending were connected to a man who was being watched by the FBI.

Nothing more happened, except that he sent them Christmas cards!

But his story continues. He went to serve in a Muslim context as a single man but soon realized he couldn't continue to do this work without a wife! So, he came back to the U.S. and signed up at Called Together, www.calledtogether.us (a relationship/dating website designed for those with a mission heart). He met a gal who was already in full-time ministry. Now, they are serving in North Africa and have three kids. They have an effective ministry there, and their team is growing and multiplying in the region.

When he shared, I immediately thought of my own experience. When I was in high school, I became more serious about my relationship with the Lord. I was coming to church and taking notes. Then, in college, I felt drawn to serve more seriously. Thankfully, the leaders were thrilled. Since I was in college, I ended up serving high school students and on the Missions Committee of the church before heading to seminary.

Probably, as a reader of *MF*, you are already involved in a mission-focused ministry to others. Still, I ask myself if I need to take another step in my faith journey. It may lead to international service, but we don't have to wait for that to get involved spreading his kingdom. As we obey him, God puts us into the lives of those who need him.

Who is he putting you near now? 📌



Challenges of Growing Deep Friendships on the Field

By **IRENE SPRINGFIELD** (Pseudonym)

Irene Springfield and her husband have been field workers in North Africa for eight years. Their ministry is focused on sharing the gospel with high-identity Muslims. They have three children.

I think one of the biggest challenges of adulthood is making friends. Sure, it's easy to have lots of acquaintances, or "friends" on social media, but it's more challenging to build deep, life-giving relationships. My husband and I call them "2 a.m. friends"—people who would pick up the phone if you called them in the middle of the night.

I had a handful of those friends when we lived in the US. Mostly, they were other young moms from our church. We connected over stories of juggling full-time jobs, volunteering with the youth ministry, and raising toddlers. It was so hard to say goodbye to them when we moved, but I assumed we'd find ways to keep in touch and that I'd easily form new friendships on the field.

When we first moved, I was so caught up in the adventure of starting a new life overseas, I didn't feel the lack of close friends right away. We were meeting new, interesting people all the time, and our friends and relatives back home were just a phone call away!

But over time, those phone calls started to feel complicated. I couldn't just share a quick update from my week without providing lots of context about people, places, and cultural norms. So many of the things I was struggling with—language gaffes, cultural faux pas, helping my kids adapt—were things they just couldn't relate to. In addition, the huge time difference made it difficult to schedule times to connect.

Of course, our teammates became our good friends. And not just our friends, but also our accountability partners, babysitters, coworkers, and church—a tall order for a group of six or eight adults with jobs, families, and responsibilities of their own! While our teammates were a critical part of our support network, over time we learned that it wasn't reasonable to expect them to provide for all our relational needs.

We've also made some wonderful local friends over the years. Our closest local friends—initially our language teachers and house helpers—are the ones who helped us

when we were linguistic and cultural “babies.” They were our guides as we learned to function in our new home culture, teaching us how to take public transportation, translating our kids’ homework assignments, and explaining the new phrases we heard on the street. There’s something incredibly vulnerable about entering a culture with the understanding of a child, and that vulnerability is great soil for friendship to grow!

But while our local friends have been a huge blessing, there are aspects of our lives that we can’t share with them. We live in a Muslim country that does not grant visas to missionaries. My husband’s work provides us with a way to live here legally and an identity that makes sense to our local friends, but I can’t tell them about the challenges I face as a team leader or my struggle to balance family and ministry.

Our sending organization has always encouraged us to collaborate with other “God’s team” members in our region, but we were cautious about making friends with other expats at the beginning. We were warned about how easy it can be to fill up your calendar with birthday parties and holiday gatherings with other foreigners, leaving little time for connecting with locals. So, at the beginning, we kept our friend circle small, focusing mostly on our relationships with our team and locals.

Then, four years into our life overseas, a family on our team who had been our closest friends had to move back to their passport country. Their kids were around the same age as ours, and we were used to showing up at their house on a random evening to share leftovers, play games, and let our kids run wild. We were devastated when they left. Even though we had other teammates who were kind, lovely people, we felt the loss of close friends who were walking through the same phase of life as us.

Just a month later, at a leadership training, the speakers talked about the importance of having relationships characterized by openness, vulnerability, and authenticity. If we didn’t have those relationships, they said, we should look at our existing circle of relationships, even those who weren’t in close proximity, and take intentional steps to pursue them. Get creative, they said, and pray!

We took their advice and started to look for ways to expand our circle, and we prayed for the Lord to send us the kind of deep friendships we longed for. And he provided for us in so many ways!

At a conference, my husband made a friend who lives in another North African country and shares his love of mountain biking. At another conference a year later, they spent their free day biking together, and we started having dates with him and his wife over Zoom. He also started connecting with Spanish speakers in the city. He was born in South America, and it gave him a chance to practice his first language and share his beloved yerba maté. We also decided to try out more clubs and activities for our kids, which helped us connect with other parents in our area.

I started having coffee dates with another mom in our city about once a month. We come from different sending organizations and have different philosophies about how to do ministry, but we have kids around the same ages, and we share a love of good pastries and long conversations. We talk about the benefits and challenges of local schools versus homeschooling, how to plan meals with local produce and limited convenience foods, and how to handle our kindergarten sons’ boundless energy.

I can’t tell you how life-giving these conversations are for me. Not only is my friend full of good ideas, but just knowing someone else is wrestling with the same small, daily challenges somehow makes them feel lighter. I’m able to laugh about the things that had me in tears the day before.

As workers, it’s easy to take on a do-it-yourself approach to life on the field. But just like it takes a proverbial village to raise kids, it takes a community to ensure that we are healthy and thriving on the field, and it takes time, effort, and creativity to build that community. But it’s time and effort well spent. Good friends are God’s grace and mercy to us on the field, and we should be open to both ask him for them and to receive the gift.

✎



Gen Z, Work, and the Search for Purpose

By **JEEMIN HAN** | All Scripture references taken from the NIV.

Jeemin Han is a Missions Innovation Fellow at Frontier Commons and a graduate student at Dallas Theological Seminary, where he focuses on missions and innovation for the next generation.

Calling, passion, career. These are words that weighed heavily on my mind when I was a college student, trying to choose a career. It's been especially hard in the past six months as I returned from the mission field eager to make my way back. I've been holding so many questions about what that would look like and what kind of work I would do.

There is a tension regarding work. On one side of the world, we have hustle culture which tells us we must grind our life away. On another side of the tension, we have people who say that work is work.¹ How do we live in the middle of this tension? We know that work is not just work but something that God has created us to do. Think about before the fall, how Adam was tending the garden. And yet work is not our whole identity, it is not what defines us. Jesus was told by God the Father before he had done a single thing, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased" (Matt 3:17). There are some ideas about work that are prevalent in our culture, ideas that I will try to push back against.

¹ Seth Burt. "Mondays Matter As Much As Sundays." (blog), January 3, 2026 sethburt.com/mondays-matter-as-much-as-sundays/.

Idea #1

What we do is who we are.

Our identity is not in our work. Let me just say that. Life is more than titles, success, or money. After I came back from Japan, I felt useless and worthless. In Japan, I had so much purpose in what I was doing. I was useful to the people around me and my whole life was dedicated to introducing people to God. And suddenly, I came back and was unemployed. Who would've thought that work could become an idol for missionaries? When you're on the mission field, your work becomes everything, and it's hard to have a life outside of that. It was a journey to see God strip away my tight grip on defining myself by my work.

Idea #2

We must follow our passion.

So many times, I hear this piece of advice: "Just follow your passion." Here's the thing, when you just follow what you're passionate about, you can start to become a slave to your passions. Every time there was something I was interested in, I wanted to see how I could turn it into a career. I became engrossed with figuring

out how I could use my skills for God's kingdom in my own twisted way, not God's. Sometimes God will lead us into things or jobs we're not inherently good at but will teach us an important lesson. I spent a year working on campuses sharing the gospel with students in Japan. I wasn't exactly passionate about cold-contact evangelism, but God used that experience in my second year as I served on the digital-strategies team. Those times talking to students proved invaluable as we came up with strategies to reach them digitally.

Idea #3

We have one calling for our lives.

When I felt called to go onto the mission field to Japan, I was set on making it my life's calling, to live at least the next 20 years of my life there. Even as I moved back to America, there was this constant pressure I put on myself to get back to Japan because that's where I thought I could serve God best. Let's get something clear: God's calling is to salvation, and his guidance is usually to the next thing, not for our whole lives. In a very real sense, God doesn't care about what we do as much as he cares about who we're becoming. Why put pressure on ourselves to figure out what God has not yet revealed?

Idea #4

Work is work. A job is a job.



For those of us who swing to the other side of the pendulum, we also need to be reminded that God made us to work; in fact, he designed us for it. For many of us, work can just be a 9–5 clock-in, clock-out regimen. How can we look towards finding deeper value in the work that we do, seeing it as holy and as the kind of culture building that God has called us to? Whether you are a pastor, accountant, or construction worker, your work is valuable.

Closing Thoughts

I'm coming down from a high, from seeing that work is everything, from trying to force my way back to the mission field. I'm still on a journey of figuring out what's next for me. I'm in seminary and working for some ministries, but nothing long term is set in stone. There is something freeing about just living without worry of the future, of creating and doing without worrying how I can turn it into a career.

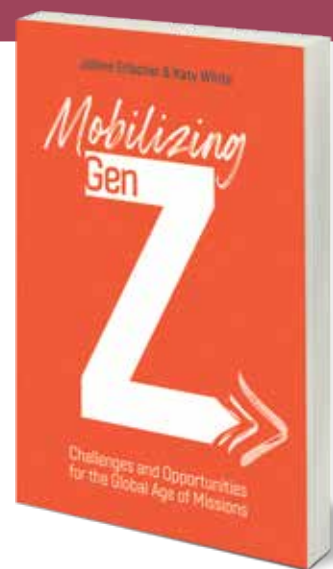
The search for calling is ultimately a search for fulfillment and joy. No matter how much I try to follow the line of my life and figure out what fulfills me, I can't control it. There are life circumstances, health issues, loved ones who fall sick that will affect us in devastating ways. In the end, it's God who provides a sense of calling and fulfillment in life. God is over all of it and sees all of it.

I often think about the example of Jesus. Jesus, before he ever started his ministry, was a carpenter. I'm sure he had bad days as well as good days. Maybe he spent his years taking care of his brothers and sisters (Joseph is absent in Jesus' adult stories). I'm sure it was not glamorous and probably mundane much of the time. An overwhelming amount of Jesus' life was spent working in something that wasn't his "calling," or his "purpose," or his "passion." I don't know if it's just me, but I feel a lot of pressure to figure out what my calling is and to start killing it. The gods of our day and age are the successful, the powerful, the beautiful. Our Savior was never any of these while he lived on this earth.

My encouragement is for those who don't know where their lives are going: Don't worry about your whole future. What is one step of faith that you can take? And while you're in the waiting, how can you be a little more like Jesus?  

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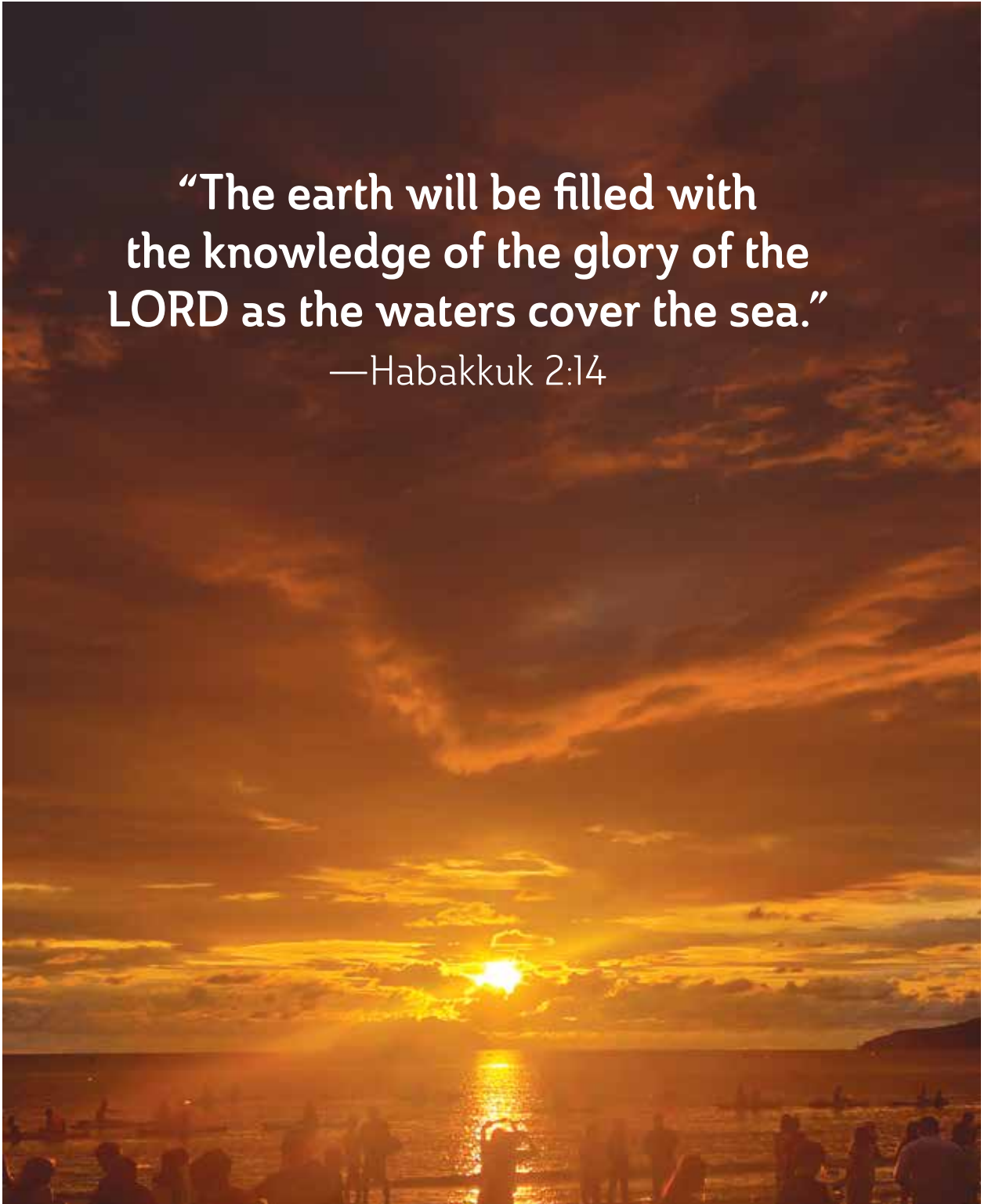
Color the World: Innovation in Missions

Artwork by **Kody Friesen**, an artist who especially enjoys using Middle Eastern and Persian art forms to highlight the beauty of Jesus. He and his wife Amy are creators who have spent 20 years among Middle Eastern communities. They now live in Canada with their four children. You can find their work at www.akfriesen.com.



Final Reflection: Holiday at the Beach

“The earth will be filled with
the knowledge of the glory of the
LORD as the waters cover the sea.”
—Habakkuk 2:14



Tanjung Aru Beach, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia, looking westward across the South China Sea. Labour Day holiday in Malaysia (May 1, 2025). Photo credit: **Betty Lau**

FINAL REFLECTION

Images marked with an asterisk (*) come from the International Mission Board (IMB) and are used with permission. Thank you, IMB!

MAY

■ 1 Pa'a in Nigeria

Pa'a boys undergo initiation with circumcision, seclusion, and a bravery test involving a masked ancestor, followed by a celebration. Marriages are arranged. The groom labors a year for the bride's family, pays a bride price, then takes his wife home. Interfaith tensions hinder outreach.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Psalm 90:1

- Pray that today's people group will make the Lord their "home" forever.
- Pray for God to bring peace between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria.
- Pray for the Lord to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the Pa'a, and that they will respond with gratitude and faith.
- Pray for the Lord to send dreams and visions to Pa'a leaders so they will open the door for Jesus to enter their hearts.
- Pray for the Lord to send out Holy Spirit-anointed workers to the Pa'a.

■ 2 Gangai in Nepal

The Gangai were once potters. Now they farm and weave within joint families, retaining distinct dress, and customs. Though Nepali Scripture exists, entrenched Hindu practices—ancestral, village, and household deity worship with Buddhist influence—keep them unreached. These traditions meet emotional needs but not salvation or abundant life in Christ.

So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom. Psalm 90:12

- Pray that this knowledge will lead many from today's people group to seek the Savior.
- Pray that key members of the Gangai families become followers of Christ and then lead other family members to the Savior.
- Pray that God's Holy Spirit will lead them into lives free from fear into lives of faith in Jesus Christ.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit of the one true God will enable them to experience his full payment of the penalty for their sins.

■ 3 Ilavan in India

Many Ilavans farm or tap palms for toddy; others work in trades and professions. Their 1903 caste association honors Narayana Guru's motto, "one caste, one religion, one god." Pluralistic beliefs dull awareness of Christ's uniqueness and holiness.

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. Psalm 91:1

- Pray for many from today's people group to find rest in their relationship with the Lord.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger that will lead Ilavan elders to the cross.
- Pray that loving and dedicated workers will come to the Ilavan.
- Pray for Ilavan disciples who will make more disciples.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to do miracles among them, convincing many that Christ is the King of kings.

■ 4 Hindu Jat in India and Pakistan

Jats are proud, influential, and prosperous, known for toughness, their control of land, thrift, and education. This self-reliance, combined with the notion that Christianity is for the "downcast," keeps many hearts closed to the gospel.

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! Psalm 95:1–2

- Pray that many from today's people group will sing joyfully to the Lord, the rock of their salvation!
- Pray that Jats will have a spiritual hunger and seek Jesus Christ.
- Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers filled with the power and the fruit of the Holy Spirit to serve the Jats.
- Pray for a movement to Christ to emerge among every Jat clan and community.

■ 5 Djogorame in Mali

Remote, close-knit Djogorame communities rely on farming and herding. Elders hold authority and ceremonies mark life and agricultural cycles. Sahel hardship and isolation preserve culture, but limit healthcare and access to Christian workers.

Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth! Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Psalm 96:1–2

- Let many from today's people group sing a new song of praise to the Lord.
- Pray that the hearts of the Djogorame would be stirred to hunger after God and to drink of the living water.
- Pray for family-based movements to Christ to transform Djogorame society, blessing them spiritually and economically.
- Pray for the Lord to move in the hearts of believers to sacrifice their lives to Jesus Christ, our one true Savior.

■ 6 Tai Pao in Vietnam and Laos

Among many tribes, Tai Pao blend animism and Theravada Buddhism. They seek lucky numbers through monks and mediums, and view believing in Jesus as dishonoring their heritage. Lottery fixation and cultural pride distract from seeking God; limited gospel exposure hasn't been taken seriously.

The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory. Psalm 97:6

- Pray that this will be the year when today's people sees His righteousness and glory.
- Ask God to send workers who will communicate the unsurpassed greatness and supremacy of God, and who will be able to interpret dreams God gives the Tai Pao.
- Pray for the eyes and hearts of the Tai Pao tribe to be turned away from superficial wealth and opened toward the glorious, eternal riches of Christ Jesus.



■ 7 Lampung Sungkai in Indonesia

The Lampung prize coffee production, consensus leadership, and strong clan identity, avoiding intermarriage with larger neighbors. Seeking their own regency, they remain tied to Islam, and few will consider the cross as the only way to the Father.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! Psalm 100:4

- Pray for this people group to enter His courts with joyful praise!
- Pray for evangelists to share culturally appropriate Christian music with the Lampung Sungkai.
- Pray for the Lord to send dreams and visions to the Lampung Sungkai, guiding them to the cross.
- Pray for them to have the spiritual hunger it takes to embrace Christ, no matter what the cost.

■ 8 Katla in Sudan

In the Nuba Mountains, Katla villages are clan-led by elders, with Islamic identity shaped early through mosques and Koranic schools. A history of them needing to seek refuge fosters mistrust of outsiders and entrenches barriers to gospel access.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Psalm 103:1

- Pray that the Lord will raise up many from this people group who will worship Him with their whole hearts.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to give Katla elders and clan leaders dreams of Jesus as King of kings.
- Pray for an enormous harvest for the Katla, and that they will understand God's provision for their needs.
- Pray for a Holy Spirit-directed movement to Christ among the Katla which will lead them to God's abundant blessings.

■ 9 Hindu Kachera in India

Lower-middle status Kacheras were traditionally peddlers and bangle makers. They have caste councils to make important decisions. Sons often pursue higher education. Rituals aim for moksha (spiritual release) through works. With no known believers, they must hear the gospel from distrusted outsiders.

Who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases ... Psalm 103:3

- Pray that this people group will flee to the Lord who alone can forgive sin.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger that will give the Kachera an openness to the teachings and blessings of Jesus Christ and a move away from idol worship.
- Pray for a movement to Christ that will soon bless the Kachera.
- Pray for the Lord to send workers to the Kachera and to share with them both the message of Jesus and His love for them.

■ 10 Muslim Jat in India and Pakistan

Prosperous farmers once esteemed as a “martial race,” Jats often prefer sons and prioritize boys’ education. Islam is a strong barrier; influential gatekeepers must see Christ as best for families and clans.

As far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us. Psalm 103:12

- Pray for this people group to find forgiveness and relationship with the Lord Almighty.
- Pray for Jat Muslims to receive the spiritual hunger necessary to seek and find the Savior with gracious help from the Holy Spirit.
- Pray also for the Lord to be welcomed by entire Muslim Jat families and clans so that they can enjoy the blessings of being children of the King of kings.
- Pray for a movement of Jesus to heal and strengthen Jat communities.

■ 11 Sikh Jat in India

Sikh Jats are proud, tradition keeping communities rooted in heritage, agriculture, and social influence. Even abroad they preserve language, customs, and identity through Sikh schools and institutions. Many view Christianity as a Western religion, making them hesitant to consider the gospel.

But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children’s children... Psalm 103:17

- Pray that this people group will understand that they can enjoy the eternal love of the Lord.
- Pray that the Lord will bless Sikh Jat families so richly that they recognize that He alone is worthy of praise and worship.
- Ask for loving workers who will live among them and patiently share Christ until there are Sikh Jat disciples ready to disciple others.
- Pray for God to prepare their hearts to hear and believe the gospel, so that whole families and communities might come to faith in Jesus.

■ 12 Ghulam in Pakistan and Bangladesh

The Ghulam trace their history to Mughalera servants and caretakers and today often face poverty while working in agriculture and small trades. Because of their location in Pakistan and Bangladesh, they have little access to Christ followers who can bring them a true understanding of Jesus.

From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work. You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that He may bring forth food from the earth. Psalm 104:13–14

- Pray for this people group to be amazed at His abundant blessings!
- Pray for people with a servant heart who know what it is to be thought of as lesser than others, to go to the Ghulams.
- May they find creative ways for them to understand that Jesus is the Servant King for all nations.

■ 13 Lao Krang in Thailand

Descendants of Lao prisoners of war, the Lao Krang farm staple crops and raise livestock. Youth increasingly move to cities and intermarry, but strong Theravada Buddhist identity and lack of Scripture in their dialect keep them unreached.

O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. Psalm 104:24

- Pray for God to speak to the hearts of members of this people group through the many wonders of nature.
- Ask God to raise up Lao Krang who are more desirous to know the truth than to stay on the broad road.
- Ask God to send loving, committed workers to the Lao Krang soon.
- Pray that the Lao Krang would no longer be hidden away from the influence of Christ.
- Pray for openness to spiritual truth.
- Pray for outreach workers to approach with humility and respect for Lao Krang heritage.

■ 14 Muslim Bhand in India and Nepal

The Bhand, historically folk performers, now hold diverse jobs. They remain Sunni Muslim, emphasize Ramadan practices, and have low literacy. Most live in Uttar Pradesh, where opposition to Christianity is strong. Oral, storybased approaches are essential for communicating Scripture.

Who can utter the mighty deeds of the LORD, or declare all his praise? Psalm 106:2

- May many from this people group not be able to praise Him enough!
- Pray for families of believers to grow spiritually and reproduce churches.
- Pray for a chain reaction of families reaching other families to develop God's kingdom in Uttar Pradesh.
- Pray for grace and truth to expand into the Bhand society.
- May Christian believers love and serve the Muslim Bhand community.

■ 15 Dampelas in Indonesia

The Dampelas live by farming, hunting, and crafts. They are shifting from their traditional language to Indonesian. Though Muslims, many retain animistic beliefs in spirits and sacred places. They rely on amulets and supernatural objects for protection, which reveals deep spiritual needs.

Both we and our fathers have sinned; we have committed iniquity; we have done wickedness. Psalm 106:6

- Pray that many family leaders from this people group will understand that their people are sinful just like the Israelis, and that they need to seek the Lord for forgiveness.
- Please pray for a greater number of evangelists and church planters to be established throughout Sulawesi.
- Pray for workers to have a spiritual harvest among the Dampelas.
- Pray for spiritual hunger among the Dampelas.

■ 16 Bezhta in Russia and Georgia

The Bezhta live in a remote, mountainous region of Dagestan (Russia) and Georgia. Nearly all are Sunni Muslims. Only two books of the Bible exist in their language—Luke and Proverbs—thanks to a “man of peace.” Violence, geography, and cultural suspicion hinder outside Christian witness.

Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He has redeemed from trouble. Psalm 107:2

- Pray for this people group to call out to the Lord to redeem them from sin, their main enemy.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to direct and empower the few Bezhta Christ followers, using them to establish His presence in their families and villages.
- Pray for the living and active Word of God to reach the hearts of the Bezhta.
- Pray for the audio Proverbs in their language to be widely circulated, heeded, and embraced.
- Pray for the Lord to anoint, protect, and empower someone to lead the Bezhta into the ways of Christ.



■ 17 Hindu Jogi in India and Bangladesh

The Jogi emerged from yogic traditions and include mendicants involved in fortunetelling and ritual practices. Spread widely across India and divided by language groups, they will require multiple outreach efforts. Their Hindu identity is deeply tied to community belonging.

I will give thanks to you, O LORD, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. Psalm 108:3

- Pray that God will raise up thankful people from among this people.
- Pray that God would call and anoint loving Christian workers to share the gospel with the Jogi.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to touch the hearts of the Jogi in such a way that they may understand the need to accept and submit to the risen Christ.
- Pray for the Lord to raise up Jogi fellowships that will start new fellowships in the years to come.

■ 18 Hindu Kachhia in India

Traditionally vegetarian farmers, the Kachhia worship numerous Hindu deities and cremate their dead with ashes placed in the Ganges. Younger generations in cities show increasing nominalism. With 25 languages used in the community, ministry must be multilingual and flexible.

Full of splendor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever. Psalm 111:3

- Pray for many from this people group to find this God whose righteousness never fails.
- Pray for improving literacy levels among this community, especially among the younger people.
- Pray for the youth to gain a desire to learn more about Jesus.
- Pray for the Lord to call, equip, and thrust out workers who will disciple the Kachhias in Christ's ways.

■ 19 Aghori in India

Aghori Sadhus honor Shiva through extreme practices involving cremation ashes, bones, and haunted sites. Their fear-driven devotion and high status foster spiritual pride, making openness to the gospel difficult without a profound spiritual breakthrough.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever! Psalm 111:10

- Pray for fear of the Lord and wisdom to come to this people group.
- Pray that the spiritual bondage that the Aghori Sadhus live under would be broken.
- Pray for spiritual truth to break into their lives.
- Pray that God would equip and prepare the right believers to take Christ to the Aghori Sadhu community.

■ 20 Ternate in Indonesia

Ternate is known for its cloves, nutmeg, coconuts, rice, and skilled sailors. Abundant resources remain underdeveloped. Most Ternate residents are Sunni Muslim and believe they will be judged by their deeds and Koranic knowledge, making salvation by faith difficult to grasp.

From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised! The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens! Psalm 113:3–4

- Pray for peoples from all over the world to discover His glory and mercy.
- Pray for the Lord to send his ambassadors from nearby islands.
- Pray for the Ternate to have the spiritual hunger it takes to find out about Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection victory.
- Pray for Ternate disciples to make more disciples.

■ 21 Gondhali in India

The Gondhali, once oil-pressers, now farm or run small businesses. Women excel in traditional needlework. They maintain seven clans and worship with drums, honoring deities like Khandoba. Christian witness in Maharashtra suffers from internal church divisions, limiting outreach to groups like the Gondhali.

Praise the LORD, all nations! Extol him, all peoples!
Psalm 117:1

- Pray that some from this people group will praise Him this year.
- Pray they will be drawn to gospel radio and the *Jesus Film*. Pray they will listen and understand.
- Pray the Gondhali will encounter Christian believers who are real disciples of Jesus, people who live out their faith, and are able to help the Gondhali also become disciples of Christ.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Gondhali that will bless all of Maharashtra.

■ 22 Bauchi in Nigeria

The Bauchi speak multiple dialects. They farm staple crops and marry within their community. Few Christians exist, none with Scripture in their heart language, resulting in a slow response to the gospel and little church growth. Many vibrant Christ followers in Nigeria can reach out to the Bauchi.

This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24

- Praise the Lord that you have the privilege of praying for others to rejoice in Him.
- Pray for an abundant harvest this year as a testimony of God's power and goodness.
- Pray for the Bauchi Christians to become literate in the language they understand best, so they'll be ready to read the scripture when it comes.
- Pray that audio recordings of the Bible will be made for the Bauchis.

■ 23 Taznatit Berber in Algeria

The Taznatit, part of the Berber peoples, are skilled artisans. Women weave and make pots, while men work wood, metal, and fine needlework. Farming remains central. With few Christians nearby and Islamic thought unchallenged, they have little exposure to the gospel.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
Psalm 119:105

- Pray that many from this people group will discover this to be true for their own communities.
- Pray for Taznatit Berbers to put their faith and hope in Christ, paving the way for a movement to Christ.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger among Taznatit Berbers that will lead them to the cross and the empty grave no matter what the cost.
- Pray for workers to go to the Taznatits and find people who will welcome them into their communities.

■ 24 Hindu Kahar in South Asia

The Kahar, possibly predating Aryan arrivals, claim descent from Brahma and are a warrior caste. Traditionally palanquin and water carriers, they hold beliefs unlike the biblical worldview. Concentrated in Uttar Pradesh, they have little Christian witness and few workers to reach them.

Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. Psalm 127:1

- Pray that this people group understands that all their efforts are worthless unless they submit themselves to the Lord.
- Pray that the Kahars would understand that Jesus desires to bless their families and clans, not harm them.
- Pray for the ability to raise their standard of living and be ready for the challenges of the 21st century.
- Pray for bold and loving workers to go to them until they have their own movement to Christ.

■ 25 Kapu in India

The Kapu, meaning “protector,” span agriculture, trade, and modern professions. Politically active and traditionally minded, many fear Christianity will harm family identity. They need to see Jesus not as a threat but as one who strengthens family and community.

Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways! Psalm 128:1

- Pray that many from this people group will have the joy that comes from fearing and following the Lord.
- Pray that many will see Jesus not as a threat to their heritage, but as the only Savior who brings unity, dignity, and lasting life.
- Pray that God will pour out his blessings on Kapu families, bringing healing and hope to homes and communities.
- Ask the Lord to raise up a movement to Christ that touches both rural villages and urban centers where Kapus live.

■ 26 Muslim Sonar in Pakistan

A small Muslim branch of the broader Sonar community, they are traditionally jewelers and craftsmen. Others are merchants and landowners. Often middle-class, they may feel self-sufficient. Works-based views of salvation limit openness to Christ.

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope... Psalm 130:5

- Pray that they will put all their trust in Him alone!
- Pray for humility within the Sonar community to recognize their need for forgiveness.
- Ask God to reveal his provision for salvation through Jesus Christ to the Muslim Sonars.
- Intercede for spiritually open hearts and divine encounters that lead them to seek truth beyond cultural or religious traditions.
- Pray for the Lord to send dreams of the Risen Christ to Muslim leaders and the Sonar community.

■ 27 Tsun-Lao in Vietnam

The Tsun-Lao live in northern mountain villages along rivers and roads, often in stilt houses. They are assimilated into Vietnamese culture, and village life centers on the Buddhist temple. Few Christians live near them to share the gospel.

For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Psalm 135:5

- Pray that they will understand that there is no god as great as God, the one who gives us all we need.
- Pray for Tsun-Lao in Vietnam to have receptive hearts, and that they would encounter the King of kings.
- Pray that movements to Christ would explode, as followers make followers, and that they would place their identity in Christ.
- Ask God to raise up prayer teams who will begin breaking up the spiritual soil through worship and intercession.

■ 28 Orang Kuala Duano in Malaysia

The Duano were once sea-nomad fishers. Now they fish using both traditional and modern traps. Malay being the dominant language, their literacy in Duano is nearly zero. Low interest in technology and education means they best receive the gospel through oral and visual forms.

I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word. Psalm 138:2

- Pray that many from this people group will delight in His promises and seek His unfailing love.
- Pray that local believers will relate and respond to the needs of these people.
- Ask the Creator to raise up Christ followers willing to sacrifice time and effort to help Duano.
- Pray that soon there will be Duano Christ followers discipling others who will, in turn, disciple others.

■ 29 Bajgi in Pakistan

The Bajgi are known as drummers for Hindu festivals. Many work as tailors, barbers, or agricultural laborers. Illiteracy is widespread, especially among women. Children often leave school early to help at home. With few Christians nearby, many may never meet a follower of Christ.

You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. Psalm 139:5–6

- Pray that many from this people group will be in awe of the blessings of the Lord.
- Pray that the Bajgi communities will come to know Christ as the only God worthy of their worship.
- Pray for the Lord to send out loving workers to the Bajgi.
- Pray that the Lord will raise up a growing church among the Bajgi.

■ 30 Sikh Lohar in India

The Sikh Lohar are blacksmiths who repair farming tools but face pressure from industrialization. Community councils guide their affairs. Many have low education and low self-esteem. Oral communication approaches are vital for effectively sharing the gospel.

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. Psalm 139:13–14

- Pray that this people group will understand and embrace that they are created by God, and that His ways are marvelous!
- Pray that the Lord will meet the Sikh Lohars' needs for work, education, and health in ways that reveal his care and glory.
- Ask for gospel recordings and oral storytelling to lead entire families to salvation.
- Pray that community leaders within the Lohar councils will encounter Christ and guide others to Him.
- Pray that Sikh Lohars will find their true worth and dignity in Jesus, who gives lasting value beyond social or economic standing.

■ 31 Kapu Reddi in India

The Kapu Reddi descend from Reddi-dynasty nobles and today are influential farmers, entrepreneurs, and leaders. Strong Hindu identity and generational prestige can limit openness to the gospel, as many lack a personal connection with their deities yet remain rooted in tradition.

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me and lead me in the way everlasting! Psalm 139:23–24

- Pray that many from this people group will have the kind of intimacy with the Lord that it takes to purge their lives of anything that offends Him.
- Pray for the Kapu Reddi to understand and embrace that Jesus wants to bless their families and neighborhoods.
- Pray for Kapu Reddi families to be drawn to the Bible to find out more about God's only son.
- Pray for a movement to Jesus to multiply among Kapu Reddi families and communities.

JUNE

□ 1 Muslim Kashmiri in India and Pakistan

Kashmiris live amid ongoing conflict and mountain isolation. Many farm, herd livestock, or rely on tourism, which is often disrupted by unrest. Many Muslims view the Bible as incorrect when differing from the Koran, and converts can face stigma and persecution.

Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice! Psalm 141:2

- Thank Him for making your prayers as precious as an incense offering. Thank Him that in praise, there is His presence.
- Pray for a just and lasting peace in Kashmir.
- Pray for workers who will go to the Kashmiris and help establish a movement to Christ.
- Pray for Christians in Kashmir to be bold in sharing the gospel.

2 Younuo in China

The Younuo maintain strong ethnic identity, practice strict endogamy, and follow animistic beliefs centered on a dragon spirit controlling weather. Sexual immorality is widely accepted culturally. With minimal gospel presence, they need workers who can introduce biblical truth and transformation.

I stretch out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. Selah Psalm 143:6

- Pray that many from today's people group will thirst for the Lord's presence.
- Pray for the Lord to call Younuo individuals and families to Himself through divine intervention and spiritual hunger.
- Ask for Spirit-led, loving messengers to reach out to the Younuo with the truth of Christ.
- Pray that God would raise up "persons of peace" among the Younuo who will open their communities to the gospel.
- Intercede for a church planting movement to take root and thrive within Younuo villages, transforming lives and communities through Christ.

3 Domal in India and Pakistan

The Domal, a Pashtun subgroup, farm and herd animals in mountainous regions with limited electricity and healthcare. Violence between villages is common. Living entirely among Sunni Muslims, they have no exposure to Christian examples and little chance to hear the gospel.

O LORD, what is man that you regard him, or the son of man that you think of him? Psalm 144:3

- Thank Him that He not only notices us but loves us as a father loves his children.
- Pray for gospel workers to catch a vision for reaching the Muslim Domal for Jesus and that in God's sovereign timing their hearts would be open and ready to follow Him.
- Pray for Jesus movements to bless extended Domal families.
- Pray for the lives and culture of the Domal to evidence the rule and reign of the Kingdom of God and for the beauty of Jesus to be seen in them.



4 Kikai in Japan

The Kikai people live on a remote island influenced by Japanese, Chinese, and Southeast Asian cultures. Agriculture, especially sugar cane, is central. Their traditional language is endangered, and though Buddhist, they combine various traditional beliefs and are largely overlooked by Christian workers.

May our granaries be full, providing all kinds of produce; may our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our fields... Psalm 144:13a

- Pray that physical prosperity will lead this people group to thankfulness to the Lord rather than spiritual apathy.
- Ask the Lord of the harvest to send laborers to reach the Kikai with God's grace.
- Pray that God will have mercy on the Kikai, doing whatever it takes to place them in a position to receive Him.
- Ask God to open the hearts of the Kikai to the gospel.
- Pray for an unstoppable movement to Christ among them.

5 Grangali Nuristani in Afghanistan

The Grangali Nuristani live in patriarchal villages where mediators handle disputes. They farm wheat and corn on terraced land and herd animals. Isolation preserves their culture but keeps them among Afghanistan's poorest and most unreached peoples, with little access to the gospel.

Every day I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever. Psalm 145:2

- Pray for many from this people group to regularly praise the Lord and worship Him.
- Pray for gospel recordings to find their way into every Grangali Nuristani family.
- Ask God to intervene in their families, calling people to his side.
- Pray for loving and dedicated workers.
- Pray for their hearts to be drawn to the Lord of lords, then ask God for thriving fellowships of Christ-loving Nuristani people.

6 Bhuyiar in India

Bhuyiar communities, linked to the term “landholder,” are Sudra landowners and laborers who practice cross-cousin marriage. They worship multiple deities across households and villages. Uttar Pradesh has minimal gospel presence, making outreach to them especially challenging.

One generation shall commend your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts. Psalm 145:4

- Pray that many from this people group will train their children in the ways of the Lord, who in turn will teach their children as well.
- Pray for loving and dedicated Christians to share resources such as the *Jesus Film* and other tools, so that they may be heard and accepted among the Bhuyiar community.
- Pray additionally for the entire Bhuyiar family to embrace the ways of Christ when they hear of His unmatched glory.
- Pray for them to hear Christ-honoring radio broadcasts when they are unable to reach the locations where Christian missionaries minister.

7 Hindu Kayastha in India and Bangladesh

Kayasthas, historically scribes, are now highly educated and influential. Their high status means they may only listen to peers who demonstrate genuine spiritual maturity. Evangelism must be discreet in both India and Bangladesh. Prestige often blinds them to their need for a Savior.

On the glorious splendor of your majesty, and on your wondrous works, I will meditate. Psalm 145:5

- Meditate on His goodness and splendor! Pray that many from today’s people group will do so as well.
- Pray for the Lord to make His holy presence known among the Hindu Kayasthas.
- Pray for the Kayasthas to experience and share the blessings of Christ.
- Pray for gratitude to the one who gives life.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to intervene in their community in such a way that it is clear that only Jesus Christ is worthy of their undivided devotion.



8 Hindu Koiri in India and Nepal

The Koiri, known for excellent farming skills, claim descent from Kush, son of Rama. A Brahmin performs their life-cycle rituals. Nominal Christianity in surrounding cultures may have distorted their view of true discipleship, making authentic Christian examples essential for outreach.

They shall speak of the might of your awesome deeds, and I will declare your greatness. Psalm 145:6

- Thank Him for His awe-inspiring deeds!
- Pray for God’s blessing, strengthening, and healing of families and communities within the Koiri through the abundant life Jesus offers to all who call on his name.
- Pray they will increasingly hunger to know forgiveness for their sins and the new life offered through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Pray for bold workers to go to them and remain dedicated to seeing the Koiris discipled.

9 Nyaw in Laos and Thailand

The Nyaw emphasize respect, hospitality, and ordered social structure. Community life centers on the Buddhist temple, though animist beliefs persist. Buddhism strongly shapes their worldview, making openness to new spiritual ideas difficult without relational trust.

The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that He has made. Psalm 145:9

- Pray that many from this people group will understand that He is good to everyone, and His compassion has no end.
- Pray for the Nyaw in Thailand and Laos to have open and receptive hearts, and that they would encounter the King of kings.
- Pray that movements to Christ would explode, as followers make followers, and that they would place their identity in Christ.
- Ask the Lord to bring forth a vibrant Nyaw church for the glory of His name.

10 Hindu Kir in India

The Kir are a scheduled tribe with low literacy and multiple clans. They farm fruits and vegetables and rely on traditional councils. They practice a flexible form of Hinduism, often mixing deities. The Kir need clear, oral, Scripture-based teaching to understand wholehearted devotion to Christ.

The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works. Psalm 145:17

- Pray that many will soon thank the Lord for His righteousness and kindness.
- Pray for many from the Kir community to devote themselves to Christ alone.
- Pray that the council leaders will come to Jesus Christ and help their community start a movement to Christ.
- Pray that gospel recordings and the *Jesus Film* will lead many to Christ.

11 Hindu Khangar in India

The Khangar worship family and regional deities. They practice ancestor veneration. Gospel access is limited and often distrusted when coming from outsiders.

My mouth will speak the praise of the LORD, and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever. Psalm 145:21

- Make this your prayer today!
- Pray that as they celebrate many Hindu festivals, the Holy Spirit of the one true God will enable them to celebrate His redemption – His full payment of the penalty for their sins.
- Pray for committed bands of prayer warriors and workers to go to India's northern states.

12 Dzala in Bhutan

The Dzala live in Bhutan's remote highlands, practicing Tibetan Buddhism for over a millennium. Their region is extremely poor and isolated, and identity is tightly bound to Buddhist tradition. Oral approaches are needed due to limited resources and accessibility.

I will praise the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. Psalm 146:2

- Pray for the Lord to raise up people from this people group with this kind of dedication to the Lord.
- Pray for workers to go to the Dzala until they have strong Christian believers among them.

- Pray for them to have the spiritual hunger to seek and find the only Savior.
- Pray for a soon-coming movement to Christ among the Dzala of Bhutan.

13 Kurdistani Jewish in Israel

Descendants of Kurdish Jews airlifted to Israel between 1949–1952, they now speak Hebrew and live in urban and agricultural communities. Many are culturally Jewish but spiritually secular, especially the younger generations.

Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever... Psalm 146:6

- Pray that God's wondrous works of creation will draw many from this people group to the Throne of Grace.
- Ask God to send messianic believers to present God's Word to them through the understanding of their Messiah Jesus.
- Pray for Kurdish Jews to find shalom in a relationship with Jesus.
- Pray that the gospel will reach the Kurdish Jewish people through powerful visits of the Holy Spirit.
- Pray that these people will be open to asking questions related to the gospel through caring followers of Yeshua.

14 Hindu Kumhar in India

The Kumhars are potters who claim to have invented the wheel. They farm, tend livestock, and make pottery, though surviving solely on pottery is difficult. They often work on land owned by higher castes.

Let them praise the name of the LORD! For He commanded and they were created. Psalm 148:5

- Pray that the gift of life will draw many from this people group to worship God only.
- Pray for the Lord to perform miracles among the Kumhars that will show them that He alone is worthy.
- Pray for better schools for the Kumhar community.
- Pray for the Lord to thrust out loving workers to them wherever they live.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger among the Kumhars that will lead them to the cross and the empty grave.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement among the Kumhars.

15 Muslim Kumhar in Pakistan and India

The Muslim Kumhar, also known as Kumar, traditionally make pottery and sometimes farm. Property passes to sons, with the eldest leading the family. Few Christians live among them, leaving them with little chance to encounter the gospel without divine intervention.

Young men and maidens together, old men and children! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his majesty is above earth and heaven. Psalm 148:12–13

- Pray for all generations from this people group to worship and praise the Lord.
- Pray for deliverance from the fear that hinders the Kumhar from accepting God’s blessing by challenging them to look beyond Islam.
- Pray for the Lord to multiply the reception and influence of His Word among this people group, leading them to love Him with their whole being.
- Pray for God’s blessing to strengthen and heal families and communities within this people group.

16 Gharti in India

The Gharti, also called Bhujel, historically served nobles as bonded laborers but now mainly farm. They follow multiple deities and believe in reincarnation, making the message of Christ’s resurrection difficult to grasp without clear, Spirit-led teaching.

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD! Psalm 150:6

- May it be soon!
- Pray for Jesus movements to bless extended Gharti families so the gospel will spread rapidly among this people group.
- Pray for the lives and culture of the Gharti to evidence the rule and reign of the Kingdom of God as they open up to the gospel, and for the beauty of Jesus to be seen in them.

17 Hindu Gosangi in India

The Gosangi historically cared for cattle and performed village services. Many now hold respected jobs and face fewer caste barriers than in the past. Higher social status can make them reluctant to associate with Christian communities. Contextualized materials are important.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7

- Pray for many from this people group to find true knowledge by fearing the Lord of heaven.
- Pray for these materials to become readily available to the Gosangi.
- Pray that Gosangi believers will introduce their Hindu neighbors to the King of kings.
- Pray for the younger generation, especially those abroad, to encounter Jesus and find their identity in Him.

18 Dalu in India and Bangladesh

The Dalu are peaceful, landless farmers who face low literacy and limited opportunities. Though Muslim, they maintain some traditional drinking practices. With no gospel exposure, oral and visual teaching methods are essential for reaching them effectively.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and He will make straight your paths. Proverbs 3:5–6

- Make this your prayer for today’s people group.
- Pray for believers to share the *Jesus Film* in Bengali with the Dalu.
- Pray for the message of the gospel to penetrate their hearts.
- Pray for workers who will go to the Dalu with the good news of Jesus Christ.



19 Jalo Berber in Libya

The Jalo Berbers balance farming and herding. They are governed through a democratic male assembly. They face danger from insurgent activity. Nominally Muslim, some revere ancestor spirits. Libya's instability makes gospel access extremely difficult and risky for workers.

By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly.
Proverbs 8:15–16

- Pray that this truth will put the fear of God in the hearts of all who hold power.
- Pray the Lord will send Christians to reach the Jalo Berbers with the gospel, and that He will protect these believers as they minister to them.
- Pray for the Lord to appear to them in dreams and draw them to Himself in repentance.
- Pray for protection, courage, and wisdom for any Jalo Berbers who come to faith in Christ.

20 Galeshi in Iran

Galeshi speakers live in northern Iran's remote hills, preserving an older dialect. Many youths move to cities, while rural families migrate seasonally for pasture. They have little contact with Christians, as most believers in Iran live in urban centers.

The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. Ecclesiastes 12:13

- Pray that many from this people group will understand that God is the one who gives our lives meaning and purpose.
- Pray for the Lord to open opportunities for Galeshi speakers to hear and respond to the gospel.
- Pray for Galeshi family leaders to have dreams and visions of the Risen Christ, so they will seek the one who offers eternal life.
- Pray that soon Galeshi disciples will make more disciples.
- Pray for the Lord to look after their needs as many are moving to urban centers.
- Pray for Iranian Christians to take the opportunity to reach them in cities.

21 Hindu Kunbi in India

The Kunbi are prominent farmers and laborers in Gujarat. Both men and women commonly smoke homemade cigarettes, contributing to high cancer rates. As a fully Hindu community, spiritual traditions are deeply entrenched, making them hesitant to question inherited beliefs or consider other spiritual paths.

The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand. Isaiah 1:3

- Pray that many from this people group will know their master and heed His voice.
- Pray for them to have the spiritual hunger it takes to embrace Christ, no matter what social pressure they face.
- Pray God will send many Christian workers to work among them and meet their spiritual and physical needs.
- Pray for the Kunbi Christians to reach out to them and disciple them in God's ways.

22 Kurmanji Kurd

Kurmanji-speaking Kurds live across Turkey, Iran, Syria, and Iraq. Their regions are often closed to evangelism, and Christians face varying degrees of persecution. Still, many biblical resources exist in the Kurmanji language, providing potential pathways for future gospel engagement.

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.
Isaiah 1:16–17

- Pray for this people group to surrender unconditionally to the Lord of lords.
- Pray that God would create a hunger for the Bible in the hearts of the Kurds.
- Ask God to raise up a Kurmanji Kurdish Disciple Making Movement.
- Pray for the Lord to send loving and dedicated ambassadors for Christ to the Kurdish people.
- Ask the Lord to send dreams of the risen and victorious Christ to Kurdish leaders.

23 Hijda in India

The Hijda community includes individuals identifying as a third gender, some through ritual castration and others by birth difference. They often face exploitation and abuse. Their role in ceremonies gives them cultural presence, yet spiritual barriers remain extremely strong.

And many peoples shall come, and say: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
Isaiah 2:3

- Pray for a heart-felt seeking of the Lord among many from today's people group.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger that will give Hijdas the willingness to follow the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
- Pray for their identity to be set on Jesus Christ.
- Pray that the Hijda community council leaders will embrace Jesus and lead others to a movement to Christ.
- Pray that God will turn the hearts of those who dehumanize the Hijdas.
- Pray the Hijdas will embrace their God-given gender.

24 Akasselem in Togo

The Akasselem of central Togo are mostly Muslim but still rely heavily on traditional spirits. They divide socially into elite and common groups. Agriculture is central, and alcohol is part of daily meals. Islamic norms discourage exploring Christian teachings.

Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty. Isaiah 2:10

- Pray for many from this people group to understand God's judgment, mercy, and His majestic glory.
- Pray for spiritual discernment and a deep hunger for God among the Akasselem.
- Ask God to send believers from other parts of Africa to share the gospel with the Akasselem through music, dance, and drama.
- Ask God for workers to follow up in discipleship groups after all evangelistic efforts.

25 Seit Kaitetu in Indonesia

The Seit-Kaitetu farm sago, cloves, nutmeg, and coffee. Many rely on fishing. Villages are orderly, and families produce crafts from eggshells and mother-of-pearl. With few Christians nearby, they see little reason to consider alternatives to their Islamic traditions.

They have lyre and harp, tambourine and flute and wine at their feasts, but they do not regard the deeds of the LORD, or see the work of his hands. Isaiah 5:12

- Pray that many from this people group will notice and respond to what God is doing.
- There are currently Christ followers among other peoples on Ambon Island and others nearby.
- Pray for the Lord to direct them to reach out to the Seit Kaitetu with God's love and compassion.
- Pray for the Lord to use dreams and visions to get the attention of the Seit-Kaitetu family leaders to seek Jesus alone.
- Pray for a Disciple Making Movement in Seit Kaitetu villages.

26 Sula in the Philippines

The Sula live across the Sula archipelago, relying on hunting, fishing, and sago gathering. Coconut products are their main export. With no known believers among them, trusted outsiders are needed to introduce the gospel.

And one called to another and said: Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!
Isaiah 6:3

- Pray that many from this people group will experience and respond to God's holiness.
- Pray for "outsider" Christians to win their trust by being loving and trustworthy.
- Pray for the Sula to experience and embrace the glory of the Lord.
- Pray for Sula elders to have dreams and visions of the risen Christ that will open their hearts to Him, who is and always will be the truth.

27 Bokha in China

The Bokha welcome guests with strong whiskey as a cultural sign of respect, making refusal offensive. Food-related superstitions shape daily customs. These expectations can make it difficult for outsiders to build trust and share new ideas.

And I said: Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts! Isaiah 6:5

- Pray that there will soon be a heart-felt understanding of personal sin and the need for God's redemption among this people group.
- Pray for workers who are filled with the love of Christ to go to the Bokha with humility and boldness.
- Ask God to prepare hearts to receive the gospel and to break through spiritual barriers that keep them in darkness.
- Pray for miracles, healings, and signs that point people to Jesus.
- Pray for the rise of new disciples and house churches that multiply quickly, bringing hope and transformation to Bokha families and villages.

28 Sorani Kurd in Iraq and Iran

Sorani Kurds, one of the largest Kurdish language groups, are shaped by tribal identity and a blend of Islamic and older religious influences. Though often less devout than other Muslims, Islam remains a core part of cultural identity, complicating outreach.

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here I am! Send me. Isaiah 6:8

- Pray that God will send His messengers to this people group soon!
- Pray for the Lord to send dreams of the Risen and Victorious Christ to Sorani speakers.
- Pray that Kurdish leaders would be willing to investigate the claims of Jesus Christ.
- Pray that God would create a hunger for the Bible and spiritual truth in the hearts of Sorani Kurds.
- Pray for Sorani Kurds to experience the surpassing glory, power, and love of Jesus Christ so they can become committed to Him.
- Pray that God would help the Kurds find their identity in Christ.

29 Hindu Kurmi in India

The Kurmi, India's largest agricultural caste, are highly skilled farmers and relatively prosperous. Their main concern about Christianity is fear that it may divide families or separate children from their community traditions.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. Isaiah 9:2

- Pray for God's light to shine brightly among this people.
- Pray for persons of peace within the Kurmi community who will welcome God's messengers.
- Pray for spiritual hunger among the Kurmi that will lead them to the cross and the empty grave.
- Pray for a movement to Jesus to multiply among Kurmi households.

30 Muslim Dom in India

The Muslim Dom, once gravediggers and cremators, now work in diverse occupations but remain low in social status. Low literacy limits opportunities. Many know Jesus only as a prophet, and workers are needed to share the full gospel message.

In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of Him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious. Isaiah 11:10

- Pray that today's people group will soon allow Jesus Christ, the son of David, to be their banner of salvation.
- Pray that the Muslim Dom community would enjoy abundant life by putting their trust in Jesus Christ.
- Pray for the Lord to intervene in their families, calling people to his side and blessing them in every way.
- Pray for loving workers.
- Pray for their hearts to be drawn to the Lord of lords.





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