



MISSIONTM FRONTIERS

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The Edges of Mission

Shaping tomorrow's mission, today.

Missiology should be a dynamic discipline, always adapting to a changing world. Today's trends—global demographic shifts, digital frontiers, and rising indigenous voices—demand more than minor adjustments. They call for reimagining what mission looks like. *New Frontiers in Missiology* rises to this challenge, offering fresh insight into emerging trends and innovative ideas that are reshaping the global mission landscape. From AI and gaming to urbanization and animistic practices, this book charts the expanding boundaries of mission with depth and clarity.

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As Frontier Ventures prepares to celebrate 50 years in 2026, we want to hear your story! **How has Frontier Ventures (formerly the U.S. Center for World Mission) impacted you or the world around you?** Share your story with us at: missionfrontiers@frontierventures.org



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Some Edges Are Hiding in Plain Sight

By DUKE DILLARD, Editor

I took the Perspectives on the World Christian Movement course in 1993, and by 1997 we were on our way to the edges, literally. We landed on the shores of the Caspian Sea, seemingly on the edge of the world, with big dreams of planting Kazakh-led churches.

The USSR had fallen in 1991, opening hidden peoples and secret cities to the rest of the world. Aktau wasn't on any maps outside of the Soviet Union. We had moved to a truly pioneer setting—sort of. We found Russian churches in the city open to reaching Kazakhs. We should not have been surprised God was already working there. Nonetheless, God used our team to start something new; lives were changed, and the impact is still reverberating today.

Almost 30 years later, what has changed in God's mission to glorify himself at the edges? Do we still have pioneer settings? Should we still prioritize them? Are any people groups hidden from maps today? Where are the edges?

Come on a journey with us through this issue and decide for yourself. God has done amazing things over the past 50 years. The proportion of the population with no gospel witness has plummeted even though the number of people on earth has doubled.

Some old categories remain—Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist—but virtual technology means we must add newly formed groups as well. These new groups are hidden in plain sight. Do you know to whom I'm referring? Come along and find out.

But around the next corner you will need to strap

in tightly. Perhaps the way we think about religion is part of the problem keeping us from getting to the edges. Are you willing to reflect on and even challenge your foundational religious paradigms?

In addition, maybe the way we deal with finances—bitcoin anyone?—is keeping doors closed to unreached groups. Clearly, this is a hot topic with much to consider, but before we close, let's step into the zone of listening to God's Spirit for potentially unorthodox guidance as we engage this brave new world.

Opening these pages could bring the adrenaline and whiplash of a mighty roller coaster if you are willing to have your assumptions challenged and your lenses adjusted.

Hidden worlds await, so grab a cup of your favorite beverage and sit in a comfortable chair; discovery awaits!

New Feature: We are adding yet another new feature in this issue. Kody Friesen, an artist who spent many years among the unreached, has created a coloring page based on our Edges theme. Check it out on page 46. If you prefer normal paper, go to the MF website and print it. Lord willing, we will be including a coloring page in each issue moving forward. Adult coloring books are popular, so feel free to indulge yourself for some stress relief, but we are happy for you to give it to your kids or grandkids as well!

May you know the love of God and may it move you to edges!

Duke Dillard 

Letters to the Editor



Hello,

I am a senior of Armenian descent, grew up in Egypt, left for Canada at age 18, then lived in two other countries. Now I reside in California.

The articles on TCKs were very moving to me. I felt emotions of sadness, anger and gladness for my TCK background. The articles were well written. Personally, I read all of them in three evenings. Thank you to each TCK contributor. I shall check the other articles online.

In his grace,
Lucine Iskenderian

Editor's Note: In the letter below, Harriet uses *MK* for *minister's kid* whereas we used it for *missionary kid* in our TCK issue. However, because of her experiences in other cultures, both in Scotland and among Mormons, the TCK mantle fits, especially considering the name of her autobiography. We are thankful the TCK issue was able to encourage her and many others.

As I read about MKs in your May/June issue, I had a hard time understanding it at first because I am also a MK (minister's kid)! We lived in Edinburgh, Scotland 1950–1952 then spent the rest of my youth in Idaho and Wyoming. Both were unfamiliar cultures as I lived in the heart of Mormonism in Idaho Falls and then the WEST in Wyoming. I attended 13 schools in 17 years! No real sense of belonging or positive adult support other than my mother and her mother later in my life.

Your checklist in your first article accurately described my life that I never had defined until later in my 30s. I lived with my father, a mentally ill adult, and as a result the whole family had secondary PTSD because of my father's experiences in WWII.

It would be interesting for you to also serve those of us who were minister's kids here in the USA! I was "Perfect" until I got on my own, and then I would not even write what I did then until I got saved at the age of 37.

The Lord called me and my husband to live in Escalante, Utah in 1988. After 25 years of living in California, it was quite a shock when we moved here in 1991 from Menlo Park, California! However, the Lord prepared me to live in another heart of Mormonism in the West. Here at last I have become part of a very small community and have submitted to the Lord's will for my life. I wrote my autobiography, *Where did you grow up?* at the age of 80. At the end of each chapter, I placed a scripture to show how the Lord carried us over all our years. (Find it on Amazon by Harriet Young Priska.)

Thanks for your thoughtfulness to TCKs and MKs. These services were not available as I was growing up.

Harriet Young Priska
Escalante, UT

Advancing the Kingdom Extending Christ's Mission

By **RW LEWIS** | All Scripture references are from the NIV.

RW Lewis wrote “a church for every people” in her Bible in 1980 and has worked toward that goal with her husband, Tim, ever since, helping to found the USCWM/FV, Frontiers and Telosfellowship.org.

“**T**he Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached...” (Luke 16:16).

The steady advance toward the fulfillment of all things is far more epic than we can imagine. This fulfillment is the “*telos*” Jesus predicted saying, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end (*telos*) will come” (Matt 24:14). Jesus established his kingdom on earth by his life, death, and resurrection. This beachhead heralded the increasing battle for the supremacy of God’s rule on earth, both in the hearts of people and in the earth’s families or peoples. As citizens of the kingdom of light, we need to clearly understand how to help advance his kingdom at the edges.

When Christ died on the cross as an atonement for our sins, Paul said, he “rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves” (Col 1:13-14). This is the first “edge of the kingdom” that Jesus came to overcome: eradicating the darkness of our hearts. The end goal or completion (*telos* in Greek) of his reign in our lives is freedom from sin, righteousness apart from the law, everlasting life, and blamelessness before him (Rom 6:22, 10:4, 1 Cor 1:8). We work toward this goal through submitting more and more of our lives to God through Christ, “purifying ourselves of everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God” (2 Cor 7:1). Paul reminds Timothy that “the goal (*telos*) of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith” (1Tim 1:5).

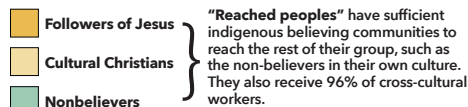
The resurrected Jesus concluded 40 days of teaching the disciples about the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3) with an emphasis on the second “edge of the kingdom,” saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:18–20). We are all called to advance his kingdom beyond its edges in our generation to all the peoples of the earth, a task which he entrusted to his followers as his ambassadors. It is in Christ that we become “fellow workers for the kingdom of God” (Col 4:11).

Missionaries and the Battle Beyond the Edges of the Kingdom

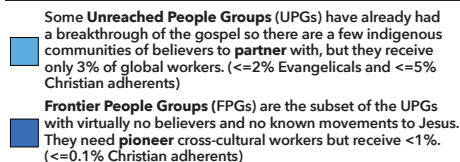
Many Christians alive today have forgotten the life of their forefathers before the light of the kingdom was brought to their people group. Slavery, child sacrifice, pedophilia, temple prostitution, etc., were deeply imbedded in the “civilized” circum-Mediterranean cultures. St. Augustine reports that as late as the 4th century, the Romans were still addicted to watching humans slaughtered in their arenas by specially trained wild animals or gladiators. Constant tribal warfare and the glorying in brutal rape, murder, and pillage characterized the tribes from the Northern European Vikings, Goths and Slavs. In the isolated tribes of the global jungles (e.g. South America, Africa, Northeast India, and thousands of islands), things like head-hunting, kidnapping and raping women, cannibalism, and genocide were almost universally practiced with no shame.

50 Years of Progress within the Unreached

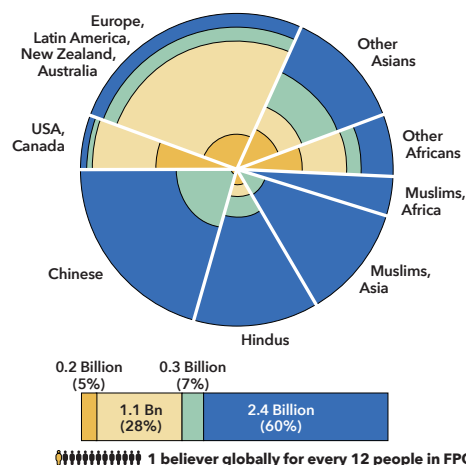
Reached Peoples



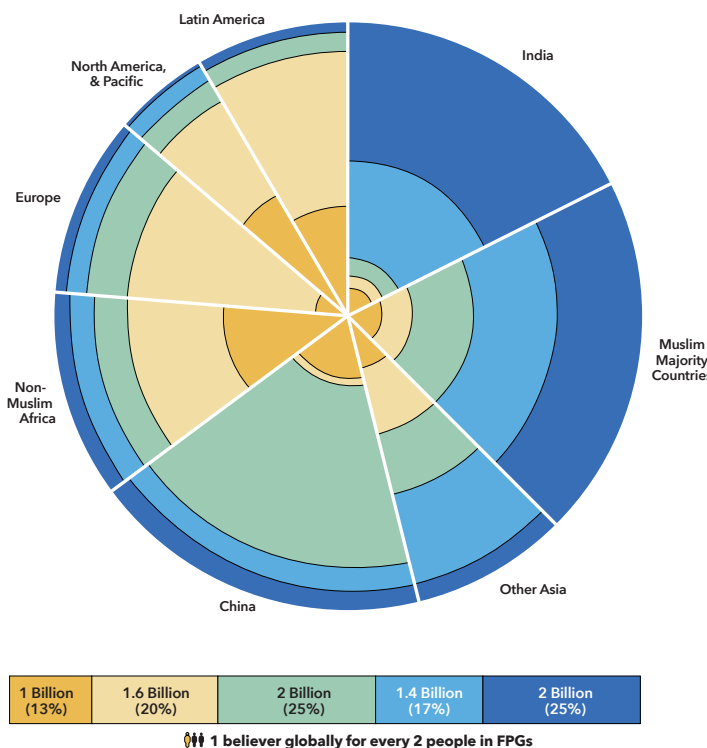
Unreached Peoples



1974
Global population = 4 Billion 60% in FPGs (2.4 Billion)



2024
Global population = 8 Billion 25% in FPGs (2 Billion)



Followers of Jesus grew by 0.8 billion while the population of FPGs decreased by 0.4 billion.

In every century, the first witnesses spreading Christ's kingdom beyond the edges to new people groups were almost always martyred or tortured and imprisoned. Catholic and Protestant missionaries themselves (almost without exception) tried valiantly not to engage in violence, even in the face of martyrdom, but instead to bring a message of hope, peace, and reconciliation. However, unfortunately, their half-converted compatriots, traders and conquerors who often preceded them into the places where Christ had not been named, quickly reverted to formerly unthinkable "heart of darkness" barbarism in the face of savagery. This testament to the evil power of fear ironically often occurred after they had traded weapons of warfare and societal destruction, from knives and guns to drugs and alcohol, in exchange for valuables they sought—furs, spices, porcelain, silk, tea, sandalwood, tobacco, and, yes, slaves.

Christian missionaries consistently defended the humanity of all peoples, and British and American evangelical revivalists managed to overturn thousands of years of defense of slavery. However, Darwinism immediately reinstated the pre-Christian perspective that other peoples were less human (less evolved). So-called "Christian nations" engaged in horrific civil and global wars, succeeding in killing millions, even with more humane rules of engagement. The most destructive world war in history was built upon the idea of an evolutionary "super race," eugenics, and survival of the fittest.

Given this seemingly dismal record, it is surprising that, despite great population growth globally, the gospel has currently taken root in peoples representing 75% of the world's population. And even when barely 10% of a people group have become believers, the

gospel has greatly transformed them, so there is now global condemnation of slavery, genocide, wars, sexual exploitation or perversion, infanticide, murder, and many other formerly widely tolerated evils, even in places where such practices continue. Although, sadly, once people groups and nations throw off the knowledge of Christ and of his Word, the reversion into pre-Christian ethical standards is surprisingly rapid.

Going with Christ Beyond Today's Edges

Jesus' disciples must constantly seek to go into the "regions beyond" (2 Cor 10:16) the edges of the kingdom. The first edge, namely the Spirit of God conquering the souls of humanity, one person at a time, *depends upon* the disciples of Jesus consistently pushing forward the edges of the second, because how can they believe if they have not heard, and how can they hear unless preachers are sent (Rom 10:13–15)? Only the indwelling Holy Spirit transfers the soul from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, so, in that sense, even Christian populations are "twilight zones" in which the battle continues to rage in every soul not fully given over to Jesus Christ. But what about those peoples and places which have not yet even heard of God's love for them?

The US Center for World Mission (now Frontier Ventures) was founded on the conviction that there were edges of the kingdom, namely "frontiers" where the kingdom of light had not yet penetrated the kingdom of darkness. This conviction came initially from the research of Dr. Ralph Winter, my father, who discovered and presented at the 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization the shocking fact that only 13% of the world's non-Christians were in the same ethnic group as the churches of the world, while a staggering 87% were in people groups with no known churches or movements to Christ (60% of the world's population). These types of people groups were first clarified at the 1972 consultation on *"The Gospel and Frontier Peoples"* (presentations edited by R. Pierce Beaver were published by William Carey Library). *How was it that most of the mission world thought the job of cross-cultural world evangelization was almost over?*

Dr. Winter was so stunned by his own discovery and

so concerned at the lack of any reaction by the mission world at the time, that he left his professorship at the Fuller Seminary's School of World Mission to found the USCWM. The three purposes for the USCWM, written down by his wife Roberta Winter in *"Once More Around Jericho,"* page 225, were:

1. Study, evaluate, monitor all current mission effort.
2. Push back the barriers limiting present efforts.
3. Penetrate the last frontiers.

Fifty years later, the kingdom has spread immensely, but frontiers still exist. No longer is 60% of the world's population in people groups with no churches or kingdom advance (1974, 2.4 billion people). Now only 25% of the world's population is without any known growing indigenous witness (2 billion people). Given that the population of the world has doubled in the same 50-year period (4 billion in 1974, 8 billion in 2024), this means the gospel is spreading at an exponential rate into people groups beyond the edges of the kingdom.

In 1792 William Carey worked out that the gospel had spread through cross-cultural witnesses to places containing 25% of the world's population. He triggered an explosion of Protestant missions by urging the formation of mission agencies to reach distant lands. In 1974 Ralph Winter figured that 40% of the world lived in people groups with their own movements to Jesus. He challenged the global church to adopt the remaining unreached peoples. In 2024, the gospel has taken root in people groups containing 75% of the world's population. See more: JoshuaProject.net/GreatProgress

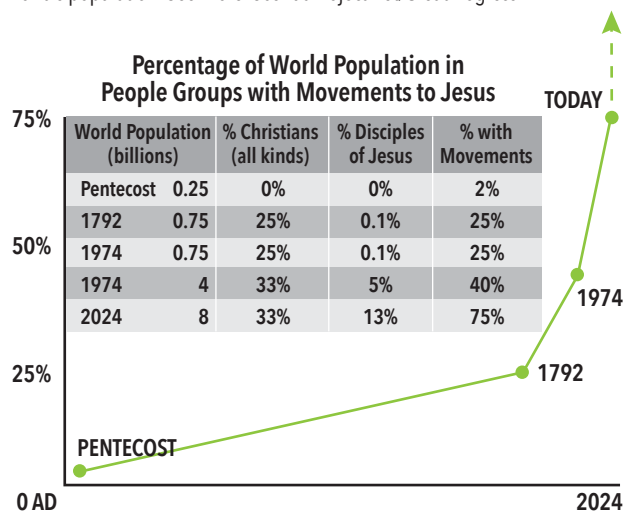


Fig.1 The Accelerating Growth of Jesus' Kingdom

But, as Dr. Winter observed, the advance of the gospel into new peoples, new languages, and new cultural expressions was nearly always done by highly dedicated missionary teams or mission

structures—second decision task-focused groups he called “sodalities.” The gospel can spread organically *within* a people group, household to household along relational lines; however, to *cross difficult barriers*, of language and culture, and of distance, special structures and the specific goal of taking the gospel beyond the edges have almost always been required. Nevertheless, *96% of mission teams today go to help Christians in other places, being totally unaware of the fact that the kingdom still has edges beyond which the gospel has not penetrated.* The edges need to be clarified again!

The knowledge of the gospel, the kingdom of light, has spread rapidly throughout the world in the past 50 years alone! (See the “50 Unbelievable Years” pie chart graph on the previous page.) During that time, the population of committed Christians globally has quadrupled (400%). Many more non-believers are now in the same people groups as committed followers of Jesus (from 13% of non-believers in 1974 to 37% of non-believers today). 97% of the population of “frontier people groups” (a subset of “unreached

people groups” with essentially NO believers among them) are either Muslims (55%) or Hindus (42%). The dark blue “frontier people groups” can be seen by name with details on a sortable map at joshuaproject.net/frontier/interactive.

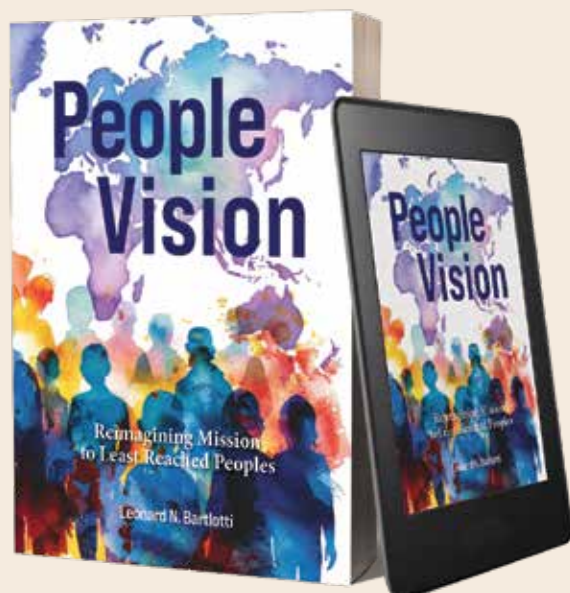
Conclusion

God promised that “all the families of the earth” would be blessed through Abraham’s descendants (Gen 12:3, 22:18, 26:4). This blessing involves two distinct “edges” of the kingdom: The establishment of the reign of Christ in our hearts as disciples and the ever-expanding kingdom to the ends of the earth—the invisible “yeast in the dough” that impacts every family, tribe, and people group that it enters. Jesus commanded his followers to finish fulfilling God’s promise to Abraham. New teams must arise today to bring Christ’s kingdom beyond the edges until the prophecy is complete and “the earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Hab 2:14). 🏡

LEARN MORE

People Vision

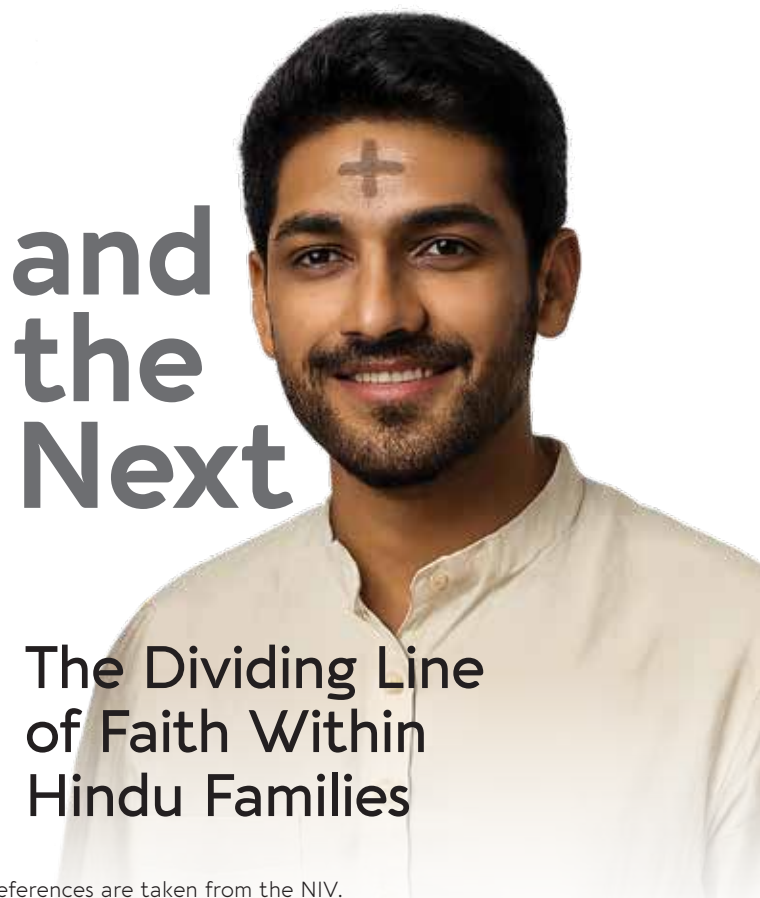
Leonard N. (Len) Bartlotti



People Vision is a benchmark study of the people group paradigm that underscores its vital role in the twenty-first century. Over sixty authors reexamine our understanding of people group missiology from the lens of Scripture, reflection, conversation, prayer, and case studies from field workers and church/mission leaders. Readers are equipped with the tools to navigate and overcome the barriers hindering effective mission work among UPGs and envision innovative approaches. Engage with this transformative guide and be part of a movement that redefines mission work, ensuring no people group is left behind.



Between the First and the Next



The Dividing Line of Faith Within Hindu Families

By **SCOTT WALKER** All Scripture references are taken from the NIV.

Scott Walker has walked alongside Hindu people for 15 years in both India and the US diaspora. He is the national director of MARG Network, an organization focused on Hindu issues. He speaks on Hindu ministry issues and is a Perspectives instructor.

It was springtime in India, and the local Saraswati festival was quickly approaching. A new Hindu friend, Saikat (pseudonym), had invited me to join his family's celebration at their home for this religious holiday.¹ Saikat had quickly become something of a local host for me, and I was grateful to be invited to his extended family's gathering.

¹ A brief description about the use of the words "Christian" and "Hindu" in this article. In the West, "Christian" and "Hindu" are primarily used as religious identifiers and denote spiritual acceptance, loyalty, and practice. A Christian is a disciple of Jesus; a Hindu is associated with Hindu deities and Vedic or other Indian spiritual practice. In South Asia, these words (along with "Muslim," "Jain," "Sikh," and "Buddhist") identify the community to which an individual belongs. A Hindu is born to Hindu parents and is distinctly not Muslim or Christian, regardless of spiritual belief or practice. A Christian is associated with the Christian community and a legacy that is intermingled and inseparable from the British occupation of India. Throughout this article, the words Hindu and Christian are used in a South Asian understanding.

On the festival day, I arrived at Saikat's house, where I was warmly welcomed and ushered inside. I met Saikat's father and mother, grandmother, and all manner of aunts, uncles, cousins, and neighbors. Saikat showed me where the religious ceremony had taken place (the Saraswati worship had already concluded), but the true focal point of the event was still to come. A long table was slowly being mounded with Bengali delicacies. Everyone was focused on the meal—Saikat, his mother and father, his grandmother... everybody. I ate well that day.

After everyone had eaten, I told Saikat's father how much I enjoyed being welcomed by his family and his many relatives. He looked a bit sad as I said this, so I asked if any relative was missing. "Only my brother," Saikat's father replied. "Three years ago he became a Christian. Since then, he never comes to our home or visits us on any of the holidays."

His words impacted me deeply. Here I was, a follower of Jesus who had left my family and hometown 8,000 miles away to share about Jesus with Hindu people. Yet the Hindu family that I was trying to reach had already experienced the hoped-for miracle that someone in their family might begin to follow Christ. Unfortunately, Saikat's uncle's conversion had left only painful wounds for the rest of his family. The gospel of Jesus, at least how Saikat's family understood it, had been distinctly *not* good news.

What happened within Saikat's family is a depressingly common experience within Hindu forward caste (previously known as high caste) families when one relative converts to Christianity. A single individual decides to convert. Maybe the convert's spouse also begins to follow Jesus, or, rarely, a single sibling. No other relative joins them.

When considering the question of where the edge of mission is in the Hindu world, the answer is where the gospel stops flowing and the kingdom of Jesus halts its advance. By and large, across the wide swath of gospel work done by Indian churches, ministries, and mission organizations, the gospel so painfully, predictably stops moving after reaching one individual in a forward caste Hindu family. The most critical edge in mission in the Hindu world is the line that develops in forward caste Hindu families between a new Hindu follower of Jesus and their not-yet-following siblings, parents, extended families, and neighbors.

The most critical edge in mission in the Hindu world is the line that develops in forward caste Hindu families between a new Hindu follower of Jesus and their not-yet-following siblings, parents, extended families, and neighbors.

There are, of course, so many edges of mission in the Hindu world. Half of the world's unreached people groups and a third of the world's population in unreached people groups are Hindu.² The good news of Jesus' kingdom is separated from so many

South Asians by language, geography, and family clan distinctions (literally *jati*, the operating force behind the many distinct people groups in India).³

Yet across all domains of personal experience, the published record, and extensive networking with like-minded leaders in both India and the global Hindu diaspora, what stands out are the shockingly few reports of a forward caste Hindu coming to trust in Lord Jesus and then being joined in faith by others from his or her family. Although only a portion of the Hindu world is forward caste, even this small subset of the Hindu world is massive, representing 270 million people.⁴ Why have so few forward caste Hindu families found good news in the name of Jesus together? I believe there are two primary stumbling blocks.

Stumbling Block: Hindu Identity?

The first stumbling block is that Hindus believe they must give up their Hindu identity to follow Jesus. Yet is that so? Is Hindu identity fundamentally unacceptable for a follower of Jesus?

Working out the interplay of new faith and prior identity claims is difficult in any context. After coming to faith in Jesus, some existing identities must be retained, while others should be renegotiated or dropped. Identities of marriage and parenthood, hometown and nation, sports fandom and collegiate alumni networks are not changed by new belief in Jesus. Other identities, such as political affiliation and various lifestyle choices, may need to be renegotiated. Identities like a spiritual allegiance to another deity must be dropped. So where does Hindu identity fall? What does it mean to be Hindu?

3 Hindu society has two separate words that are both translated into caste in English. The first, *jati*, describes a large, endogamous family network or clan that can number in the thousands or millions. The second, *varna*, is the hierarchal, hereditary occupational system that most people associate with caste. Forward caste Hindus are from the three highest ranking *varnas* (Brahman, Kshatriya, and Vaishya). Of the two terms, *jati* is the more important and more operative in everyday life.

4 Pew Research Center: Neha Sahgal, et al. "Religion in India: Tolerance and Segregation," (June 29, 2021): 99. [pewresearch.org/religion/2021/06/29/religion-in-india-tolerance-and-segregation/](https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/06/29/religion-in-india-tolerance-and-segregation/).

2 joshuaproject.net/religions/5.

Hindu identity can be best understood as an ethnic identity, rather than a religious identity. There is no specific deity that must be worshipped to be Hindu, no accepted way of salvation, no universal scripture, and no mandated spiritual practice. What we consider Hinduism is the amalgamation of countless merging and dividing strands of religiosity found within the Indian subcontinent. In fact, rather than someone who *believes* something or *does* something, the best definition of a Hindu is someone *born* to Hindu parents. The word Hindu more clearly marks the people someone belongs to, rather than the god(s) they worship or the way they demonstrate spirituality.

Yet common experience shows that when a Hindu begins to follow Jesus, they are instructed to give up their Hindu identity and take on a Christian cultural identity. Critically, this changing of identity does not refer to accepting a new spiritual reality as an heir of God and co-heir with Christ (Rom 8:17), but rather, transferring membership from one human group to another.

This sometimes happens explicitly. A Hindu friend of mine, living in a large Indian city, experienced a miracle from Jesus. Knowing that it was Jesus who intervened in his life and not knowing what else to do, he visited a local church (because as he told me, “Jesus is the Christian god, so I thought that I should go to the Christian place”). After hearing his story, the pastor who met my friend said that there were just two things he needed to do. One, he should take baptism. Two, he needed to change his name, as he carried a Hindu name which was not appropriate for a follower of Jesus. “Popular names to take are Thomas or George,” the priest said. Thomas, for the apostle who traveled to India. George, for the British king who ruled India during part of the British colonial era.

Followers of Jesus who were born into Hindu families often begin to follow Jesus because of an overwhelming conviction of the presence and reality of God’s goodness through *Prabhu Yeshu* (Lord Jesus). These individuals are so convinced of Jesus and his reality, like my friend above, that they are willing to overcome the pain of identity loss to be associated with him. Yet is it surprising that so few of their family members are willing to accept the same identity loss?

Perhaps not coincidentally, most first-generation Indian Christian converts come from *jatis* not very closely tied to Hindu identity.⁵

Stumbling Block: Hindu Community?

The loss of Hindu identity feeds directly into the second stumbling block, which is how discipleship to Jesus is typically situated within a distinctly other, Christian community rather than a Hindu community. The Christian community is different in language and social customs from the Hindu community. There are different starting points and differing assumptions. Frankly, the new disciple of Jesus from a Hindu family must navigate different (and often more challenging!) social settings. The lessons learned from the Christian culture do not directly address the issues being faced in the Hindu world.

Particularly, social behaviors and discipleship patterns that are appropriate in the Christian world can be deeply provocative for the Hindu community. Discipleship instructions given to new Hindu believers, because of these cultural differences, often lead to unnecessary antagonism between the new follower of Jesus and their not-yet-believing Hindu family. This is regrettable, as there are so many examples of Hindu families (though not all) being notably gracious in interacting with a family member beginning to follow Jesus.

Essentially, the second issue is the difference between a disciple and a proselyte. Two Hindi words, *desi* (lit. “of the soil” and meaning to be Indian) and *videshi* (lit. “foreign”), can help here. A Hindu disciple of Jesus has the gospel freedom to develop a new *desi* witness of Christ’s kingdom expressed in the deep-rooted traditions, idioms, and arts of their Hindu community. A proselyte, however, may be too quick to adopt the *videshi* cultural expressions of a culturally Christian community quite dissimilar from their

⁵ “The majority of Christians in present-day India come from Dalit (formerly known as “untouchable”) and tribal communities that are considered to be the furthest removed from Sanskrit influence, although they are subject in varying degrees to processes of Sanskritization (acculturation to the beliefs and practices of Hindu upper castes).” (Mallampalli, Chandra. *South Asia’s Christians: Between Hindu and Muslim* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023), 145.

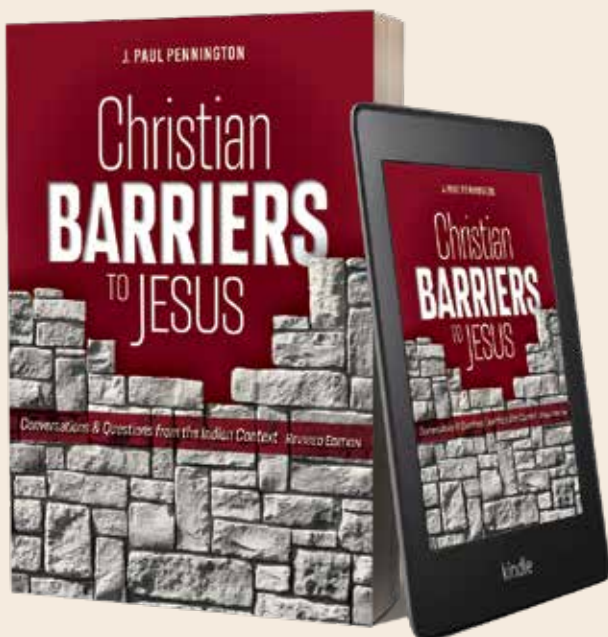
family. To both better demonstrate and communicate the gospel message, new disciples of Jesus from the hundreds of unreached Hindu forward caste *jatis* must build vibrant, compelling *desi* witnesses to Christ in their own cultural contexts, rather than mimicking Christian expressions from other communities in India or other parts of the world.

This issue is best illustrated by a story I heard from a church planter in western India. My friend Vijay (pseudonym) spent several years starting a church amongst middle-class professionals in a large, prosperous Indian city. Though most of the church came from Christian backgrounds, several Hindu men, mid-career individuals well-regarded in their companies and families, also began to trust Jesus. After some time being a part of the church, Vijay began to dialogue more seriously with these Hindu converts to Christianity about the need and possibility of reaching their other family members. As Vijay told me the story, he shared, “I was dismayed to hear from these

men about their inability to share with their families. What these Hindu background believers shared with me was, ‘We can’t understand our families anymore. It is like we have been reprogrammed by our time in the church.’” Vijay went on, “I couldn’t understand at the time what they meant. But now I can see it more clearly. Because of how this ended, I recognize that our church failed. I may have reached a few people who were formerly Hindu. But nothing we did could carry forward into the broader society.”

The edge that exists within a Hindu forward caste family between the first follower of Jesus and their other family members has proven to be a historic challenge for the gospel’s advance in South Asia. My hope is that a powerful wave of faith will pour over this edge as new Hindu followers of Jesus begin to joyfully retain their Hindu identity after beginning to trust Jesus, and as discipleship to Jesus is more consciously situated within the Hindu family rather than outside of it. ❏

LEARN MORE



Christian Barriers to Jesus

J. Paul Pennington

There are many challenges to adequately representing Jesus to the Majority World, and often Western Christian traditions create unnecessary hindrances to people accepting His truth.

This book grew out of many interviews with Indian Jesus-followers—both Christians and Yesu bhaktas—who identified painful stumbling blocks to receiving and sharing the gospel.



Transformation from Within Christ-Centered Movements in Muslim Societies

By **STEVE AND KITTY HOLLOWAY**

Steve and Kitty Holloway have been with Frontiers since its founding in 1983 and have held a variety of leadership positions through the years. Currently, they are investigating the dynamics of Christ-centered movements within Muslim societies for the Frontiers International Director Team. They live in England.

*H*akeem and I were well into our second cups of chai—and our second hour of conversation—when he suddenly grew quiet. I could tell he was processing something important. Finally, my curiosity got the best of me, and I broke our shared silence. “What’s going on? What are you thinking about?” His response still echoes in my mind: “Why has no one ever told me this before? Why has no one ever taught me how to listen to God and let him speak to me personally?”¹

As we press into the edges of mission among Muslims, the vision of a promised new humanity (Eph 2:15) offers a compelling way forward. This vision is based on observations of current movements to Christ happening within formerly unreached cultural groups. This responsiveness to the gospel is bursting the confines of mission strategies, which often project (foreign) culture-bound models of Christianity.

As today’s mission efforts move into the least-reached people groups, field experience affirms over and over that the message we carry is not merely a message of individual salvation. The very nature of the good news opens a way for people to interact with God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—personally, leading to lasting personal transformation. The gospel message empowers people to also bring this transforming power into their families and communities.

¹ Personal testimony from cross-cultural worker in South Asia.



In the context of Muslim societies, this redemptive power is most fully expressed when Muslim believers (MBs)² remain within their communities, retaining their cultural identity while living as faithful followers of Jesus. Rather than requiring believers to leave their cultures or embrace the culture of another Christianized group (for example, American), the gospel calls for transformation from within (Matt 13:33).

The Catalyst for Transformation

*Tariq explained to me that while he had repeated a prayer to surrender his life to Jesus a few years ago, it wasn't until recently that he truly understood what it meant to surrender to Jesus as Lord. "My uncle betrayed my family, causing us a lifetime of suffering and poverty. Last week when I forgave him and left the judgment to God," he said, "that is when I really began following Jesus."*³

The source of true transformation is heart-level allegiance to the kingdom of God. The kingdom is made up of those who recognize Jesus as savior *and* as king. They give him their ultimate loyalty and submit every part of their lives to his rule. This allegiance goes beyond intellectual belief; it is a reorientation of the heart which can reshape how they behave, how they treat other people, and what they value.

This wholehearted allegiance enables the Holy Spirit to bring about deep, lasting change. When MBs such as Hakeem or Tariq entrust themselves more fully to Jesus as king, they open their lives to the Spirit's work, allowing God to transform their desires, character, and purpose.

This transformation isn't about adopting foreign religious forms or conforming to external cultural expectations. It is an inner, Spirit-empowered transformation that expresses itself through the lived values of God's kingdom, such as humility, mercy, compassion, and the desire to reconcile broken relationships. Inward transformation leads naturally to change in behavior and relationships, which can ripple outward into entire communities.

² MBs are people who have been raised within Muslim societies and decide to follow Jesus.

³ Personal testimony from cross-cultural worker in South Asia.

Personal Transformation

*In one town, a formerly violent man named Kareem came to faith. At first, people thought he had joined a cult. But when he returned money that he had stolen and began reconciling broken relationships, they began to ask him what had happened. Many became interested in learning more about Jesus. They were attracted, not through a message someone was preaching, but through the visible witness of a radically transformed life.*⁴

As MBs live out their allegiance to Jesus, they begin to demonstrate a new kind of humanity to those around them. The fruit of the Spirit becomes visible in daily life—they become more loving spouses, patient parents, and generous neighbors. They not only live out the Spirit's fruit but also receive and exercise spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:4–7). The power of the Spirit is experienced through acts of love as well as through dreams and visions, healing, deliverance, and prophetic encouragement. These are all signs that the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ has truly come near (Luke 10:9).

As they are freed from their destructive habits and besetting sins, MBs embody a better way: a new kind of humanity marked by the freedom, grace, and dignity found in Christ. What begins as personal transformation spreads naturally along trust relationships—reshaping families, friendships, and eventually entire communities. As they mature, believers—sometimes quietly, sometimes with bold public courage—begin to challenge legalism, spiritual fear, and abusive authority. Over time, through growing networks of believers, the Spirit begins to redeem communal patterns—restoring relationships and reshaping communities to increasingly reflect God's justice and *shalom*.

A Slow Leavening

In one city, a foreign believer hosted monthly gatherings of musicians and artists. As more among them began to commit their lives to Jesus, the shared tea, singing, and poetry time

⁴ Personal testimony from cross-cultural worker in Sub-Saharan Africa.

also included reflection on Bible passages. As new acquaintances joined in, the foreigner did not need to explain the context to them, all those who were experiencing the blessing of God in the gathering eagerly shared what was going on. No church had been formally planted, yet community transformation was quietly beginning as they shared their griefs and joys and experienced God in their midst.⁵

Gospel transformation is never meant to remain private—it's intended to reshape communities. As Paul writes in Ephesians 2:22, "In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit."

As gospel messengers live out the truth, the Spirit affirms what is good and brings these cultural expressions into fuller alignment with God's reign.

Many Muslim cultures have habits that echo kingdom values, such as hospitality, communal responsibility, and daily rhythms of prayer (affirming the greatness of God, looking to him for help). These values create a foundation for the Gospel to resonate deeply when shared in culturally meaningful ways. Bridges already exist across which truth can travel. As gospel messengers live out the truth, the Spirit affirms what is good and brings these cultural expressions into fuller alignment with God's reign. Paul acknowledged in Acts 17:26–27 that God "marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands," so that people might "seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him." Those who seek will discover indeed that he is not very far from them.

Community Transformation

The refugee camps were full of people from different tribes, who did not trust each other. Many women had lost their husbands and family members in the war and were traumatized at the violence they had seen. When they shared their stories with one another, it felt like a competition as to who

had suffered the most. This increased their anguish, rather than bringing healing.

A refugee herself, Shaheen had just given her life to Jesus and felt compelled by his love to serve other widows in the camps. They were surprisingly responsive. As teachings about Jesus began to spread, the dynamics among the widows changed. Instead of competing in misery, they began to support each other. One day, a widow's son had to be hospitalized. The other women rallied around to care for her other children, wash her laundry, cook for her family, and take her to hospital. This was unprecedented. Over a few years, Jesus transformed this group of despairing women into a caring community through Shaheen, who embodied a contagious new kind of humanity—one marked by hope, compassion, and motivation to bring about change.⁶

Is this the image Paul had in mind when speaking of Christ creating "one new humanity" (Eph 2:15)? Through the cross, Jesus has broken down walls—not only the ones dividing Jew from Gentile but also those dividing all peoples from each other.

Human societies all over the world are characterized by sexual immorality, idolatry, occult bondage, hatred, strife, envy, murder, addictions, violence, etc.—"works of the flesh" (Gal 5:19–21). Many people walk in darkness (Isa 9:2), forced to cope with fallen human nature, using their own wits, not realizing that there is an alternative.

Those who give heart allegiance to Jesus turn from darkness to light (Acts 26:18). Jesus invites us to follow him fully within our own cultural worlds, honoring our heritage even as he makes us new in him. The gospel message affirms and values cultural distinctiveness while demanding that our hearts and lives be transformed. Muslim believers like Shaheen embody this vision when they remain within their cultural context and follow Jesus faithfully. They demonstrate that it's possible to be fully part of their people and fully part of God's family—a community not defined by bloodlines, conflict, or suffering, but by

⁵ Personal testimony from cross-cultural worker in the Middle East.

⁶ Personal testimony from cross-cultural worker in Middle East.

hope, compassion, and the reconciling love of Christ (1 Pet 2:10).

This pattern is at the heart of the healthiest gospel movements today among Muslims. In Jesus, people discover the fulfillment of their deepest spiritual longings as the gospel takes on local form—embodied by family, friends, and neighbors who speak the heart-language and live the heart-culture of their communities. MBs who purposefully remain become bridges, not barriers, to the gospel. Their lives proclaim a profound truth: Allegiance to Jesus is not a rejection of their culture, but its fulfillment in the true king—the Messiah who redeems every people, language, and tribe (Rev 7:9).

A Timeless Pattern for the Future of Mission




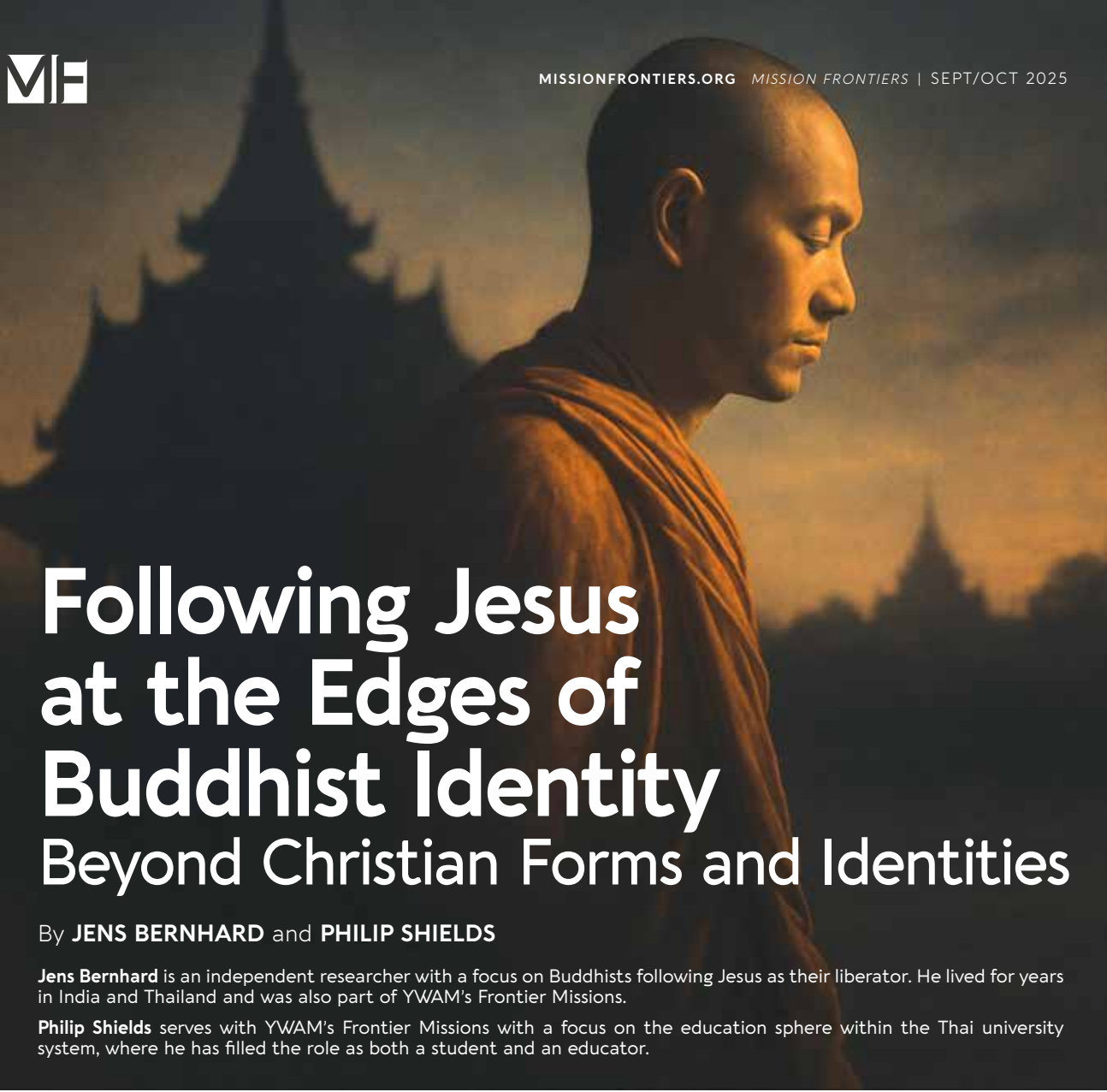
Throughout history, the most profound advancement of the gospel has come not through cultural imposition or erasure, but through redemption from within. From the first-century Jewish world to Greco-Roman cities, from Celtic tribes to African villages, the Spirit of God has consistently birthed a new kind of humanity—transforming lives, relationships, and entire societies through allegiance to king Jesus.

What we now witness among MBs is this same ancient and living pattern. As MBs remain rooted in their communities, the gospel takes on local form. Their wholehearted allegiance to Jesus allows the Holy Spirit to reshape hearts and relationships, making them agents of transformation who embody the values of God's kingdom from the inside out.

As we look to the future of mission—particularly among Muslims and other least-reached peoples—this vision of a new kind of humanity offers a compelling way forward. It calls us beyond the current edges of mission strategy, where extraction and external forms have often limited gospel impact. What is emerging instead is a Spirit-led movement from within: one that honors and illuminates the best of culture, flows through trust networks, and redefines church and discipleship on local terms.

This is not cultural erasure, but cultural redemption. God wants every people group to align with his justice, mercy, humility, peace, and love—to bring the glory and honor of their culture into the kingdom (Rev 21:24,26). The Holy Spirit infuses daily life with divine purpose. The kingdom of God need not be imposed from outside; it will grow organically wherever Christ is enthroned, the Spirit welcomed, and culture honored (Mark 4:26–29).

A new humanity is within our reach. Many in the world today experience the growing *shalom* as they meet God at the cross. As the gospel advances to the unreached cultures, across generations, it quietly and powerfully produces this enduring community of living stones (1 Pet 2:5) who become agents of transformation and hope. This is how the kingdom advances—quietly but powerfully—through transformed lives and communities, as God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven. 



Following Jesus at the Edges of Buddhist Identity Beyond Christian Forms and Identities

By **JENS BERNHARD** and **PHILIP SHIELDS**

Jens Bernhard is an independent researcher with a focus on Buddhists following Jesus as their liberator. He lived for years in India and Thailand and was also part of YWAM's Frontier Missions.

Philip Shields serves with YWAM's Frontier Missions with a focus on the education sphere within the Thai university system, where he has filled the role as both a student and an educator.

In today's Buddhist-majority societies, particularly in Thailand, the missional challenge is not singular but twofold, presenting unique challenges. The first edge lies within Thai society itself, especially among the younger generation. It is marked by a deep and growing disengagement from Buddhism. We'll refer to this as post-Buddhist disaffiliation.

The second edge is found in the mindset of cross-cultural workers—their theological vision, missiological method, and spiritual posture.¹ We'll refer to this as the post-institutionalized message paradigm.

¹ I, Jens, have written about this in ijfm.dreamhosters.com/PDFs_IJFM/34_1-4_PDFs/IJFM_34_1-4-Bernhard.pdf and also in middlepathinitiative.net/why-buddhists-do-not-want-to-become-christians/.

While these two edges intersect, they are not the same. One is social and cultural; the other is conceptual and internal. Together, they necessitate a fresh approach to inviting people to follow Jesus within Buddhist contexts.

These two edges are shaping a new kind of missional landscape—one in which traditional assumptions no longer hold. The disaffiliation of young Buddhists and the internal rethinking among messengers together demand more than minor adjustments. They call for a fundamental reexamination of where the barriers truly lie—and how people can begin to follow Jesus without first adopting another identity. To understand this, we must start with the first edge.

Post-Buddhist Disaffiliation

Traditional mission narratives often depict the unreached as remote peoples with limited access to the good news. However, in Thailand, many individuals who are considered “unreached” reside in city centers and university campuses and are digitally connected. Among Thailand’s Gen Z, the edge is not geographical—it’s psychological and cultural.

A significant shift is occurring, with many young Thais no longer identifying as Buddhist and some not even nominally so. Unlike previous generations, they don’t engage in rituals, visit temples, or offer donations to monks unless required by family tradition. And they feel no shame about this indifference. There is no weight of responsibility in upholding the tradition; for them, Buddhism has simply become irrelevant. Much of this stems from the perception that institutional Buddhism fails to address practical needs, instead focusing on rituals and outward form.

However, this disaffiliation has not led to atheism. Instead, several trends are emerging:

- Continued reliance on luck or auspicious practices before exams or major life events.
- A leaning toward pragmatic life philosophy, including a simplified form of Buddhism, focused on harmony, balance, and inner peace.
- An openness in seeking emotional well-being, meaning, and ethical decision-making—guided by personal values rather than institutional religion.

This post-Buddhist disaffiliation is not anti-religious; instead, it is characterized by an anti-institutional, skeptical stance rooted in the search for meaning and personal relevance.

Post-Institutionalized Message Paradigm

The second, and arguably more challenging, edge is deeply personal as it requires those of us sharing the gospel to confront our own assumptions.

We refer to this edge as the post-institutionalized message paradigm: a way of communicating Jesus that distinguishes the good news from Christian

identity, Western liturgical forms, and the institutional framework of the Church.

The core issue isn’t a lack of access, as many of Thailand’s Gen Z have smartphones, nearby churches, and online sermons readily available in their language.



Instead, the primary challenge is an aversion to a change in religious identity. For many in Thailand, identifying as “Christian” carries significant risks, including social alienation, strained family relationships due to misunderstandings, and negative perceptions due to its foreignness, association as Western, and a growing skepticism toward institutional religion.

Despite efforts at bridging the culture gap, even “contextualized Christianity” often struggles to overcome this psychological barrier. The continued emphasis on converting to Christianity as a requirement of following Jesus might inadvertently

strengthen the very resistance we hope to alleviate. Therefore, it's vital to nurture inclusive approaches that allow people to follow Jesus without needing to adopt a Christian label.

Beyond Contextualization

We do not merely call for deeper contextualization; instead, it's a demand for a meta-contextual shift—a fundamental rethinking of how the message of Jesus can be lived out and shared.

We must move:

- From transferring religious identity to spiritual transformation.
- From cultural extraction to valuing the preservation of relationships.
- From requiring people to adopt the label of “Christian” to helping them live in alignment with God’s kingdom and the path of Jesus.

A meta-contextualized approach enables people to follow Jesus from within their existing cultural frameworks—whether Buddhist, secular, or undefined—without first exiting those identities, in order to deepen their faith.

Practically, this means:

- Discipling people within their current relationships and cultural settings.
- Affirming their pursuit of wholeness, peace, and compassion.
- Encouraging transformation that feels organic and authentic, not forced or institutionalized.

A Relevant Gospel

For the message of Jesus to resonate with Thailand’s Gen Z, many of whom are post-Buddhist or only nominally Buddhist, it must:

- Offer practical solutions.
- Demonstrate genuine emotional understanding.
- Speak to their lived experiences and concerns.
- Address their struggles with relational breakdown, anxiety, and identity.

The message’s success relies on authentic friendships, personal role modeling, and the consistent

demonstration of integrity—a life that reflects the values it promotes.

Abstract theology or a rule-based religion won’t resonate with the younger generation. However, the core message of Jesus—forgiveness, healing, purpose, and renewal—remains incredibly powerful, particularly when it can be encountered within their cultural identity and is relevant to their daily experiences.

Ultimately, young Thais are not seeking membership in a religious system. They are seeking meaningful transformation.

The Present Problem

I’ve watched curious and open-minded young Thais walk into Bible studies and quietly walk away—not because of Jesus, but because the Christian format felt unfamiliar and intimidating. They often could not relate to the forms of group worship, preaching, or prayer.

There is simply no equivalent in their upbringing for singing worship songs or speaking out in group prayer. They were not rejecting Jesus but rather the foreignness of the format with which the message was presented. What was meant to be inviting, instead created a sense of distance.

This is not a criticism of how Christians practice their faith—but a call for relevant forms of worship and faith expression that resonate with the present society for those in a Buddhist majority society.

We must be willing to:

- Listen deeply.
- Experiment courageously.
- Model expressions of faith that are relationally natural and culturally familiar.

Additionally, we need to stop the harmful practice of taking people out of their existing world and transplanting them into a Christian subculture. Rather, we should aim to allow faith in Jesus to emerge organically within Buddhist, post-Buddhist, and secular communities, enabling authentic spiritual growth.

We must avoid equating success with church attendance, mistaking identity change for spiritual transformation,

or merely substituting one set of institutional forms for another. True success should be defined by a life progressively centered on Jesus marked by genuine, grace-filled, honest, and loving relationships, and fostering communities that honor Jesus, even if they avoid using traditional religious language.

Reaching the Edge

As the edge shifts, our approach must shift with it. Thailand's Gen Z is primarily hindered by the perceptions that understand Christianity as foreign, institutional, and detached from lived experience.

If we require people to become "Christian" to follow Jesus, we risk obscuring the good news we seek to share. But if we release that demand, we discover something surprising: The desire to follow Jesus may already be there—hidden, cautious, waiting for permission.

The future of discipleship in Buddhist-majority contexts hinges on a deeper understanding of both post-Buddhist disaffiliation and a post-institutionalized message paradigm.

It requires stepping beyond the framework of religious conversion and embracing a more dynamic, organic path toward Jesus—one that does not require a

cultural or identity shift. It asks us to reimagine how we communicate and embody the gospel, creating spaces where spiritual transformation can unfold naturally within pre-existing identities and relationships.


This shift is not about watering down the good news. It is about removing barriers that prevent people from seeing Jesus clearly.

When we allow discipleship to emerge from within existing identities and relationships, we open new ways for authentic and unforced evangelism, as well as fostering sincere spiritual growth.

Instead of transplanting individuals into a Christian subculture, we encourage them to live out their faith authentically within their own diverse communities.

Conclusion: The Real Edge

Ultimately, we need to step beyond the traditional missional framework and trust the good news to flourish organically—outside of institutional control and beyond the boundaries of religious identity.

This is not about making discipleship easier. It is about liberating the gospel from our frameworks so that Jesus can be known, followed, and loved—on the edges and beyond. 

LEARN MORE



Mobilizing Gen Z

Jolene Erlacher & Katy White

Jolene Erlacher and Katy White blend leading research with the voices of current mission practitioners to unpack the dynamics behind our changing culture and the resulting impact on the church. They reach the conclusion that God has already provided a solution for such a time as this—Gen Z (b. 1996–2010).

Mobilizing Gen Z provides practical tools and strategies for engaging, equipping, and retaining Gen Z missionaries. Are we ready to pass the torch?



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Christianity and the Challenge of Religions

Challenges and Contextual Approaches

By **Dr. KANG-SAN TAN**

Dr. Kang-San Tan is General Director of BMS World Mission. Previously, he also served as Head of Mission Studies at Redcliffe College and Director for Mission Research for OMF. He completed his doctoral studies in missiology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, USA. He also has a PhD in Theology of Religions from Aberdeen University.

Christian mission originates in the nature of the Trinitarian God, whose essence is love, and whose desire is to draw all people into a relationship of worship and communion with him. The Church, as a missional community, is not only the recipient of salvation but also a participant in bearing witness to God's redemptive love in Christ to the world. This calling entails engaging the frontiers of globalization, poverty, and religion—domains that are deeply interrelated and require thoughtful, strategic approaches to mission.

Religion, for the purposes of this article, is understood as “a set of institutionalised rituals identified with a tradition and expressing and/or evoking sacral sentiments directed at a divine or trans-divine focus seen in the context of the human phenomenological environment, and at least partially described by myths or doctrines.”¹ To be classified as a religion, three criteria must generally be met: (1) belief in an Ultimate Reality that transcends the immediate world, (2) religious practices oriented toward understanding or communing with this reality, and (3) a community of adherents who share in this pursuit.

In contemporary discourse, the term “religion” is often used to refer to major world religions such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism. However, it is important to recognize that religious identity is only one aspect of a person's being. As Edward Said argued, “no one today is

purely one thing,”² and survival increasingly depends on recognizing the interconnectedness of various identities and traditions.

What are the edges of mission? Beyond the proclamation of the gospel, Christian mission must engage with the crises of poverty, of peace, and of the planet (or ecological concerns). Regardless of new frontiers with which Christianity seeks to engage, the challenge of engaging religions remains a central concern for Christian mission.

This article explores the challenges posed by religious pluralism to Christian mission in the contemporary world. Grounded in a Trinitarian theology, it seeks to reframe the conversation around mission by addressing the complex intersections between globalization, poverty, and religion. In particular, it analyses the limited success of Christian mission from a Western influenced worldview into the frontiers of Asian religions, reflecting on historical, theological, and strategic reasons for this impasse. The discussion culminates in a proposal for a contextual and relational approach to mission that recognizes the socio-cultural embeddedness of religious traditions.

¹ Smart, N. *The Religious Experience* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1981), 15-25.

² Said, E. *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1994).



The Challenge of Religions in Missiological Thought

Numerous missiologists—including David Bosch, Jacques Dupuis, Gerhard Anderson, Terry Muck, Frances Muck, Gerald McDermott and Harold Netland—have identified the challenge of religions as one of the most significant and complex issues facing Christian mission in the modern era. Bosch notably described the formulation of a theology of religions as “the largest unresolved problem of the Christian church.”³ McDermott and Netland similarly emphasized that responsible theology in a global Church must address the nuanced debates surrounding contextualization and religious pluralism, drawing on insights from scholars across continents.⁴

Historically, the evangelical approach has often sought to replace other religions with Christianity. Yet this strategy has met with limited success, especially in Asia. Unlike the significant growth of Christianity in Europe, North America, Latin America, and parts

of Africa, evangelical missions in Asia have struggled to generate mass conversions.

As Muck and Muck have argued, the history of evangelical mission in Asia reflects a consistent pattern of ineffectiveness in terms of mass movements turning to Christ within world religions.⁵

Statistical data supports this observation: The percentage of the global population identifying as Christian has remained relatively stable over the past century, shifting only slightly from 34.8% in 1910 to 33.2% in

2010.⁶ Projections suggest only modest growth in the coming decades. This stagnation signals the need for a re-evaluation of mission strategies—not merely to increase numbers but to embody God’s desire for a reconciled humanity.

Obstacles to Mission in the Asian Religious Context

Christian mission in Asia has faced unique challenges, many of which are deeply rooted in historical and cultural realities. One key factor is that the major Asian religious traditions—Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism—were well-established long before the arrival of Christianity. These systems offer comprehensive and resilient worldviews that provide explanations for suffering, ethical guidance, and existential meaning, often rendering them resistant to new religious narratives.

Furthermore, these religions are deeply embedded in the cultural and intellectual fabric of their societies. Unlike animistic traditions, they possess canonical texts, institutional structures, and theological doctrines that have been transmitted over millennia. Religious beliefs in Asia are not merely intellectual commitments but are woven into mythology, family traditions, social customs, and national identities.

Colonial history also plays a role. While Christianity in Africa and Latin America often spread alongside or through colonial dominance, colonial influence in Asia was largely restricted to coastal regions and driven by trade. In many cases, colonial powers actively discouraged missionary activity, particularly among Muslims and Hindus. Consequently, Christianity in Asia developed without the advantages—however problematic—of state support.

Jonathan Bonk notes another profound difficulty: Many religions lay exclusive claim to particular revelations or myths, often resisting external theological engagement.⁷ These proprietary claims are deeply defended, not only theologically but socially and politically. As belief systems pass through generations, their embeddedness

3 Bosch, D. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 476-477.

4 McDermott, G. and Netland, H. *A Trinitarian Theology of Religions: An Evangelical Proposal* (Oxford: OUP, 2014).

5 Muck, T., & Muck, F. *Christianity Encountering World Religions: The Practice of Mission in the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009).

6 Barrett, D., G. Kurian, & T. Johnson *World Christian Encyclopedia*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

7 J. Bonk, “Religions and the Common Good,” in *International Bulletin for Missionary Research*, 35, No. 4 (2011), 185–186.

can lead to the perception of myths as incontrovertible truths, fuelling both intra- and interreligious conflict.

Globalization and Interreligious Complexity

The processes of globalization further complicate interreligious engagement. Political, economic, and cultural forces shape religious boundaries and interactions, often exacerbating tensions. For instance, in the post-9/11 world, Christian mission efforts among Muslim populations occur in a climate of mutual suspicion, hostility, and fear. As such, interfaith dialogue and mission cannot be isolated from their socio-political contexts.

Moreover, religious engagement today involves not only theological dialogue but the navigation of issues like economic disparity, ethnic identity, and post-colonial memory. Treating interreligious engagement merely as a religious activity risks oversimplifying the task and overlooking the deeper structural forces that inhibit mutual understanding and cooperation.

Toward a Trinitarian Theology of Religions and Inreligionisation

Given these complexities, Christian mission must be re-envisioned through a Trinitarian theology that embraces God's relational and inclusive nature. A Trinitarian missiology views mission not as conquest, but as participation in God's ongoing work of reconciliation. This orientation calls for what might be termed **inreligionization**—an incarnational model in which the gospel engages religions from within, seeking transformation rather than replacement.


Rather than presenting Christianity as a competing system, missionaries must enter religious cultures with humility, recognizing God's presence and activity beyond the traditional boundaries of the Church. Inreligionization involves deep listening, contextual theology, and a willingness to see the gospel in conversation with local wisdom, narratives, and spiritual insights. Mission is no longer bringing a foreign gospel to replace world religions but a pilgrim witness whereby both Christians as well as different religious practitioners are transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

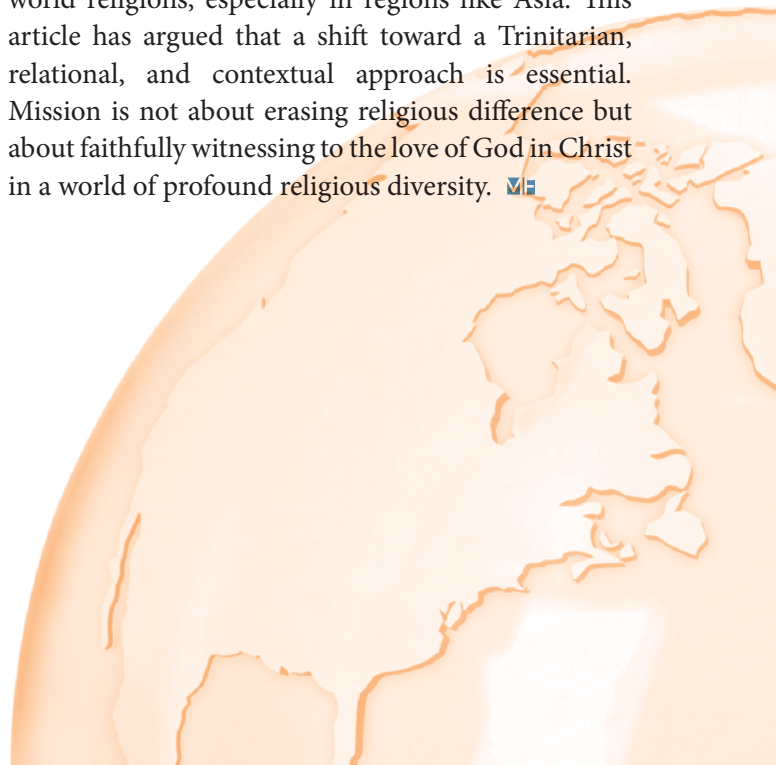
Missional Themes for the Future

In light of the above, five key missional themes should guide future engagement:

1. **Contextualization:** Theology must emerge from within the lived experience of local cultures and religious contexts.
2. **Mutual Witness:** Interfaith dialogue should foster reciprocal learning, where Christians bear witness to Christ while also listening attentively to others.
3. **Strategic Humility:** Mission strategies must acknowledge past failures and avoid triumphalism or cultural imperialism.
4. **Relational Engagement:** Authentic relationships across religious boundaries are essential to credible mission.
5. **Theological Innovation:** The Church must cultivate theological frameworks that are hospitable to pluralism without compromising the uniqueness of Christ.

Conclusion

The challenge of religions is not merely a theological concern but a strategic and relational one. As Christian mission enters a new era of global complexity, it must reckon with the embeddedness and resilience of other world religions, especially in regions like Asia. This article has argued that a shift toward a Trinitarian, relational, and contextual approach is essential. Mission is not about erasing religious difference but about faithfully witnessing to the love of God in Christ in a world of profound religious diversity. 





A Nomadic Journey Through Scripture & Beyond

By **RON AHLBRECHT**

Ron Ahlbrecht is a nomadic peoples advocate with over 30 years of experience living among and learning from nomads. He equips others to engage nomadic cultures through research, biblical insights, and practical training, helping reframe mission strategies for today's mobile and marginalized communities.

When we look at Scripture through a nomadic lens, we see that God has been fulfilling his purposes through nomadic culture since the first chapters of the Bible. Almost all the positive role models in the Old Testament were nomads. God has always blessed and used nomadic ethos to build his kingdom. And we see that commands for believers today are in line with standard nomadic practice. Let's look at what God is doing with and through nomads and join him!

The positive role models in biblical history start at the very beginning. Can you name one from the Old Testament who was NOT a nomad?

God created Adam and Eve and set them in the garden as hunter-gatherers who were priest and priestess and vice-regents before God, but with no building for themselves or for God. The entire garden, somewhere east of Eden, was an open-air temple to meet with God.

Their own children, starting with Cain and Abel, naturally inherited nomadic identity. Then Cain began farming. Did that make him stop being a nomad? Not necessarily. Many nomads throughout history have some family members who tend crops. Cain was producing food that everyone else in the clan would need.

Abel was also producing things that everyone needed, but not food! What were the people wearing when they came out of the garden? Leather robes, according to Genesis 3:21. The Hebrew term is only used in reference to the kind of long sleeved, decorated robes worn by priests and royalty, like the robe Jacob gave his favored son Joseph. Noah's sacrifices after his little clan of eight came out of the ark, were continuing the system that God had initiated in the garden at which he had covered the shame of humanity with the skin of an animal. After all that, God gave authority to eat meat. So, Abel's work of shepherding provided for ongoing sacrifices for atonement and leather clothing for shame. God had warned Cain that he also would be accepted if he did what Abel did, which was... offer a high quality, unblemished lamb. Cain could easily have gotten one from his brother. Instead, Cain had broken a cardinal law from the nomad code of ethics. As the first born, the safety and care of his younger brother should have been his primary duty.

In a Discovery Bible Study on that passage, when we got to the part where God confronts Cain about his brother, and Cain replies, "Am I my brother's keeper?" a Pashtun Muslim jumped up and shouted, "OF COURSE! OF COURSE, he was his brother's keeper!" I have never seen a settled person understand that passage so deeply. Try it yourself: Study the scriptures with nomads, listen to what they see happening in the Scriptures, and you will learn a whole new perspective on what God is doing!

God blesses and uses nomadic ethos to build his kingdom. Here are some examples of God's work in relation to our five points (N.O.M.A.D.) of nomadic identity.

Abraham is constantly **Networking** relationships. When his nephew's part of the clan is captured with the people of Sodom, Abraham's alliance with two other nomadic clans comes to rescue the settled folks from the invaders (maybe also nomads).

When **Organized** by clan, loyalty is required, and the punishment for breaking this rule is excommunication or "social boycott." This is what Cain experienced as his punishment for the murder of his brother, the brother he should have been protecting. Nomads

often refer to this as a removal of the social covering. It is considered a fate worse than death.

Throughout Abraham's life, along with the other patriarchs, nearly every episode involves **Mobility as Resource**.

Abraham demonstrated his **Autonomy**, his freedom to choose his loyalties, by accepting the feast and blessing of Melchizedek and rejecting payment from the corrupt Sodom alliance.

Jacob and his sons were clearly **Distinct** from those sedentary Egyptians. But the Egyptians also needed meat and leather, so nomads could live in Goshen. As is typical, settled people think nomads are dirty, impoverished, and uncivilized. On the other hand, nomads think city people are arrogant, selfish, and... uncivilized. Knowing this, Joseph wisely asked for his tribe to be allowed to occupy Goshen, to keep the two opposite civilizations separate and distinct.

When we look at Scripture through a nomadic lens, we see that God has been fulfilling his purposes through nomadic culture since the first chapters of the Bible.

God has been the Good Shepherd, king of nomads, from Genesis through Revelation and to today. But, as one nomadic prophet declared, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and YHWH—'He IS'—has laid upon him the iniquity of us all" (Isa 53:6). This verse speaks deeply to nomads. Of course, nomadic pastoralists know all about the difficulties of keeping track of the animals in their herd. The mobility mentioned in this verse is about going the wrong way! We all like sheep have wandered away: nomads as well as settled people. Sheep have moved AWAY from their shepherd, but there is more. It is not just about sinful waywardness. Nomads understand that going the wrong way and doing your own thing is also a departure from the community... a betrayal of the loyal love of the Good Shepherd and his community of faith. But the Good Shepherd has placed the iniquities of us all on his Servant.

NOMAD identity made a difference for the shepherds outside Bethlehem who were not the only nomads, just the most obvious ones. Tents were common dwellings throughout both Testaments. Priscilla, Aquila, and Paul had a market for their tents. Mobility was still a common resource for herding animals or for services and trades by Hebrews, Arabs, and others. Four or five thousand people easily assembled on hillsides for teaching and miraculous feasts. The groups of 50 mentioned by Luke, could form quite naturally around kinship groups. Later, when Paul was converted, he went out to “Arabia.” That could be a good place to meet shepherds from as far away as Bethlehem who were still multiplying the good news for all people.

The Good Shepherd’s message continued to be spread by nomads, Hebrew and Arab *Bedouin*. *Amazigh* (*Berber*, *Tuareg*) nomads took it across North Africa and down across the Sahara while others took it along the east to Egypt and Ethiopia. Persian nomads took it north into Central Asia meeting Turkic nomads who took it all the way to China. Other Hebrew nomads, like Thomas, took it all the way to South India where there were already Jewish trading posts. When nomads from northwest Europe came south and sacked Rome, they took the Christian message back with them.

But by 300 AD, Christianity had begun to fossilize into the shape of Greco-Roman buildings and social structures, leaving nomads feeling abandoned. In the vacuum, a merchant nomad arose with a message of subservience. Nomads of the Persian Gulf took up the new religion of Islam with a vengeance. Once again, *Amazigh* nomads joined the *Bedouin* to take it west across North Africa and the Sahara. Soon, *Fulani* nomads took it farther south across the African Sahel. Somali and other nomads took it across Eastern Africa where now only settled urban pockets and Ethiopian Highlanders remain Christian. Eventually, Arab slave traders took it down to Malawi in southeastern Africa.

Challenges

Nomads, like other tribal peoples, typically don’t trust outsiders. If you hear and obey Jesus’ call to nomads, this will be your first challenge. In the beginning, you only have two options: Either you are an enemy to be protected against, or you are a cow to be milked. It is

vitaly important to recognize why! And why if you do win a few converts, there is little room for rejoicing.

Do you know this song: “I once was lost, but now I’m found; was blind, but now I see”? Well, what if I told you that converted nomads often feel more lost than before they were found, and blind, unable to see value in this strange individualistic, building-centric, Christian life. Why should they have to abandon their own unique heritage? I didn’t have to abandon mine. Did you have to abandon yours? If so, in what way?

But that’s what happens when you try to take your nomad friend off his/her camel and put them in a building-centric church.

But what if you focus on putting the church on their camel? Or, leaving that metaphor, what if we bring the Good Shepherd into nomadic communities?

We know that...

Jesus heals broken relational networks!

The Good Shepherd gathers and restores dysfunctional clans and tribes!


He is constantly on the move leading his flocks!

He wants us to be autonomous from worldliness and any world system that goes against his divine code of conduct!

We share a distinctive heritage in the nomadic patriarchs through Jesus, our shepherd king!

Many early Christ-followers recognized Jesus as the Good Shepherd of Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, Jeremiah 23, and Zechariah 10. In John 10, Jesus said, “I have other sheep.”

Will you join him in calling them? Will you teach them to follow the good shepherd king?

Recognizing that God is the good and true shepherd king of all nomads, I now have two missions in life. One is to teach settled people the biblical lessons I have learned from nomads. The other is to help nomads remember their first love; to leave off following a nomad merchant and return to their true and good shepherd king. Will you join me? Let’s keep talking and walking with nomads following Jesus! 

An Asian Missiology?

Re-imagining Mission Beyond the Western Conception of Religion

By **CLAIRE TC CHONG** All Scripture references taken from the NIV.

Claire Chong (PhD) lived in Cambodia for 15 years. She is presently a research and training associate with the Singapore Center for Global Missions and a research tutor for Fuller Seminary's Doctor of Global Leadership program.

The Edge of Mission

In 1555, Gaspar da Cruz, a Portuguese Dominican, was the first-known missionary to have arrived in Lovek (Cambodia). However, after one year, he abandoned his mission, concluding that the Khmers were impenetrable to the gospel because of their loyalty to the king and their religious way of life.¹ In 2025, the echoes of this reason still ring true; it is not uncommon to hear Cambodians say, “Your Jesus is good, but you have your religion, and I have mine.”

The resistance of the Khmers to the gospel is also apparent—and arguably more so—in Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand.² Despite active evangelization by Catholics and Protestants for more than four centuries, Christian presence in Buddhist Southeast Asia remains marginal at best, with most conversions among animist minority groups but not the majority Buddhist populations. Does this Theravada belt still

constitute the edge of mission? The gospel of Christ has been preached across many parts of the Mekong Indosphere; the people have heard, but they have decidedly not embraced the gospel of the messengers. I submit, in this article, that the edge of missions is not defined by the “unreachedness” of a community but the limits of *our own* Christian missiological methods.

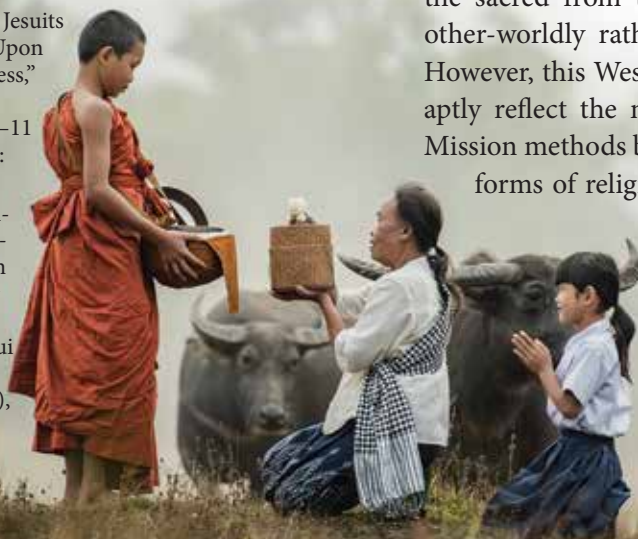
Modern cross-cultural missions emerged from a specific socio-historical context and intellectual tradition shaped by the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and imperial and colonial enterprises. Critically, the methods of proselytizing the Christian faith and envisioning a God-centered way of life are based on a particularistic understanding of religion and how it should be practiced—that religion is a coherent system of beliefs hermeneutically constructed from scriptural texts, and from these beliefs flow actions; religion is a matter of individual choice, a personal relationship with a Divine, and a private practice; religion sets apart the sacred from the profane or secular, valorizing other-worldly rather than this-worldly aspirations.³ However, this Western construct of religion does not aptly reflect the majority of lived realities in Asia. Mission methods based on such conceptions produce

forms of religion that create dissonances among the receiving communities. This essay invites us—frontier mission thinkers

1 Vanessa Loureiro, “The Jesuits in Cambodia: A Look Upon Cambodian Religiousness,” *Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies* vol. 10–11 (June–December 2005): 196.

2 Stephen Bailey, “Christianity in Theravada Buddhist Southeast Asia,” in *Emerging Faith: Lessons from Mission History in Asia*, ed. Paul H. de Neuvi (Littleton, CO: William Carey Publishing, 2020), 107–117.

3 Dubuisson, Daniel, *The Western Construction of Religion: Myths, Knowledge, and Ideology* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).



and practitioners—to explore how “religion” is lived and practiced in other parts of the world and to reimagine our missiology accordingly. Here, I share two emerging perspectives from my analysis of the Cambodian *sasna* (“religion”).

***Sasna* (“Religion”) as a Marker of Collective Identity**

The concept of religion as a system of beliefs and practices was only introduced in Asia during the colonial era.⁴ Not that ideologies and practices pertaining to spirits and the afterlife did not exist before, but the notion of religion as a discrete domain distinct from other aspects of life and subject to individual choice was largely alien to pre-colonial mentalities. In fact, several historians and anthropologists have shown that etymologically there is no indigenous word equivalent to the Western term, religion.⁵

This is true in the Cambodian context as well. In at least two Khmer-French dictionaries in the 1870s, the Khmer word *sas* សាសន៍ and its cognate, *sasna* សាសនា, which today denote race and religion respectively, appeared as single entries and were interchangeably translated as religion or race.⁶ Before the introduction of the sacred-secular divide by Western modernism, *sasna* referred to a total, holistic way of life that was inherently religious.

Although many Cambodians nowadays linguistically separate *sas* and *sasna*, in the collective consciousness of Khmer Buddhists (less so among Christians), “religion” is still intimately associated with civilizational identity. In a 2023 study on religion in South and Southeast Asia by the Pew Research Center, 97% of Cambodians consider Buddhism to be a vital part of who they are; it is “a culture one is part of,” “a family tradition one must follow,” “an ethnicity one is

born into,” and “a central part of national identity.”⁷ Interestingly, patriotism is a more important “religious” value than following the Buddhist precept of not drinking alcohol.⁸ Similar patterns of thought are also evident in other Theravada societies, suggesting that to these peoples, Buddhism as a religion diverges from the conventional definitions and operates within a different framework of parameters. In Theravada worlds, “religion” embodies history and culture and is integral to nationhood; it is not so much about a private faith for individual salvation as it is about a communal practice inextricably linked to collective identity and solidarity.

***Sasna* (“Religion”) as a Moral and Emotional Practice**

In contrast to the Western perspective in which world religions are categorized according to beliefs, in Cambodian lived realities, beliefs are not primary determinants of people’s identities. Most men and women on the street are not able to articulate core Buddhist tenets such as the Four Noble Truths, but they would categorically profess to be Buddhists. People do not make offerings to their deceased loved ones because of certain cogent conceptions of the ontological nature of spirits or a doctrinal understanding of *puñña* (merit). Lay beliefs are diverse and eclectic, morphing with varying situations. Just within the last 10 years, hungry ghosts transformed from spirits who could not enter temple premises to beings who can be found within sacred spaces, though lingering at the peripheries. Religion as lived and practiced is not defined by Orientalist conceptions of textual scripturalism. Belief in Buddhism does not hold the same currency as it does in Christianity, especially in Protestantism.

Rather, *sasna* is a practice of life characterized by shared customs, values, and emotions which are religiously imbued. The Khmer word *sasna* is derived from the Pali term *sāsana* which refers to the teachings or advice of the Buddha for wise living. *Sāsana* is not about special revelatory truth-claims of the Divine and afterlife that

4 Masuzawa, Tomoko, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

5 Picard, Michel, *The Appropriation of Religion in Southeast Asia and Beyond* (Cham: Springer, 2017); Mitsutoshi Horii, *The Category of “Religion” in Contemporary Japan: Shukyo and Temple Buddhism* (Cham: Springer, 2018).

6 Claire Chong and Samnang Tep, “Can Cambodian Christians ‘Worship’ their Parents? A Hermeneutical Dialogue,” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 39, no. 1 (Spring 2022), 37–41.

7 Pew Research Center, “Buddhism, Islam and Religious Pluralism in South and Southeast Asia” (September 2023), available at www.pewresearch.org/religion/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2023/09/pr_2023.09.12_se-asia_report.pdf, 10–11.

8 Ibid, 67.

require faith but general realities that can be discerned by keen observation of life. For example, the beauty of flowers is fleeting, the strength of a lion fades, and human happiness comes and goes—all existential phenomena are impermanent. This insight should therefore encourage people to maintain a healthy distance from temporary things and not be consumed by them. The call to respond does not require believing but realizing the nature of life and living wisely.

The Buddha's *sāsana*, which may be compared to the collection of Jesus' teachings, such as the Sermon of the Mount, the beatitudes, and his parables, is a different genre of knowledge from theological doctrines. Central to Buddhist teachings, such as the Three Characteristics of Existence, the Eight-fold Noble Path, or the Ten Meritorious Deeds, is the eradication of unwholesome roots that lead to turmoil and suffering and the establishment of wholesome states of mind-heart-and-being. According to a renowned Buddhist scholar, Maria Heim, the development of moral emotions is pivotal to the Buddhist practice of life,⁹ and in Khmer society, these include a profound sense of indebtedness to parents—living or deceased—and forebears of the Khmer race, and a deep compassion to all beings including hungry ghosts condemned to a life of misery because of their bad *kamma* (actions). Cultivation of such affective characteristics, and not the profession of propositional truths, determine collective identities. While the European Enlightenment has privileged intellectuality over affectivity, in societies not predominantly shaped by this Western tradition, such as that of Cambodia, being a Buddhist is not defined by what they think and espouse but how they feel and relate with others. The value of a religion is measured not by the cogency of its doctrines but the virtuosity of its adherents.

Implications for Christian Mission

This article invites us to consider the Theravada conception of *sasna* ("religion") and to reimagine missiological approaches, working within local paradigms of understanding. It is assumed that how

we conceive religion shapes the way we construct our mission methods. For example, if we conceive religion as a system of beliefs, evangelization involves the communication of the gospel as a message of doctrinal ideologies, which require intellectual assent by the recipients. However, if religion were conceived as shared practices, values, and emotions, introducing Jesus and sharing faith in him may take on more communal, relational, and affective approaches. In this concluding section, I raise a few questions to open the conversation.

Is it possible to re-envision a missiological approach based on a non-dualistic understanding of "religion"? Can we do missions in a way that respects the place of Buddhism in Theravada polities? The work of the Dominican friar Silvestre de Azevedo may inform our missiology.¹⁰ Azevedo won the trust of the devoted Buddhist King Barom Reachea II, who allowed the missionary to establish churches and even provided assistance for the translation of Christian resources into Khmer. Unfortunately, as the mission expanded with the arrival of other missionaries who were less religio-culturally cognizant, the king's good will ceased because the Christian mission was perceived as a socio-political threat. All missionaries but one—Friar Azevedo—were expelled.

Can followers of Jesus demonstrate their love for country, history, and culture by honoring the traditional religio-cultural practices of the land? Revelation 7:9 portrays a picture in which a multitude of people of every *ethnos*, *phulon*, *laon*, *glosson* will stand before the throne of Jesus. The word *ethnos* does not merely refer to an abstract identification but denotes divergent lived practices. Beyond cultural garments and indigenous languages, this prophetic verse depicts a profound diversity of life of different traditions and social habits, and varying thought paradigms and moral sensibilities. The uniquely distinct ways of life of every *ethnos* will be represented—not just a universal form in different packaging. Additionally, the word *ethnos* in the New Testament is often translated as Gentiles.¹¹ To Jewish

⁹ Maria Heim, "The Philosophy of Emotion in Buddhist Philosophy (and a Close Look at Remorse and Regret)," *Journal of Buddhist Philosophy* 5 (2023): 2–25.

¹⁰ Vanessa Loureiro, "The Jesuits in Cambodia: A Look Upon Cambodian Religiousness," *Bulletin of Portuguese-Japanese Studies* vol. 10–11 (June–December 2005): 197–198.

¹¹ For example, Matt 6:32, Matt 10:5, 18, Luke 2:32, Luke 18:32, Acts 10:45, Acts 15:12.

listeners, *ethnos* bore an inferior connotation—referring to the non-Jews with their heathen rituals. However, Revelation 7:9 suggests that indigenous practices will be redeemed and sanctified in Christ and will not be eradicated.

Can knowing Jesus occur through corporeal and affective rather than cognitive approaches? Acts 17:27 suggests that the Greeks may *pselaphao*—grobe and feel—their way to God. Additionally, Acts 17:28 alludes that it is through our living with each other and movements in our world that we have our being. Furthermore, Old and New Testament words such as *yada* or *ginosko* (know), *biyn* (understand), *pisteuo* (believe) carry highly relational, visceral, and affective nuances.¹² These suggest an alternative epistemology—that ways of knowing are not merely cerebral through cognitive understanding of theological conceptions alone, but that knowing God and understanding his ways occur also through enacted, embodied, and emotional practices through the senses and affects. It is probable that modern Christianity has privileged intellectualist approaches and neglected somatic and social ones because of the Enlightenment intellectual tradition.

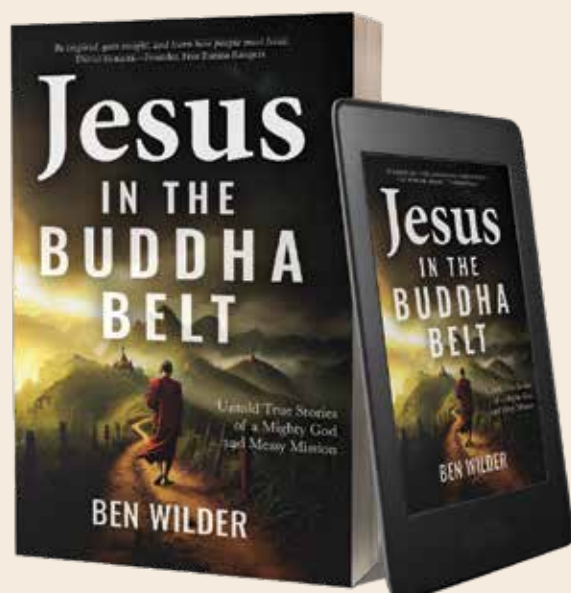
¹² For example, *yada* in Gen 4:1 and Ps 46:10, *ginosko* in Luke 1:34 and John 17:3, *biyn* in Prov 3:5, and *pisteuo* in Acts 16:31.

Similarly, discipleship could emphasize the cultivation and embodiment of virtuous emotions and not merely focus on acquiring right beliefs. Rather than viewing Bible study and discursive discussions as the crux of discipleship, could God's Living Word be embedded in enacted stories, recitations, religious artefacts, cultural customs, local arts, and daily rhythms such that the embodied Word shapes and transforms moral sensibilities, emotional dispositions, and behavioral instincts? Could followers of Jesus embody *metta* (lovingkindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *mudita* (sympathetic joy), and *upekkhā* (equanimity)—virtues esteemed in Buddhist societies—in Christ?

Conclusion

In this article, I have defined the “edge” of mission not by the geographical limits of the gospel but the limits of our own missiological imaginations, which are based on the Western construct of religion. If we can accept that, in some places, religion is not merely a discrete set of beliefs but a practice of life—a practice of living and moving and becoming—and that God's redemptive work could be accomplished through divergent conceptual paradigms, Christian mission may move beyond propositional evangelization and discipleship and toward more holistic approaches. 📖

LEARN MORE



Jesus in the Buddha Belt

Ben Wilder

With unflinching honesty, a former Buddhist monk, a comfortable Christian, and two urban immigrants recount gut-wrenching battles with family, society, and their own misconceptions, risking everything to follow Jesus in the war-torn epicenter of Buddhism. These true stories pull back the curtain on racial tension, murder, betrayal—and the miraculous ways God is working among Buddhists despite them.



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PRESS

Mission at the Edge of the Screen



By **ANDREW FENG** and **ROMANS TEN** (Pseudonym) All Scripture references used are from the NIV.

Andrew Feng is the founder of Indigitous US, driving innovation at the intersection of faith and technology. He empowers believers to reach digital spaces with creative strategies for the gospel.

Romans Ten is a gaming strategist and digital evangelist who helps creators grow online. Founder of REACH Conference, he equips believers to share the gospel in gaming spaces worldwide. Connect via andrew.feng@indigitous.org and Romans@guardiansgold.com.

The Island We Refuse to See

At 2 a.m., a Roblox clan leader named Aria poured out her nihilism on Discord. Fifty teammates listened. No Christian spoke.

Forty years ago, the frontier of mission looked like a jungle airstrip. Today, it's a voice channel that never sleeps. If your missions budget still files Roblox under "youth entertainment," you're funding yesterday's Great Commission.

The term "missions" still evokes huts and unreached tribes—but today's unreached hang out in Roblox, stream on Twitch, or connect anonymously in Discord servers. The most spiritually open conversations now happen with headphones on and avatars up. Mission needs a new mental map.

"How can they hear without someone preaching to them?" —Romans 10:14

This article argues that the digital gaming ecosystem is one of the most overlooked yet urgent frontiers of global mission. These aren't distractions—they're the new "villages" of the gospel. Let's stop asking, "Is it valid?"

and start asking, "Who's already there waiting to be discipled?" It's time to show up where people already are.

Play·Stay·Disciple—A One-Line Strategy

Play where gamers play. Roughly 3 billion people game globally. Yet well under 0.1% of Twitch or Roblox creators share explicit gospel content.¹

Gaming is more than escapism—it's identity formation. If Gen Z is spending six hours a day here, why wouldn't we? In many closed countries, Roblox is the only uncensored platform. Where they game, we go.

Stay long enough to earn trust—hours in chat, seasons in a guild. Seminary Greek means little if you rage-quit before the raid ends. The digital mission field doesn't reward drive-by evangelism. It rewards patient presence.

Disciple in native mechanics: Quest-lines morph into Discovery Bible Study; clan ranks become leadership pipelines. Instead of inviting people "off platform" to encounter Jesus, bring Jesus into their digital world.

¹ *Indigitous and CV Global Gaming Report*, ed. Indigitous (Internal Report, 2023), ndgt.us/gaming-report.

Reaching the Full Spectrum of Gamers

Gaming isn't just for teens in basements—it spans ages, genders, and platforms. From Antonio on a gaming rig to Olivia on a Switch and Roberto on his phone, digital mission must adapt to their world, not the other way around. Understanding this diversity is critical for effective engagement and contextual discipleship.



Missionaries need to recognize the full spectrum of players across platforms, generations, and play styles.²

Field Notes from the Mission Desert

- Fortnite and Steam remain gospel ghost towns.
- The Robloxian Christians, one of the oldest Christian groups with over 54,000 members, has historically reached hundreds of thousands of users through worship services at TRC Church.³
- 83 self-identified Christian Twitch streamers labor largely unsupported.⁴
- A Minecraft world guides players through the trauma-recovery mechanics.⁵
- REACH Conf equips creator-evangelists but runs on a shoestring budget while many large churches spend over \$1million annually on A/V upgrades.
- Chatbots built during a hackathon answered thousands of bible questions.⁶

² Nick Rubright, “60+ Video Game Statistics for 2024: Data on Demographics, Devices & Trends,” *Liquid Web Blog*, Liquid Web, January 11, 2024, liquidweb.com/blog/video-game-statistics/.

³ *The Robloxian Christians*, Roblox group page, accessed July 2, 2025, www.roblox.com/communities/477219/The-Robloxian-Christians#!/about.

⁴ *Indigitous and CV Global Gaming Report*, ed. Indigitous (Internal Report, 2023), ndgt.us/gaming-report.

⁵ *Bringing missions online with a Minecraft server*, Indigitous. (2022, December 19), indigitous.org/article/bringing-missions-online-with-a-minecraft-server/.

⁶ Indigitous.



Leaders from diverse ministries gather at REACHConf to bridge the gap between digital culture and gospel mission—equipping the Church to meet gamers where they are.

“Pixels have people.” Yet 97% of missionaries still deploy to places that already have churches.⁷

Voices from the Edge

- **Chloe**, 16, found Christ through a Roblox Bible quiz. It wasn't the game—it was the welcome.
- **VR Baptism Collective** saw a young woman in a closed country follow Jesus publicly in a private VRChat world.
- **Minecraft Healing World** in Brazil walks kids through Psalm 23's emotional arc using immersive gameplay.
- **Lang**, a former pro Street Fighter gamer, now runs God & Games in Singapore to disciple gamers and reframe their identity in Christ.⁸

Digital Bible Deserts

Bible Society's *Digital Nations 2025* audit revealed only four of 25 major digital platforms had moderate Scripture engagement. Gaming and AI ecosystems are Bible deserts.

Lausanne's Digital Engagement Report urges mission leaders to focus on gateway languages—Mandarin, Arabic, Hindi, English, and Spanish—in digital ecosystems where Gen Z lives.

⁷ *The State of Digital Technologies for the Great Commission*, ed. Lausanne Movement (Lausanne Movement, 2022), indigitous.org/projects/state-of-digital-technologies/.

⁸ thirst.sg/god-and-games-former-street-fighter-pro-fights-gaming-stigma-with-g-g

Real-time dashboards now track gospel conversations, prayers, and digital baptisms. But analytics don't make disciples—people do.

"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few."
—Matthew 9:37

Theology of Pixels

The EMS 2025 paper introduced **Digital Ecclesiology**: where two or three gather—even in a Minecraft server—there the Church is.

Can a baptism in VR count? Yes, if it leads to embodied obedience. Avatar identity is now the handshake; Discord is the fellowship hall. As C.S. Lewis noted:

*"God is not hurried along in the time-stream...
He has infinite attention."*
—Mere Christianity

Servers, like rivers or printing presses, are just new vessels for timeless truth.

Mental Models for Digital Mission



First Principles Thinking

Break down the mission field to its essence. Ask: *What does discipleship really require?* Then rebuild around those core truths in digital space.



Second-Order Thinking

A VR baptism isn't just a personal moment. It shapes perceptions of sacraments, community, and ecclesiology. Always ask: *"And then what?"*

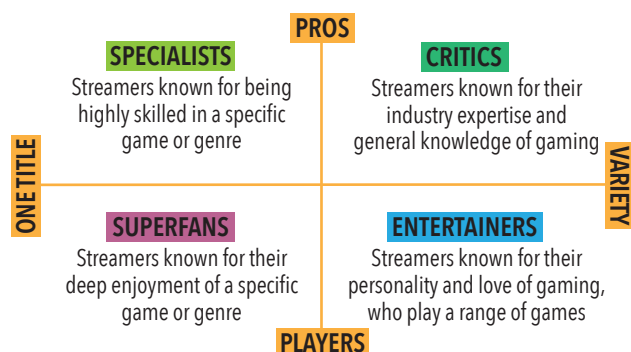


Inversion

Flip the question. What would cause this gaming mission to fail? Burnout, tech bans, isolation? Plan around those weak points first.

Global Gamer Stats

"Gamers are not a monolith."



*The Four Gamefluencer Archetypes—
Builders, Explorers, Competitors, and Connectors
define gamer motivation.⁹*

According to the same report, over 70% of gamers say they play to "escape and process emotions"—a huge spiritual opportunity if we show up with empathy and gospel fluency.

90-Day Challenge for Local Churches

Action	90-Day Target
Redirect 1% of your missions budget	Fund a gamer missionary with monthly impact metrics
Launch a Play-Stay-Disciple guild	Log 20 gospel convos + 2 DBS follow-ups
Join Indigitous #HACK	Release one gospel tool for a platform in a gateway language
Adopt a Discord server	Host weekly Bible quests; track results with open dashboards

Our Moment to Press "Start"

Three billion gamers are building identity online. Many are spiritually curious, emotionally raw, and relationally hungry. But they're being disciplined—just not by us.

Pixels have people. And the Lamb purchased every gamer tag with his blood.

"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"
—Romans 10:15

"Risk is not to be evaluated in terms of the probability of success but by the value of the goal."

—Ralph D. Winter

As Dr. Winter urged us to go to the unreached, today that means stepping into platforms and pixels. We're not called to play it safe—we're called to press **Start**.

Ready to take the next step?

Join a global community reimagining mission for the digital age at indigitous.org. MF

⁹ wearesocial.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Eat-Sleep-Game-Repeat-The-We-Are-Social-Gamefluencer-Report.pdf

Bitcoin Is Bridging Barriers in Global Missions

By **NATE SCHOLZ** and **AHSHUWAH HAWTHORNE** All Scripture references from the NIV.

Nate Scholz and **Ahshuwah Hawthorne** work with Brilliance Labs and host the Bitcoin for Missions Program, a global missions innovation initiative that explores bitcoin as a tool for solving adaptive challenges at the edges of frontier engagement. Nate@brilliancelabs.org Ahsh@brilliancelabs.org

The final words of Jesus on earth still echo as the Church's unfinished assignment: "Go make disciples of all nations..." Yet as global missions have expanded in reach, many remain cut off not only by language and religion, but by economic systems, political barriers, and failing infrastructure. As traditional methods strain under new global realities, a surprising ally has emerged from the world of decentralized digital technology. Could bitcoin offer strategic advantages for engaging the hardest-to-reach peoples on earth?

The Edges of Mission

Just before ascending to heaven from his earthly post-resurrection ministry tour, Jesus offered his disciples a summary of his instructions that we call the Great Commission:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.¹

Crucial to our task is to develop our best interpretation of what *all nations* means and what Jesus meant by discipling them. Most agree that nations are not about geopolitical boundaries on a map but relate to people group identities. For evangelization purposes, Ralph Winter defined a *people group* as "the largest group within which the gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance."²

Unengaged Peoples

Likewise, our responsibility in discipling can be thought of as presenting the gospel in a meaningful,

relational way that will impact at least a portion of each people group's population, to the point where they are able to take on the rest of the task themselves. An *unengaged people group* is one that has no known efforts focused on establishing self-sustaining churches consistent with evangelical faith and practice.³ No one has been sent to them.

There are 17,350 ethno-linguistic groups globally. We have come so far, but there are still 1,586 groups that have no access to the gospel. 69% of these remaining unengaged people groups live in just seven countries: India, China, Sudan, Laos, Chad, Indonesia, and Nigeria.⁴ In essence, these people groups *are* the edges of mission.

Constraints-based Design

As missions innovators with Brilliance Labs, we have embraced the task of full engagement by putting the *theory of constraints* to work for us. A constraint is normally thought of as some obstacle that stands in the way of success, but a constraint can become a defining parameter, offering a stimulus to finding a better way of doing something.⁵ In the book, *A Beautiful Constraint*, the authors suggest that if a bold ambition is paired with a significant constraint, they combine to form a propelling question that launches us beyond the path of normal thinking into truly innovative ideas.⁶ Our bold ambition is completing the Great Commission. Our familiar constraint is money, but it goes deeper than simply fundraising capacity.

3 Joshua Project, "JP+ Report: Early Access Insights for Global Missions Strategy - May 2025 Edition," May 2025, 8.

4 Engage Network, "Countries with the Most Unengaged Unreached Peoples (by Religion)," www.unengagedpeoples.com/overview, 1.

5 Morgan, Adam, and Mark Barden, *A Beautiful Constraint: How to Transform Your Limitations into Advantages, and Why It's Everyone's Business* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2015), 4.

6 Morgan and Barden, 5.

1 Matt 28:18-20.

2 Winter, Ralph D. *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, 4th ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Publishing, 2013), 531.

The most difficult places in the world to reach are also stricken with poverty, government corruption, and a lack of electrical infrastructure. The common root of these problems is the broken global monetary system. Since the world left the gold standard in the early 1970s, money has only continued to carry value through government decree—people accept it as money because a national government or central bank declares it to be legal tender. Governments have too frequently succumbed to the temptation to print more money with no asset to back its value, which causes inflation and eventually hyperinflation. This dilutive practice impacts everyone but has more dire consequences in developing countries where the least reached peoples need both spiritual and physical salvation. The problem in the developing world is that the money itself is broken and is, in fact, designed to keep them in poverty. Alex Gladstein, with the Human Rights Foundation, is outspoken about the neo-colonial economic practices of Western nations and institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).⁷

Historically, the Western missions movement has had the advantage of operating with the tailwind of the globally dominant currencies of Europe and North America. Now, the Church in the Global South is taking more of a leadership role in finishing the task of global evangelization, yet no satisfactory answer has been given for how they will be able to create self-sustainable funding models for missions mobilization when the entire global monetary system is designed to keep them in the back seat. Enter bitcoin.

An Alternative to Government Fiat Currencies

Bitcoin is an emerging monetary technology developed apart from central banks or governing authorities. It is what economists would call a neutral currency, meaning it has grown because of free market dynamics rather than government fiat and it can be traded across borders without a bias towards any one nation or bank. Bitcoin is native to the internet and decentralized by design so it cannot be controlled or manipulated by any single group or individual. It is an open-source network that allows anyone with internet access to participate regardless of who they

are or where they come from. Its auditable monetary policy, decreasing inflation rate, and provable scarcity make it a hard currency—like a digital version of gold.

When compared to other currencies, it has appreciated significantly in value over the past 15 years. Against the US dollar, bitcoin has appreciated at a compound annual growth rate of 142%. When compared to bitcoin, every single developing world currency has lost over 85% of its value in just the past five years and some have lost over 95%. After five years of researching how bitcoin is being used around the world, our propelling question has emerged: How might we holistically engage the remaining unengaged people groups in the world with the use of bitcoin?

Bitcoin Solves Real World Problems

Through numerous personal interviews, site visits, and online research, we have gathered a comprehensive collection of case studies that demonstrate how bitcoin is being used around the world to benefit the lives of people and facilitate gospel ministry. We'll mention a few.

Bitcoin Beach is an economic community development project in El Salvador.⁸ It was founded by a team of missionaries who saw an opportunity to introduce bitcoin to an unbanked community. Over the past five years, this “bitcoin circular economy” has infused millions of dollars of value into this community, instilling hope for the future.

Gridless Compute is a bitcoin mining company founded by two missionary kids who grew up in East Africa. They have a vision to bring electrification to all of Africa. They accomplish this by co-locating bitcoin mining computers alongside underutilized and unprofitable renewable energy infrastructure. *Gridless* becomes the anchor tenant and purchases all the energy that is unused by the community. In doing so, they lower the electricity cost for everyone else, while also making



⁷ Alex Gladstein, “Structural Adjustment: How the IMF and World Bank Repress Poor Countries and Funnel Their Resources to Rich Ones,” November 30, 2022, bitcoinmagazine.com/culture/imf-world-bank-repress-poor-countries.

⁸ BitcoinBeach.Com “The First Bitcoin Circular Economy,” accessed April 6, 2025, www.bitcoinbeach.com/.

the build-out of new energy infrastructure profitable for the first time.⁹

A third compelling use case is creative-access funding for ministries in authoritarian regions of the world. Missions entities often utilize complex, slow, and expensive money-flow processes, or unreliable and risky cash mule strategies to get money into the hardest to reach places. As an internet-native currency, bitcoin can be sent anywhere in the world instantly and anonymously. As the 7th largest global currency, there is demand for bitcoin in every country on earth.

Chadian Demographic Analysis

Based on these use cases, how might we use bitcoin as a tool to reach one of our countries on the unengaged watch list? Chad is an African country that hosts 39 unengaged people groups. In Chad, 76% of adults are unbanked.¹⁰ Mobile phone penetration is 68%,¹¹ and only 11% have internet access.¹² Only 12% of Chadian homes have access to electricity.¹³

Another challenge is the lack of access to US dollars, due to external capital controls. However, a benefit is the lack of focus on internal financial surveillance.¹⁴ An alternative monetary technology may be a good fit for this situation where it's hard to use dollars, and the government has not yet developed bitcoin policies or regulations.

The lack of energy infrastructure

9 "A Blueprint for Bitcoin Mining and Energy in Africa," Gridless, May 17, 2023, gridlesscompute.com/2023/05/17/a-blueprint-for-bitcoin-mining-and-energy-in-africa/.

10 "Global Snapshot of Indicators and Enabling Regulations," accessed June 10, 2025, digitalfinance.worldbank.org/country/chad.

11 "World Bank Open Data," World Bank Open Data, accessed June 10, 2025, data.worldbank.org.

12 "Digital 2023: Chad," DataReportal—Global Digital Insights, February 14, 2023, datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-chad.

13 "Chad | Tracking SDG 7," accessed June 10, 2025, trackingsdg7.esmap.org/country/chad.

14 International Monetary Fund, *Chad: 2024 Article IV Consultation-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Executive Director for Chad*, IMF Staff Country Reports (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2024), doi.org/10.5089/9798400295065.002, 4, 12, 35.

in Chad could be addressed with bitcoin mining. Miners and utility owners profit-share the bitcoin that is produced with excess power, hastening the profitability of the power grid. The presence of electricity makes Starlink internet viable, which in turn would empower the commonly owned mobile phones to run bitcoin wallet apps. The community deciding to use bitcoin in a circular economy, as in the Bitcoin Beach model, would help people avoid theft and save for the future. Though bitcoin's value is known to be volatile, it has consistently trended up, while fiat currencies erode consistently through inflation. Over time, the local community will climb out of poverty. Missionary bitcoiners would have a clear purpose for being present as community development specialists and bitcoin miners, and bitcoin's global network would allow missions funding to be efficiently sent in and out of Chad without endangering gospel workers.

Implications of Adoption

While the advantages of bitcoin are interesting and offer many benefits for missions organizations, it is also important to recognize the potential hurdles that come with adopting this technology. Missions organizations need to consider and address these challenges carefully to ensure the successful implementation and integration of bitcoin into their operations. If you would like to learn more about how to get involved with the Bitcoin for Missions project or explore what it would take to adopt this new technology to impact the kingdom, look at the Brilliance Labs website at www.brillancelabs.org/bitcoin.

Imagine a world where organizations and missionaries can send and receive support instantly, securely, and at minimal cost. Picture communities in the most remote and underserved regions gaining access to financial services and economic opportunities through bitcoin. Envision a future where missions organizations operate with greater financial transparency and integrity, strengthening their relationships with donors and supporters. If we believe the gospel is for all peoples, then we must be willing to explore all means to get it to them. Bitcoin is not a silver bullet, but it is a bold, underutilized tool that aligns with the decentralized, grassroots nature of kingdom movements. Join us in exploring how a potential bitcoin future can dismantle financial barriers and allow missions work to thrive unimpeded until all have heard. 🏡



Redefining Mission

From Fixed Frontiers to Fluid Edges

By **JOSEPH W. HANDLEY**, President, A3

OpenAI's ChatGPT was employed for research and to enhance the clarity and grammar of this article.

Joseph W. Handley, Jr., (PhD Fuller Seminary) is author of *Polycentric Mission Leadership* and President of A3 (a3leaders.org), a global leadership accelerator network in 20+ countries. Connect with Joe on mission, leadership, and missiology: jhandley@a3.email

Forty years ago, the “edges” of mission were relatively clear. Unreached people groups were primarily mapped geographically, pioneering missions meant long journeys to faraway lands, and “access” was defined by political and physical barriers. But in today’s hyper-connected, globalized, and mobile world, the edges are not just geographical or based on ethnicity—they can be everywhere. That said, despite major progress, the frontier task remains. There are still more than 2 billion people with no known access to a viable, contextual gospel witness.¹

At A3, we believe the Church must follow the Spirit to the new frontiers—those that are geographic, cultural, digital, ideological, and even ecclesial. And as we do so, we must shift from a centralized, Western-centric model to a polycentric, Spirit-led approach that listens deeply to local voices, shares leadership across contexts, and multiplies mission through relational networks.

From Fixed Frontiers to Fluid Edges

For decades, the mission enterprise was largely driven by the West—well-meaning, passionate pioneers charting a course toward “unreached” regions. This model bore tremendous fruit, and we celebrate that legacy. But today, mission is not from the West to the rest—it is from everywhere to everywhere. Frankly, it’s always been that way!

In fact, some of the hardest “edges” of the gospel are not only in unreached villages in Central Asia or the Sahel but in corporate boardrooms in Tokyo, influencer circles in Jakarta, and post-Christian urban centers in North America and Europe. Paul Borthwick notes that, “Globalization has not only redistributed

the world’s people but also its spiritual longings and missional challenges.”² The boundaries of access have shifted from geography to worldview—apathy, secularism, nationalism, and spiritual disillusionment form powerful barriers, even in places with churches on every corner.

Reframing the Edges

So, what comprises the edges today?

1. **Edge as Pioneer Territory:** This is the most pressing edge. According to R. Lewis, “There are essentially no national believers to partner with” in these groups, requiring fresh cross-cultural engagement. Joshua Project data confirms that more than 2 billion people still live in these contexts.³
2. **Edge as Spiritual Openness:** In regions where the Church is small but resilient (like Türkiye), the spiritual hunger of a generation can create unexpected receptivity. We have seen young leaders, shaped by trauma and transformation, become catalysts of gospel movements—even in places long deemed “hard.”
3. **Edge as Influence Hubs:** A3 prioritizes equipping leaders in important sectors—business, media, education, and politics—because we believe the Spirit is drawing us to places of cultural and social leverage. In cities like Seoul and Chennai, we’ve witnessed how Christ-centered leaders in business can spark renewal and shape whole ecosystems.

¹ Rebecca Lewis, “The Great Progress of the Gospel: 50 Unbelievable Years” (Pasadena, CA: Frontier Ventures, 2024).

² Borthwick, Paul, *Western Christians in Global Mission: What’s the Role of the North American Church?* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 47.

³ Rebecca Lewis, “The Great Progress of the Gospel.” See also: Newell, M. J. (2021). *A Third of Us: What It Takes to Reach the Unreached*. William Carey Publishing.

Several of our business and young professional alumni share that they never realized their marketplace work could be a mission field until our network showed them how.

4. **Edge as Leadership:** One of the most important frontiers is the shortage of character-rich, vision-driven leaders across the global Church. Leader development is not optional—it is strategic mission. The edge, in this sense, is anywhere the Church is growing faster than leaders can be trained with depth, contextual wisdom, and Christlike humility.
5. **Edge as Collaboration:** Mission today demands networks, not empires. At A3, we model polycentric leadership, drawing on the wisdom of diverse leaders across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. We've learned that mission accelerates when leadership is shared, contextualized, and deeply relational.

Polycentric Mission and Spirit-Led Discernment

Rather than defining the edge by distance, we must discern where the Spirit is leading. Some of the hardest-to-reach peoples still need gospel pioneers. But others—like burned-out pastors in post-COVID Europe or skeptical Gen Z students in New York—also represent spiritual edges.

Rather than applying a rigid definition to the “edge,” perhaps the better posture is one of *discernment*. As one of my mentors once implied, “The edge is wherever the Spirit is stirring hearts.”

This doesn't mean we abandon strategy. On the contrary, we need better maps—ones that overlay geography with influence, receptivity, leadership gaps, and missional readiness. But these maps must be held lightly as we sense where the Spirit blows and redraws the edges. The Spirit often calls us to go where others are not looking—to the margins of society, the forgotten subcultures, the burned-out pastors, the digital natives.

Rebecca Lewis highlights that while tremendous gains have been made—dropping the percentage of global population in Frontier People Groups from 60% in 1974 to 25% in 2024—60% of all UPGs still have no known indigenous churches or movements to Christ. These groups still require intentional cross-cultural witness.⁴

Following these ideas requires a posture of listening and a shift in mission strategy. A3 models polycentric leadership, a distributed, multi-nodal approach that values local agency, shared power, and contextual intelligence. “Polycentric leadership empowers diverse centers of influence, rooted in mutual trust and shared discernment.”⁵ Instead of mission being led from one center, we see movements cross the edges when voices from Asia, Africa, and Latin America shape strategy in collaboration with others. This is not only more—it's more effective.


Conclusion: The Edges Are Closer Than We Think

Today, a Bengali software engineer in Silicon Valley, a Buddhist CEO in Bangkok, and a spiritually hungry Gen Z in Boston may all sit at mission's frontier. The “edge” is not necessarily defined by access to the gospel but by *awareness, engagement, and transformation*. And that requires a Church willing to walk slowly, listen deeply, collaborate widely, and lead humbly.

The edges are in rural Afghanistan and in London's refugee housing. They are in the Buddhist monasteries of Myanmar and the hip cafés of Seoul. They are where the Church does not yet exist, and where it does exist but lacks depth and discipleship.

At A3, we've embraced this journey. We're seeing Christ-centered movements emerge—not through force or formulas, but through the Spirit's prompting and the Church's faithful response.

Let us not merely chase the old frontiers. Let us also ask, “Where is the Spirit moving *now*?” That's the true edge of mission. We must remain deeply committed to the unengaged and least reached peoples while also discerning new frontiers emerging in urban centers, digital ecosystems, and fragile church contexts.

The edge is not only a place—it is a posture. A commitment to go where the Spirit leads, especially among those with no access to the gospel. A3 is resolved to invest in leaders who can multiply that witness among the world's most vulnerable and unreached. May we walk forward with courage and humility to the true cutting edges of mission. 

4 Rebecca Lewis. Email correspondence in Motus Dei Network, Dec 6, 2024

5 Handley, Joseph W., *Polycentric Mission Leadership: Toward a New Theory for Global Leadership* (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books, 2022), 32.



24:14

Movement engagements in every unreached people & place by 2025 (4 months)

5 Principles for Movement Servants

By **KYLE MILLS** and **PHOEBE** (Pseudonym)

Kyle Mills is a movement servant, administrator for the 24:14 Coalition (2414now.net) and co-founder of Forefront Experience (kyle@forefrontexperience.com). **Phoebe** is a movement servant with Beyond living in South Asia.

How do movements start? The best way to start a disciple making movement is to already have one. Research shows that 80-90% of movements have been started by other movements.¹

This movement statistic sent many pioneering movement catalysts on a path of transformation into a role we call “movement servant.” These servants started connecting with existing movement leaders to find needs, then submitted to doing whatever was asked. They made this effort to pursue the evidence-based hope that movements will continue to start more movements.

Here, we won’t try to convince you to become a movement servant (for that, see the footnoted article²). Instead, we want to encourage you with five principles and some practical actions we have learned on our journey. The specific insights and stories have been collected from those laboring in the 24:14 Network (2414now.net).

1 Servants equip movements to meet the movements’ own needs for the long term

One example comes from a movement in which outsiders (servants) gave a small, one-time financial gift so the movement could start a silk factory business. The purpose of this silk factory was specifically to fund the movement’s Bible translation projects. Instead of creating dependence on outside money, the outsiders found a way to help the movement generate its own income for the ongoing projects.

As servants equip movements to meet their own ongoing needs, they should do it in a way to keep the movement free from dependence on the outside.

1 2414now.net/movement-servants-helping-movements-multiply/.

2 2414now.net/movement-servants-needed/.

2 The best movement resources come from within movements

Bible translation provides a great example of *informational* resources developed within movements. Movement leaders aiming to expand their work needed Scripture in minority languages, so they researched existing translation practices and implemented initial processes with teams in their movement. They found these teams were not only successful but had also developed innovative adaptations to traditional methods by leveraging the movement’s scale. Some Bible translation experts learning of these advancements shifted their role from more traditional Bible translation to serve the movements doing translation. Now they are helping spread the adapted, effective training to other movement families globally. As a result, movements worldwide now have several hundred active or completed Bible translation projects.

The Listening Movement in South Asia supplies an example in which *financial* resources were better supplied from within a movement. The movement’s top disciple-making families were beginning to struggle financially due to focusing so much time on ministry. A “goats project” was proposed by well-meaning outside servants to help with finances. Funding was obtained and goats were purchased. However, a cultural dilemma arose about distributing the first goats, which resulted in the most fruitful disciple-maker not getting any. As the story continued, the goats actually all died for unknown reasons. The need of the fruitful disciple-maker, however, was seen by his network of house churches, and they graciously began supporting him financially. Movement servants are needed to help movements fund the right projects, while still leaving room for God to provide from within movements in transformational ways.

Movement-led fruitful practices and/or funding models can be shared through cross-pollination with other movements via movement servants.

3 Servants are relational, not salespeople

J is a movement servant focused on supporting a movement in Southeast Asia. Although he doesn't live in the region, he takes multiple trips each year to build relationships and advance projects with the movement. Recently, the movement asked J to help map an unreached people group in a country in which they work. Understanding that the movement leader is too busy to be J's on-the-ground partner in the mapping effort, J took a trip just to build relationships with local disciples from the movement who could help him with the project. Even though J has extensive experience and training, he refuses to rush in with answers. Instead, he models the understanding that movement servant projects happen relationally. This often results in projects looking different than he expected—which actually better meets the needs of the movement.

Servants thoughtfully and intentionally build relationships with movements while holding their own agenda loosely.

4 Servants adopt a learn-first posture and customize solutions

Last year, the Listening Movement was about to have its first top-level female leaders meeting. The movement leaders recognized this as an opportunity to gather information about what Bible translations to work on in the coming year. Unsure how to approach collecting this data, they went to their favorite movement servant/researcher, Justin Long, and asked him for guidance. First, Justin asked many powerful questions about the participants, content, and desired outcomes. He then presented the movement leaders with a few simple questions requiring only simple answers, that they could ask the groups. This research at the meetings yielded tremendous insight. The movement used it for translation projects, creating a prayer guide, fundraising, and getting a clearer picture of what languages the movement was engaging. All that learning wouldn't have been possible if Justin hadn't been willing to serve the movement through humble listening and appropriate helps.

Although servants may be subject-matter experts, they adopt a learn-first posture with movements and look to customize solutions for each unique context. They don't push a specific program or tool.

5 Servants take initiative but can also take a hint

I (Kyle) recently restructured my work schedule to free up time to serve movements part-time. I connected with a network that had already obtained a list of needs from several movement families. I diligently studied the needs they had shared and was certain my business/non-profit background would solve their problems. By the time I was about to start a project for one of the movements, they very graciously told me they didn't need me after all. The one need they still had was above my pay grade, and I found CPAs to get involved. Humbled, but understanding, I pivoted to a role of intercessor on their emergency prayer chain as a way to stay connected. God has since opened up different doors for me to serve, and this movement knows I am available to help anytime.

Servants are ready and eager to advocate ways to help with high-quality offerings, but are open-handed when serving doesn't work out the way they expected.

Conclusion

God is working among unreached people groups through movements! One of the most strategic ways you can be involved in global missions is by pouring fuel on the fire of movements through serving these multiplying works of God. Here are some practical steps you might want to consider.

1. **Start with prayer.** Check out the prayer guides and apps on www.110cities.com for movement-related prayer requests.
2. **Make an inventory of your gifts, skills, and abilities.** Consider things like admin, business, media, technology, networking, crisis response, medical, prayer, finances, and more.
3. **Pray about freeing up some capacity.** You can be a movement servant with just part of your time. It may take a while to find a project, so be patient and be ready.
4. **Spread the word.** Who do you know that you could mobilize toward serving these kingdom movements? The next missionary your church sends out could be a movement servant!
5. **Get connected.** If you want to hear more, you can contact us at admin@2414now.net and check out the current opportunities at www.movementservant.com. 📧

The Edges of God's Kingdom

A Call to Learn, Listen, and Serve

By GREG H. PARSONS

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

Since the founding of Frontier Ventures in 1976, we have been about what is “not yet.”¹ Meaning that we want to see God’s kingdom come to all peoples, especially those in which that hasn’t happened yet.

We are not presuming that we know what God is doing in any people or place. In fact, over the years, even though we *pursue* information about how the Kingdom is expanding into new areas, we have learned that we usually know very little of how he is at work. So, when I say we are all about the “edges of the kingdom” or about what is “not yet,” I mean that as best we can tell, God doesn’t seem to have chosen to move among this people group or culture—yet. So, we press on!

The Apostle Paul was increasingly focused this way as a crucial direction for his calling played out. He writes that Christ became a servant to the Jews, in confirmation of the promises to the patriarchs in the Old Testament (OT).² Then, he notes there is a purpose that, “the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.”³ Paul then lists several OT references, of *many* possible choices.

The “edges” today are where there is less noticeable gospel impact. And they tend to be hard places to live. It can also be difficult to be sure how to best love and serve people effectively in what is a strange, cross-cultural setting to the outsider. I’ve heard many stories of global workers who really don’t know how to engage the people on a deeper level. The complications inherent in sharing Jesus make this more difficult when the belief systems are radically different than our own. I grew up in a “Christian” country, going to church as a child, getting trained in the ministry professionally. All that makes it harder for me to understand someone from a very different background—say a Buddhist in Thailand, or a Hindu in India, or even a Muslim next door!

Some Western mission and church leaders believe that nothing changes in our message when we serve cross-

culturally. While the gospel does not change, that does not mean we always say it the same way. We know from many Bible translators, that the words used in a translation may not communicate what we think they mean. That is why they are trying to be careful and understand how something is understood and received. Hopefully, we are growing in our own relationship with the Lord and understand how to live out what the Scriptures mean in our lives.

We can only come into a right relationship with God through his son, Jesus the Messiah. But there are many *methods* for how we share that message. Over the past 60 years, Western Christians (and some not from the West but trained by us!) often use a simple outline we heard via Billy Graham or someone like him. That is fine and can be a powerful way to share the gospel—if the hearers have a context for it. But many don’t. And we know that most people come to faith through the faithful, sometimes long and patient witness of friends or family, not in mass appeals. If you tell someone in India they are a sinner, they might slug you! They see “sinners” as those “miscreants” or criminals who steal or cause trouble—which they have never done! They do not see everyone as a sinner. The concepts of sin or missing the mark of God’s perfection are not viewed the same.

People who are going to the edges of the Kingdom need to be a bit different. While we want people to be trained and mentored in faith, it seems best for us to send out those who are not “experts” or “professionals” but *learners... listeners... alongsiders*.⁴ Those who come across as spiritual know-it-alls can easily create problems they may not see. Better to come *alongside* someone in relationship to *listen* and *learn* caringly and carefully. They may want to hear our story, and hopefully we will have learned enough that we share in a way that is understood. Perhaps then, in God’s timing and sovereignty, that people or place will no longer be an edge. ■

1 The original name was the U.S. Center for World Mission.

2 See *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement Study Guide*, Lessons 1–3 for many examples.

3 Romans 15:8 ff.

4 These are ideas we’ve been thinking and writing about in the Frontier Ventures Missiology Catalyst group. If you would like a copy of more on these, please write to me at: greg.parsons@frontierventures.org



Cynicism and Surrender

A Gen Z Perspective on Missions

By ROME WILLIAMS

Rome Williams is a graduate student at Wheaton College, holding a BA in Theology and Communication. He writes and speaks on next generation leadership and the relevance of faith. Find him at romewmacy@gmail.com.

Growing up with an iPhone, I'd never encountered a language barrier before. The advantage of traveling in a digital world was that if all else failed, either Google Translate or ChatGPT could always find me a bathroom, directions, or a meal. But here I was in the middle of rural Romania, without food, money, a phone, or a Romanian interpreter, and my mission team hadn't eaten in almost a day.

I had never planned to participate in missions at all. Growing up in Washington State, I didn't meet a practicing Christian my age until I was 14, and my own disconnected relationship with church didn't inspire confidence that I would meet more. Missions was a foreign concept, something I only briefly experienced

during a short-term trip to Haiti in high school, where we worked with an orphanage like the one my adopted sister had come from. A brief analysis of the book *When Helping Hurts* in preparation for the trip made me doubt our ability to truly help, and our time spent with the kids in the orphanage only made me feel more guilty about the sense of abandonment I knew they would feel when we left. In the end, I concluded that missions did more harm than good and was best left to sociologists or anthropologists, not people like me.

Missions and Surrender

Fast forward and Covid canceled my senior year of high school, leading me to take a gap year as I waited for colleges to return to in-person education. My days

were spent delivering food before coming home to an apartment of friends each night, where we would boast about how smart we were to defer our enrollments instead of wading through online classes. The days blurred, friends moved back in with their families, and in that sea of impatience and purposelessness, my mom approached me about an opportunity to explore missions work in Eastern Europe.

Despite my resistance to missions, and to enduring the question “So, Rome, why did you go to *Rome-ania*?” for the rest of my life, I reluctantly applied to a Spring Mission Bible School there. Dracula’s castle had never been on my bucket list, but between pandemic travel options and a frustrating sense that this was where I was supposed to be, a month later I found myself starving in that small shop in Middle-of-Nowhere Romania.

The sheer insanity of it all set in as I attempted to mime that we wanted to trade for food by waving around some tomato sauce and pointing to some loaves of bread. I had never wanted to come here. I didn’t see how throwing some Germans, a Brit, and an American into a backwater village would somehow fulfill the Great Commission. And I definitely did not expect my hopeless gesticulating to land us some lunch. But to my surprise, the woman behind the counter grabbed one of the loaves of bread, pushed it toward me, and refused to accept our tomato sauce, our only semi-tradable good, in exchange. We watched in awe, as she handed us a large salami, and in dismay, as she refused our offer to pray for her before we stepped back out into an icy rainstorm.

To me, this only confirmed my suspicions. Our “mission work” was achieving nothing. The locals may have been hospitable, but our efforts were awkward, unwanted, and ineffective. In response to that feeling of helplessness, I turned around, deciding I wasn’t going to stand outside with a Romanian New Testament burning a hole in my pocket, and shuffled apologetically back into the store, where I placed the book on the counter and managed my best attempt at “Jesus loves you” before making for the door. To my surprise, she burst out talking and halted my exit by offering me a coffee. This was followed by another and another, and my soaking, bewildered team stumbled back inside to see what was happening, now with warm hands and revitalized caffeine addictions. After an attempt at a

conversation, she thanked us, and set the Bible in her purse with a smile as we walked back out into the rain.

Since returning from Romania and completing four years at a Christian college, I’ve encountered many people with views like mine from that rainy day. I’ve seen missions dismissed as a thing of the past, as an instrument of violence, as a waste of time and money. I’ve listened to the exhausted stories of burnt-out missionary kids and heard testimonies of the disconnect experienced by families on the field.

But since that day in the shop, I’ve only wanted to learn more about God’s work across the world. I’ve met missionaries in thriving ministries showing hospitality, battling human trafficking, and providing education to the poorest people in the most desolate of places. When foreigners in Mexico City or single moms in Quito needed help, it was missionaries who provided food, lodging, and protection. When kids in the Amazon or rural Romania needed a way out of a life of poverty, it was missionaries who left their homes to extend one to the least of these.

Why Missions?

Growing up in the Pacific Northwest, the question was settled, at least outside the walls of the church. Missions were antiquated, destructive, and ethnocentric. Since entering the world of mission work and experiencing the lifeblood of organizations such as Urbana and Lausanne, that question has been resurrected for me, despite its complicated answers. I write this article from an apartment in Quito, Ecuador, fresh from a visit to another museum recounting the horrors of the Spanish conquest and the Church’s active involvement in the enslavement of a continent. Yet I write from the home of a hospitable Ecuadorian pastor, one who would not trade the gospel, the same one puppeted by the conquistadors centuries ago, for the world.

One of the reasons I’m here now is because of a talk I



heard at the Fourth Lausanne Congress last September. Held in South Korea, it welcomed delegates and volunteers from more than 190 countries, and focused on catalyzing collaboration to better fulfill the Great Commission. There, I worked alongside a volunteer team representing more than 10 nationalities to help manage the conference, and I got to learn under some of the leaders pioneering modern missions.

I never used to believe that one bold act or one Bible set on a counter could change the world. But God has changed my cynicism into surrender, and I'm beginning to doubt my unbelief.


One of those pioneers, Sarah Breuel, is a Brazilian missionary who serves in Italy as a house church leader. She also serves on the Lausanne Movement's Board of Directors and as the former Director of Revive Europe, two organizations dedicated to world evangelization. In Korea, her talk focused on the relationship between revival and repentance and included charges to each continent. She blessed North American Christians, pointing out that many of the global delegates in that room were the fruit of the North American missionary movement. She then argued that the secular belief that our missions movements had just aided colonialism was crippling our boldness and our zeal, demanding that we come fully to the table.¹ Her eyes burned into me, and I recognized my need to repent of any lingering cynicism.

Missions Today

Missions, despite the narrative, really have been a force for good in the world. The thousands of leaders standing with me that night are evidence that the gospel and the people who carried it with them are forces for good in their communities. From missionary doctors like Albert Schweitzer (also a renowned theologian and

Nobel Peace Prize winner)² to academics like Matteo Ricci, who pioneered ethical cross-cultural interaction,³ much of the world's medical and social development has come from the efforts of missionaries. The lifeblood of the global Church today is not a shadow cast by the ghosts of colonialism, but light in a dark world, fighting to protect women and girls in Kenya,⁴ against human trafficking in Thailand,⁵ and for the rights of indigenous peoples across South America.⁶

To my readers who remain unconvinced about the goodness of missions, I recommend exploring Jehu Hancils and John Dickson, two authors who have argued well for the inherent goodness of Christian mission through history. To my fellow young adults, missions offer you the most humbling, most fulfilling, most abundant life you could dream of. In a global world, reaching the unreached doesn't require a degree or even a second language, and our cities are filled with parents, engineers, business owners, and refugees from a hundred countries who are all desperately hungry for the hope of the gospel. To my readers skeptical of Gen Z, and our faithfulness in the 21st century, we need your example. We need to see boldness and zeal modeled and lived out, that we would rise up to be women and men who come fully to the table.

I never used to believe that one bold act or one Bible set on a counter could change the world. But God has changed my cynicism into surrender, and I'm beginning to doubt my unbelief. 

2 Nobel Prize Outreach AB, "Albert Schweitzer: Biographical," NobelPrize.org, accessed June 17, 2025, nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1952/schweitzer/biographical/.

3 Jesuits Global, "Matteo Ricci: Missionary of Inculturation," Jesuits Global, last modified December 19, 2022, jesuits.global/2022/12/19/matteo-ricci-missionary-of-inculturation/.

4 World Vision Kenya, "Accelerating Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation and Child Marriage Project," World Vision, accessed June 15, 2025, wvi.org/kenya/accelerating-abandonment-female-genital-mutilation-and-child-marriage-project.

5 International Justice Mission UK, "Anti-Slavery Organization International Justice Mission Announces Grant from Walmart Foundation to Address Human Trafficking in Thai Fishing Industry," International Justice Mission UK, September 21, 2017, ijmuk.org/news/anti-slavery-organization-international-justice-mission-announces-grant-from-walmart-foundation-to-address-human-trafficking-in-thai-fishing-industry.

6 Caritas Internationalis, "Pan-Amazon Ecclesial Network (REPAM)," Caritas Internationalis, accessed June 15, 2025, caritas.org/what-we-do/development/repam/.

1 Sarah Breuel, "Revival and Repentance: Lessons from Global Movements," Lausanne Movement, Lausanne Movement, September 2024, lausanne.org/video/revival-and-repentance-lessons-from-global-movements.

Color the World

Enjoy coloring this Pashtun man carving a *sutuun*, a decorated wooden pillar. 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.



This poem was inspired during a retreat by the sharing of those who had been serving at the edges of missions for many years. May all those serving at the edges receive God's invitation to dance.

May I Have This Dance

By RICHARD H. BARRY

Richard H. Barry is an American mystic and poet who has been involved in cross-cultural service for more than two decades.

It isn't all bad,
This desire we have
To work, work, work
Toward some grand
Healing of this world.

It's just rather ironic.

We want to work for God,
While he just wants to dance,
Knowing that healing, without a thought,
Trails his sublime movements like a wake.

All he needs is a partner.

And there we are fretting,
Even scolding the Divine,

"You really need to
Stop all this dancing—

You know?—

And get back to work
Healing the world."

What a remarkable capacity we have
For missing the point!

So allow me to state it plainly:

It is the dance that heals.

And the look in God's eye,
Not to mention the deep breath
He just took, tells me
He's almost done mustering
The courage to ask you,

"May I have this dance?"



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

■ 1 Hindu Kumhar of Bangladesh

The Kumhar make earthen pots, and they claim to be the first inventors of the wheel. They are honest people who make their livelihood through hard work. It is difficult for any Hindu to understand that there is only one God and one way to true spirituality. This seems very narrow to them.

But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall.—Malachi 4:2

- Pray for the Lord to thrust out workers to them in Bangladesh and India.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger among the Kumhars that will lead them to the cross and the empty grave.
- Pray for Kumhar disciples who will make more disciples.

■ 2 Terai Brahmin of Nepal

Nepal is a Hindu country. There is a small but powerful and well-educated Brahmin community in the Terai Plains. When there are no Christians in a community, gospel workers must start at the very beginning. Caste is an issue because most Nepali Christians are not from high-caste communities like the Terai Brahmins.

But he answered, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.—Matthew 4:4

- Pray that the true God will reveal Himself to this community and use Terai Brahmins to preach and teach about Christ throughout Nepal.
- Pray for Brahmin disciples to make more disciples among every Brahmin community in Nepal.

■ 3 Toukaleur Fulani of Senegal

Toukaleur Fulani women often use henna around the mouth, resulting in a blackening around the lips. The traditional dress of the Fulani in most places consists of long, colorful, flowing robes, modestly embroidered or otherwise decorated. The various Fulani groups have a long-standing, strong commitment to Islam. It's part of their identity.

The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.—Matthew 4:16

- Pray for the Lord to raise up many who will put their identity on the solid rock of Christ.
- Pray that radical Islam will be discredited among the Toukaleur Fulanis.

■ 4 Kabardian of Türkiye

Kabardian people came dangerously close to ethnic extermination as victims of the century-long Russo-Circassian wars that ended in 1864. Considering the epic devastation, the tragic expulsion/emigration/destruction of 90 percent of their population from their Russian homeland, their national survival into modern times is almost unbelievable, thanks to Turkish hospitality. The Karbadians are strong in hospitality, saying, "A guest is a messenger from God." Or "The guest of a Kabardian is as safe as if protected by a fortress."

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.—Matthew 5:3

- Pray they ask Jesus to be a permanent guest in their lives.
- Pray for many house churches to be established among these hospitable people.
- Pray for Jesus visions and dreams among this people group.



■ 5 Drawa Berber of Morocco

Berber languages are not officially recognized in Morocco. There are a few Berber programs on television, mainly as a token gesture. Berber is a spoken language. Berbers were once Christians, and St. Augustine was of Berber descent.

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.—Matthew 5:14

- Pray for the Drawa Berbers to learn that a way of forgiveness for their sins has been provided.
- Pray that God will overthrow the spiritual forces of darkness opposing the spread of his gospel.
- Pray for visions and dreams of Jesus.
- Pray that any Drawa Berber expatriates in Europe come to faith in Jesus and win family members to Christ.

■ 6 Warain Berber of Morocco

Contrary to the romantic, popular image that portrays Berbers as nomadic people who cross the desert on camels, their main activity is sedentary agriculture. Gospel radio and recordings, and the JESUS Film are available in the language of the Berbers.

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? —Matthew 7:15–16

- Ask the Lord to multiply the reception and influence of his word among the Warain Berbers, to lead them to love Him with their whole being.
- Ask God to give Warain Berbers a hunger for Christ to dwell in their hearts through faith.

■ 7 Makhuwa of Mozambique

The Makhuwa are also known as “Nahara” which translates as “fisher” and reflects the occupation of this distinct people group. They prefer a simple lifestyle and do not mind being dependent on others who are more educated and can solve their problems for them. The Makhuwa tend towards extremely conservative and suspicious attitudes. They tend to keep to themselves and rarely form friendships with outsiders or other ethnic groups.

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.—Matthew 10:28

- Ask God to equip teachers and pastors to be available to instruct new believers in the ways of the Lord, to lead them to spiritual maturity and fruitfulness.

■ 8 Aimaq of Afghanistan

The ethnically mixed Aimaq tribes formerly stretched from northeastern Iran into western and central Afghanistan, where they still reside. Aimaq are known as formidable warriors. They live semi-nomadic lives, traveling seasonally to graze their herds and/or subsisting as sedentary farmers and carpet weavers in mud-brick villages.

At that time Jesus declared, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children.—Matthew 11:25

- Ask God to soften the hearts of the Aimaq toward the gospel message, and that they will hunger for the grace found in Jesus.

■ 9 Tai Khun of Myanmar

Khun people live in northeast Myanmar and areas of northern Thailand. The Khun people themselves are said to have a deep and firmly rooted culture of self-determination. Their homeland has been the center of civilization for many centuries.

Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.—Matthew 13:8

- Pray for Bible portions and gospel recordings to have a powerful impact on the Tai Khun people.
- Ask God to give the Tai Khun interactions with believers, if and when they travel out of their own region; then ask the Holy Spirit to provide them with a spiritual hunger, as only He can, to draw them to Jesus.

■ 10 Pale Palaung of Myanmar

Like many others in Myanmar and Thailand who are nominally Buddhist, the Palaung still practice various forms of animist rituals. The most famous such ritual is known as “nat worship.” Nats are believed to be the spirits of otherwise inanimate objects that will cause harm if not appeased.

Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find. And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.
—Matthew 22:9–10

- Ask the Lord to provide workers who can accurately communicate the gospel to the Palaung.
- Ask the Lord to multiply the reception and influence of his word among the Palaung people, to lead them to love Him with their whole being.
- Pray for them to establish peace with their government so they can raise their families in safety.



■ 11 Hindu Chik of India

Hindu Chiks are farmers in Bihar, India, and some of them own their land. Their income is derived mainly from the slaughter of goats and sheep. Hinduism fosters a mindset that embraces many spiritual possibilities. Few would consider the idea that there is one God and one savior.

His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’

—Matthew 25:21

- Pray for a move of the Holy Spirit in Bihar that will lead thousands to the only Savior.
- Pray for loving workers to go to them to help them begin a movement to Christ.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger that will lead the Chik people to the cross and the empty grave.

■ 12 Khatwa of Nepal

The Khatwas of Nepal have monogamous marriages, arranged by family leaders. There is no divorce, but those bereaved may marry again. In Nepal, only about one in a thousand has made a profession of faith. Christ is compelling, but few have heard the gospel.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel. —Mark 1:14–15

- Pray the Lord will give Khatwa families understanding and responsive hearts as they hear about the love of Christ from broken-hearted disciples for whom we are also praying.
- Pray for the Khatwa people to be delivered from their fear of “Christianity” and to begin their own movement to Christ based on knowledge of Him.

■ 13 Jai Bhabra of India

The Bhabra are an ancient merchant class. Most Hindu and Jain Bhabra moved to India during the 1947 Partition and were merchants and businessmen. The Bhabra community has had a close historical association with Jainism, a religion that emphasizes causing as little harm as possible to all living things. Their belief in a multifaceted reality means that truth is too complex to be adequately communicated. We are aware of no followers of Christ within the Jain Bhabra community.

And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, If you will, you can make me clean. Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, I will; be clean.—Mark 1:40–41

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to give Jain Bhabra people teachable and understanding hearts.
- Pray that a strong movement of the Holy Spirit would bring entire Bhabra families into a rich experience of God's blessing.



■ 14 Hindu Vannan of India

Hindu Vannans prefer to marry within their community, often marrying cousins. They practice Hinduism, a broad term encompassing the diverse local religions of South Asia. They do not have a personal or familial relationship with their gods. Since only about one in a thousand Vannan people follow the Lord, few can see living Christianity in action from their community.

And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Peace! Be still! And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.—Mark 4:39

- Pray that the leaders of the caste councils will come to Jesus Christ and lead others of the Vannan to Him.
- Pray that many will take up the call to reach the Vannan community with the gospel of Christ.

■ 15 Ajudhyabansi Bania of India

Ajudhyabansi Bania is a subgroup of the Bania. Their name means 'trader' in Sanskrit. This caste has always been about trade, business, and money lending. The gospel has not made inroads into any Bania subgroup. Any work among them will be in the beginning stage. Pride in material wealth will not be easy to overcome in this people group.

And he did not permit him but said to him, Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you. —Mark 5:19

- Pray that the Ajudhyabansi Banias will see that the only true wealth are the spiritual riches gained through a loving relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Pray Christ's disciples will be called to work among them and share Christ in a culturally relevant way.

■ 16 Sakaldwipi Brahmin of India

The Sakaldwipi Brahmin is a well-known community in Bihar and other parts of northern India. As priests and astrologers, the Sakaldwipi Brahmin have a patron-client relationship with other communities. Brahmins must be reached in a way that they understand. Brahmins need to learn about Christ one step at a time.

And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.—Mark 7:37

- Pray for a movement to Christ among the Sakaldwipi Brahmin that will affect other Brahmin subgroups.
- Pray that Sakaldwipi Brahmin believers will learn to walk in humility with their Savior and Lord.
- Pray for the Lord to thrust out the right workers to the Sakaldwipi Brahmin community.

■ 17 Magahia Kumhar of India

Part of the greater Kumhar group, who are traditionally potters, the Magahia are well educated, and some work in business. With only about one in a thousand Magahia following Christ, they will need to hear the gospel from outsiders.

And he asked them, But who do you say that I am? Peter answered him, You are the Christ.—Mark 8:29

- Pray that the council leaders come to Jesus Christ and lead their community into a Christ-ward movement.
- Pray that gospel materials and the internet lead the Magahia Kumhar to start their own Discovery Bible groups.



■ 18 Yerwa Kanuri of Niger

Yerwa Kanuri marriages and families need help in staying together, help that only the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can solve. The Kanuri have been Muslims since the 11th century, and they are deeply committed to the Islamic religious system.

For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? — Mark 8:36-37

- Pray for the Lord to heal the marriages of the Kanuri people and lead them into the loving respect that encourages lasting unions.
- Pray for God to give dreams of the victorious, risen Christ to the elders of the Yerwa Kanuri.
- Pray for the Lord to thrust out Holy Spirit-driven workers to lead the Yerwa Kanuri people to the cross.
- Pray for a movement to Christ among all Kanuri subgroups.

■ 19 Fulani, West Niger of Niger

The West Niger Fulani are gradually losing their traditional grazing lands, and they roam the savannah in search of grass and water for their cattle, while trying to avoid harmful insects. Due to their semi-nomadic lifestyle, most West Fulani children do not attend school.

For he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise. — Mark 9:31

- Pray for the Lord to bless the West Niger Fulani with abundant rain for their cattle and crops as a testimony of His goodness, mercy and sovereignty.
- Ask God to save key West Niger Fulani leaders who will share the love of Jesus with their people.
- Pray for disciples who will make more disciples among the West Niger Fulani.

■ 20 Manga Kanuri of Nigeria

Manga Kanuri have been Muslims since the eleventh century. Though they blend their form of Islam with their ancient beliefs, Islam is their identity. It will be challenging to present Christ to them in a way that they won't perceive it as a threat to their identity. Throughout Africa, people are passionate about music and dance. If the gospel message is presented musically, the Manga Kanuri might find it acceptable.

But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it. — Mark 10:14-15

- Ask the Lord to raise up a movement of Manga Kanuri disciples making more disciples.
- Pray for God to raise up the right people to present the gospel in a culturally acceptable way.

■ 21 Adamawa Fulani of Nigeria

In the 1800s, Modibo Adama, a scholar and Muslim holy warrior, led a jihad in what is now Cameroon and Nigeria, opening the region up to Fulani colonization. He continued his campaign, eventually conquering many villages and founding his empire, which he named Adamawa after himself. His Fulani people established Islam as the religion in the region.

And Jesus said to him, What do you want me to do for you? And the blind man said to him, Rabbi, let me recover my sight. — Mark 10:51

- Pray for compassionate believers to take Christ to the Adamawa Fulani people.
- Pray that the Lord would soften and prepare the hearts of the Fulani to receive the gospel.

■ 22 Muslim Tamboli of Bangladesh

The Tamboli derive their name from the Sanskrit term for "betel leaves" (tambula). Tambul or betel leaf packing is the primary source of their income. Many Tamboli people work as small business traders and hardware shop owners because of their higher or "clean" caste status. The entire Bible has been translated into Bengali, the spoken language of the Tamboli people in Bangladesh. Audio and visual resources also exist.

Jesus said to them, Is this not the reason you are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? — Mark 12:24

- Pray for someone to take these resources to the Tamboli people.

■ 23 Sunri Sadhubanik of Bangladesh

The Sadhubanik are a subgroup of the Sunris. It is hard for Hindus like the Sunri Sadhubanik people to grasp and embrace the idea of worshipping only one god. They will have to understand that God is a jealous God and he has no rival.

And he said to them, The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. — Luke 10:2

- Pray for the Sunri Sadhubanik people to understand that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.
- Pray that they would see the impotence of the gods they worship. Pray for Holy Spirit-anointed workers to go!

■ 24 Omani Arab of Oman

Omani Arabs were among the first people in the Middle East to accept Islam. Most Omani people belong to the Ibadi sect of Islam, one of the oldest and most traditional branches of the religion. Ibadi principles of puritanism (including reverence for the text of the Koran) and idealism have greatly influenced Arabs in neighboring countries as well. To follow Jesus in this environment would be difficult, as it would break their traditions of “puritanism.”

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. — Luke 24:45

- Pray that a strong movement to Jesus would bring whole Omani families and communities into a rich experience of God’s blessings.
- Pray for the Lord to send dreams and visions to Omani Arab family leaders, opening the door for entire clans to embrace Christ.

■ 25 Makhmi of Pakistan

The Makhmi tribe is Muslim in a land where Islam, Hinduism, and even Buddhism are nearby. Jammu and Kashmir is a very difficult part of the world where the armies of India and Pakistan are usually on the brink of war. For this reason, the Makhmi people live with the presence of military forces. It is also a gospel-starved region.

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. — John 15:5

- Pray for Makhmi decision-makers to have a Holy Spirit-led hunger for spiritual truth.
- Pray for workers to take Christ to the Makhmi people no matter what the cost may be.
- Pray that they would crave the joy and transformation that comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit.

■ 9/26 Korai Baloch of Pakistan

The Korai Baloch pass traditions to children through oral history retelling. The tradition of a Baloch mother singing lullabies to her children has played a significant role in the transmission of knowledge from generation to generation for many centuries.

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! — John 1:29

- Pray for the entire Korai Baloch clan to experience God’s blessings and to put their faith in Him together as a group.
- Pray that the Korai Baloch may be open to the message of the gospel.
- Pray that God will provide workers who speak the Balochi language to lovingly work with the Korai Baloch people lovingly.
- Pray that God will supply unity among the various Baloch tribes.





■ 27 Muslim Jat Varaich of Pakistan

Historically, Varaich (a.k.a. Waraich) Jats have been landowners and tenant farmers but they also have a reputation as fearless warriors. Many from this clan serve in both India's and Pakistan's military forces. Some of Pakistan's prominent military officers hail from this clan. Today, Varaich Jats typically farm. Islam stands unchallenged among the Varaich Jat community in Pakistan. If someone considered embracing Christ as Lord, they would face severe persecution.

Jesus answered him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.
— John 3:3

- Ask the Lord to prepare the hearts of the Varaich Jats to be receptive and ready to surrender to Christ.

■ 28 Pardhi of India

Many Pardhi communities make and sell baskets, while others make black-stone vessels. Some of the Pardhis sell oil from crocodiles or perform monkey shows. Commonly, the Pardhi hire themselves out as day laborers. They struggle to adjust to modern Indian society. Their nomadic background and their reputation as petty criminals make other communities suspicious of the Pardhis. Some Pardhis have risen above this by leading tours that showcase the flora, fauna, and wildlife of their central Indian homeland to tourists.

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.
— John 4:23

- Pray that God will send culturally sensitive missionaries who will show them the way to the cross.
- Pray for the Pardhi people to be blessed with peace, joy, and spiritual prosperity as they follow Jesus Christ.

■ 29 Israeli Jewish of West Bank / Gaza

Anger, hostility, and violence have engulfed the lives of the Israelis and Palestinians living in the West Bank for over five decades. The situation remains unresolved, resulting in ongoing tensions. This is hard for both parties. Most Israeli Jews living in the West Bank are cultural Jews or atheists who reject outreach from Christians. They do not believe they need spiritual help.

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.
— John 5:24

- Pray that the Jewish and Arab people of the West Bank will hear God's voice, repent, and be willing to find final peace in the Lord.
- Pray for a Jesus-centered spiritual revival in the West Bank that will draw both sides to the King of kings.

■ 30 Bachgoti Rajput of India

Rajputs were a class of South Asian warriors and nobles for centuries. At certain times, their warriors conquered kingdoms and defended the land; whenever possible, they enjoyed the life of nobles. Today, the Rajputs take pride in sharing the military exploits of their ancestors, and many still serve in the military or own land. There are many Rajput subgroups and clans, one of which is the Bachgoti. Reaching the Rajputs would be enhanced by an understanding of India's history and how the caste system influences their mindset.

Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. — John 6:35

- Pray that the Lord will give the Hindu Bachgoti Rajputs a spiritual hunger and then satisfy that hunger.
- Pray that these Rajputs will understand the value of becoming part of God's royal family.

OCTOBER

1 Swiss Jewish of Switzerland

Jews have lived in Switzerland since the 13th century, frequently facing persecution. Today, most Swiss Jews live in the large cities. The many Jewish organizations and communities in Switzerland, including ultra-Orthodox, Orthodox, Reform, and Liberal Jews, are united by the Swiss Federation of Jewish Communities.

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.
— John 7:37-38

- Pray that Swiss Jews would be willing to investigate the claims of Jesus.
- Pray that God would open their spiritual eyes as they read and study the Old Testament.
- Ask the Lord to send believers to demonstrate God's love to the Jews in Switzerland.

2 Spanish-speaking Jewish of Uruguay

In 1907, Sephardic Jewish immigrants began arriving in Uruguay from Turkey. By 1920, they had established retail stores in Montevideo. Uruguay was the first Latin American country to recognize the state of Israel and establish diplomatic ties with that new nation. The Jewish cultural connection that once tied the community together has been replaced with secularism and nominal adherence to Torah Judaism.

And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.
— John 8:29

- Ask the Lord of the harvest to send forth loving Christ-followers to work among the Jewish communities in Uruguay.
- Pray that the Jewish people will understand that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah.
- Pray that strong local churches will be raised up in each Jewish community in South America.

3 Southern Sama of Philippines

The Southern Sama are known for their traditional dances, songs, percussion, and xylophone music, as well as dyed mats, food covers, and wood carvings. They believe that the spirits of the dead remain in the vicinity of their graves, requiring expressions of continued concern from the living. They have reported that some of these graves are the source of miracle-working power. Christians, primarily Catholics, have reached out to help these people in the areas of health and education.

Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. — John 8:58

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to give the Southern Sama people teachable and understanding hearts.
- Pray for Southern Sama families to encounter Jesus and experience his love.

4 Kalagan of Philippines

The Kalagans have a fairly elaborate social structure with different rankings given to families. They are Muslim yet incorporate some animistic beliefs and practices into their religion. Muslim religious leaders and teachers (imams and panditas) direct religious life and teach young boys to read and memorize the Koran.

He answered, Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.
— John 9:25

- Pray for all the Muslim groups in the Philippines to live peacefully with their non-Muslim neighbors.
- Pray for the government to know how to deal effectively with unrest in Muslim areas.

5 Iranun of Philippines

Iranuns are a small Filipino Muslim group of sea-based people. The Iranun are Muslim but also believe in spirits and are in constant fear of them. The Iranuns have resisted every effort to introduce Christianity to them.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. There has been one group trying to reach the Iranun for a long time, but with very minimal results. — Acts 1:8

- Pray for the safety of the Iranun fishermen as they ply their trade.
- Pray for Christians in other Filipino tribes to have a heart to share Christ with the Muslim Iranun Filipino community.
- Pray for the Lord to give Iranun family leaders dreams of the risen Christ that will lead them to the only savior.

6 Rashaida of Sudan

Despite being a majority of them illiterate, the nomadic Rashaidas memorize the pedigree of their animals in great detail, keeping mental records of their herds over seven or eight generations of the flock. Their constant movement as nomads makes it challenging to connect and maintain relationships with them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. — Acts 2:4

- Pray for the few followers of Christ who exist and work in the Rashaida community, and for any believers who will soon come to faith.
- Pray that they may build a great community among themselves.
- Pray for the Rashaida people to receive the gospel message and share it with many others.

7 Dhund of Pakistan

Most likely, the Dhund Abbasi people migrated to ancient Pakistan from Egypt around 850 AD, primarily as commodity traders and merchants. Northern Pakistan, where the Dhund people reside, is exceptionally resistant to the claims of Christ.

You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence. — Acts 2:28

- Pray that the Lord will be present in the Dhund's lives in powerful ways, shining a light through much of the darkness and pain present in Pakistan.
- Pray for the brave Pakistani Christians, for their protection and opportunities to spread the message of Jesus to those around them.
- Pray for Christians to intentionally make disciples among members of the Dhund community.

8 Middle-Eastern Turkmen of Iraq

The Turkmen in Iraq are the descendants of Central Asian people who migrated to Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) started in the 7th century. They are divided, in part, by religious adherence to Sunni or Shia Islam, and by clan affiliation.

And all the people saw him walking and praising God. — Acts 3:9

- Pray for translation and distribution efforts for both the New Testament and the JESUS Film.
- Pray that these tools will be widely available to speakers of all Turkmen dialects spoken in Iraq.
- Pray for a growing movement to Christ to rise up among them.
- Pray for the boldness and protection of Turkmen believers, as well as opportunities for them to disciple others.



9 Dendi of Benin

The Dendis of Benin are almost entirely Muslim. Though Islam introduced new elements into the Dendi culture, it left the underlying framework of customs and traditions virtually untouched. Spirit possession, magic, sorcery, ancestor worship, and witchcraft remain vital components of the Dendi belief system.

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. — Acts 4:12

- Pray for adequate rainfall to produce good crops and for improved health care.
- Pray for entire Dendi families to come to know Christ.
- Pray that the Lord will send teachers to help the few Christ followers among the Dendi become firmly established in the truths of Scripture and send pastors to shepherd them.

10 Arwa Mala of India

Surprisingly, the Arwa Mala are Hindu, yet they eat beef, pork, and mutton, though their staples are rice and other grains. The most common jobs for the Arwa Mala people are either selling bundles of wood or working as laborers on someone else's farm.

But Peter and John answered them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard. — Acts 4:19-20

- Pray that the Arwa Mala could see the value and enrichment that Jesus Christ would bring to their lives if they would let Him.
- Pray for the Lord to bless their families, calling people to his side and guiding them through his Spirit.
- Pray for Tamil-speaking Christian believers to reach the Arwa Mala community.



11 Hindu Devadiga of India

The Devadiga name originates from words meaning "servant of a god." As their name suggests, the traditional occupation of the Devadiga was assisting Brahmins in temples as helpers and musicians. It is challenging to initiate a movement to Christ when there are no Christ followers within a community. Those who take the gospel to the Devadiga people will need to reach their leaders.

And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus. — Acts 4:29-30

- Pray that a movement to Jesus would multiply among Devadiga families and communities.
- Ask the Lord to raise up and send out a new generation of fruitful, multiplying witnesses from among the Devadigas.



12 Ingush of Russia

There are probably about 30 scattered Ingush followers of Christ. Ingush people need these few believers to shine with the light of the Holy Spirit and take Christ's great name to every Ingush village. At least one Russian Christian believer has reached out to the Ingush people.

Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. — Acts 5:41

- Pray for Ingush hearts to hear and receive the gospel.
- Pray that more of Christ's ambassadors will go to the Ingush people and practice the unconditional love of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Pray that workers will translate the Bible and the JESUS Film into the Ingush language.
- Pray for the establishment of a viable, indigenous, and reproducing Ingush church.

13 Tabasaran of Russia

The Islamic faith was adopted by the Tabasarians in the 8th-9th centuries, following Arab conquests. To the present day, many pagan traditions have persisted among them. Their homeland was taken by Russia in 1806. One Tabasaran individual became a follower of Jesus Christ in 1997, and now several dozen more have come to faith.

So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, Do you understand what you are reading? — Acts 8:30

- Two Tabasaran Christian music recordings, in authentic Tabasaran style, have widely circulated. Pray that these and other such resources will bring many to Christ.
- Pray that the handful of followers of Jesus Christ among the Tabasaran people will grow into the likeness of Christ, living consistently in the power of his Spirit.

■ 14 Balkar of Russia

The Soviet government forcibly deported almost the entire Balkar population to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Siberia in 1944. Thousands died from malnutrition and disease. They were allowed to return home to the Caucasus in 1957. Every aspect of life, from birth to marriage, to death, is governed by folk-Islamic and Balkar traditions. There are a few Christians among the Balkar people of Russia.

Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. — Acts 13:12

- Pray these Christians will come to understand it is by grace that we are saved, not by works, so that no one can boast.
- Pray for peace throughout the Caucasus region, between ethnic groups, and with the Russian government.

■ 15 Nogai of Russia

The name Nogai derives from the name of one man. Nogai, grandson to Genghis Khan, was an outstanding chieftain and the real leader of the Golden Horde. He was the ruler of these people west of the Danube. In recent times, several waves of migration have swept into Nogai territories. The Caucasus region is challenging for Christian workers to access due to government restrictions and local suspicions.

For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth. — Acts 13:47

- Pray that Christian radio will be made available throughout the Caucasus and that people will find it and listen with open hearts and minds.
- Pray for the Lord to speak to Nogai elders through dreams and visions.

■ 16 Dargin of Russia

The history of the Dargins is one of struggle, being constantly conquered over centuries by the Huns, Turks, Mongols, Persians, and Russians. Dagestan is one of the strongest bastions of conservative Islam in Russia. Since the 11th century, Islam has been the predominant religion of the Dargins. The influence of Islam has remained strong and is even increasing. The Caucasus region is volatile, and the people do not welcome Christian influence or presence.

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, Come over to Macedonia and help us. — Acts 16:9

- Pray for justice and peace in the Caucasus region, including peace among ethnic groups, with the Russian government, and with God.

■ 17 Kollan Viswakarma of India

The Viswakarma Kollan are traditionally blacksmiths, but now many work as agricultural day laborers, goldsmiths, businessmen, or office workers. Most likely, an entire family or clan will need to respond at one time, so they are not subject to community pressure to return to Hinduism.

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

— Acts 17:30-31

- Pray that the leaders of the Kollan will come to Jesus Christ and lead their community into a Christ-ward movement.
- Pray that gospel materials and the internet will become readily available to them.
- Pray for a spiritual hunger that will lead them to the only Savior.

■ 18 Kachhwaha Kachhi of India

Though they have a rural background, some Kachhwaha Kachhi people have made careers in the government or in private sector roles such as medicine or engineering. Their deep roots in Hinduism make evangelism a challenging endeavor. There is probably no active Christian witness to the Kachhi Kachhwaha people in India.

So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.

— Acts 19:20

- Pray that the Spirit will be working in many Kachhi and cause them to seek spiritual truth.
- Pray the Kachhi Kachhwaha people will humble themselves and come to trust in Christ like little children.
- Pray for a movement among this people group that will result in many church plants reproducing themselves.



19 Bedouin Arab of Saudi Arabia

Bedouins typically follow a hierarchy of loyalties based on the closeness of kinship that runs from the nuclear family through the lineage, the tribe, and even to an entire ethnic or linguistic group. Disputes are settled, interests are pursued, and justice and order are maintained through this organizational framework.

But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.
—Acts 20:24

- Pray that the Lord's Spirit will open Bedouin eyes to see that Jesus is more than a prophet.
- Pray that the women will hear how much Jesus values them.
- Pray for their elders to have dreams and visions of the risen and victorious Christ.

20 Northern Yemeni Arab of Saudi Arabia

Northern Yemenis who are residing in Saudi Arabia formerly lived in the northern mountains and northeastern deserts of Yemen, the poorest country in the Arab world. Yemen has a turbulent history of wars and conquests. They have experienced a small but growing movement to Christ in recent years.

To open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.
—Acts 26:18

- Praise the Lord for what He is doing! Pray for a disciple-making movement to flourish among Northern Yemenis.
- Pray for a movement of the Holy Spirit that will give Northern Yemenis a willingness to embrace Jesus Christ as lord and Savior, depending on Him alone for salvation.

21 Sengar Rajput of India

Sengar Rajputs have witnessed Indians from lower caste groups embracing Christ, so they tend to have a negative view of Christianity.

Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.
—Acts 28:28

- Pray for faithful intercessors for the Rajput community in India.
- Pray that the Sengar Rajputs will have a spiritual hunger that will open their hearts to the King of kings.
- Pray for the Lord to send dedicated workers to the Sengar Rajputs in India.

22 Somvanshi of India

Today, the Somvanshi are financiers, business owners, traders, and industrialists. They hold a high position in Hindu society. Putting their faith in Christ would mean associating with people of lower positions. This is an unspoken stigma among Hindus.

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God
—2 Corinthians 10:3-5

- Pray that God sends high-caste background believers to the Somvanshi Khatri.
- Pray that a strong movement to Jesus will bring entire Somvanshi Khatri families and communities into a rich experience of God's blessings.
- Pray that God will overthrow spiritual forces of darkness opposing the spread of his gospel among the Somvanshi.

23 Sadgope Yadav of Bangladesh

The Sadgope Yadav practice Hinduism and claim to be descendants of King Yadu, which gives them a sense of high honor. They tend to look down on other Bangladeshis, and this pride could be a barrier to following Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,
—Ephesians 1:3

- Pray for these proud people to humble themselves, repent, and receive forgiveness in Christ.
- Pray for God to send workers who are filled with the Holy Spirit to share the gospel with the Sadgope Yadav. Pray for a movement to Christ among the Sadgope Yadav in both Bangladesh and India. Pray for those who come to Christ to be bold in sharing their faith.

■ 24 Susu of Sierra Leone

Susos combine their Islamic faith with traditional beliefs. They believe that ghosts and spirits inhabit the same land, and that witches possess the power to transform into animals and inflict harm on their villages. The spiritual forces that control them keep them from embracing the truth of Christ.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the
—Ephesians 1:17-18

- Pray that God would draw these people into the abundant life only Christ can offer.
- Pray for Jesus to set them free from wicked spirits.
- Pray for improved healthcare and quality schools for the Susu.

■ 25 Chalvadi of India

Traditionally, the members of this people group carried carcasses and worked as servants. More recently, they have become wage laborers in agricultural operations. Some are employed in government service.

That according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
—Ephesians 3:16-17

- Pray for the Chalvadi community to educate their children, find better employment, and enjoy a better standard of living. There are only a few followers of Jesus Christ within this community.
- Pray for these Christians to consistently clothe themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience and represent Christ well.

■ 26 Molesalam Girasia of India

Girasia means landlords; their primary profession is farming. They have a low literacy level, so the gospel needs to be presented in oral form.

That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

—Ephesians 5:26-27

- Pray that the Molesalam Girasia are attracted to Jesus enough to begin their own discovery Bible studies.
- Pray that gospel recordings and the JESUS Film will lead them to salvation.
- Pray for spiritual discernment and a hunger for truth that will lead them to Christ.

■ 27 Hindu Sansi of India

Sansis were stigmatized under the Criminal Tribes Act during the British rule of India. That stigma remains with them today, making their lives difficult. They are sometimes shunned by other communities, giving them a reason to withdraw from outsiders. Some of the Sansi are landless farmers and day laborers, while others sell alcoholic drinks. They are bound by poverty.

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

—Ephesians 6:11

- Pray that the poverty they live in will cause them to look to Jesus Christ for answers.
- Pray for faithful, Holy Spirit-directed workers to go to them as Christ's faithful ambassadors.

■ 28 Velama of India

Velamas are solidly Hindu. Hinduism produces a very different understanding of spiritual issues than does the Christian Bible. Radically changing a person's experience and spiritual belief system is usually a slow and challenging process.

...filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

—Philippians 1:11

- Pray for the Velama who have reported themselves as Christians to the Indian census.
- Pray they will lead holy lives and will learn to live in the power of God's Spirit, demonstrating love, joy, peace, and all the fruit of the Spirit.

29 Barawani Swahili of Somalia

The name Swahili means “coast,” and refers to several people groups that share a common culture, language, and the Islamic religion. They have subgroups; among them are the Barawani. For approximately 2,000 years, commerce has been the backbone of the Swahili economy.

Being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy.
—Colossians 1:11-12

- Pray for the Lord to give the Barawani Swahili people group the humility to see the only one who can save them from sin and spiritual death.
- Pray for the Lord to send his children as long-term ambassadors to the Barawani Swahili people.
- Pray for a movement to Christ to occur among the Barawani Swahilis.

30 Bantu Somali of Somalia

Most Somalis will not intermarry with Somali Bantus, and some will not even eat with them or enter their house. During the civil war in Somalia, Somali Bantus suffered horribly at the hands of clan militias and criminal gangs. Fear that Christianity undermines their identity, communities, and traditions is one way that Satan uses to hinder Somali Bantu communities from accepting Christ’s blessings.

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.
—Colossians 4:5-6

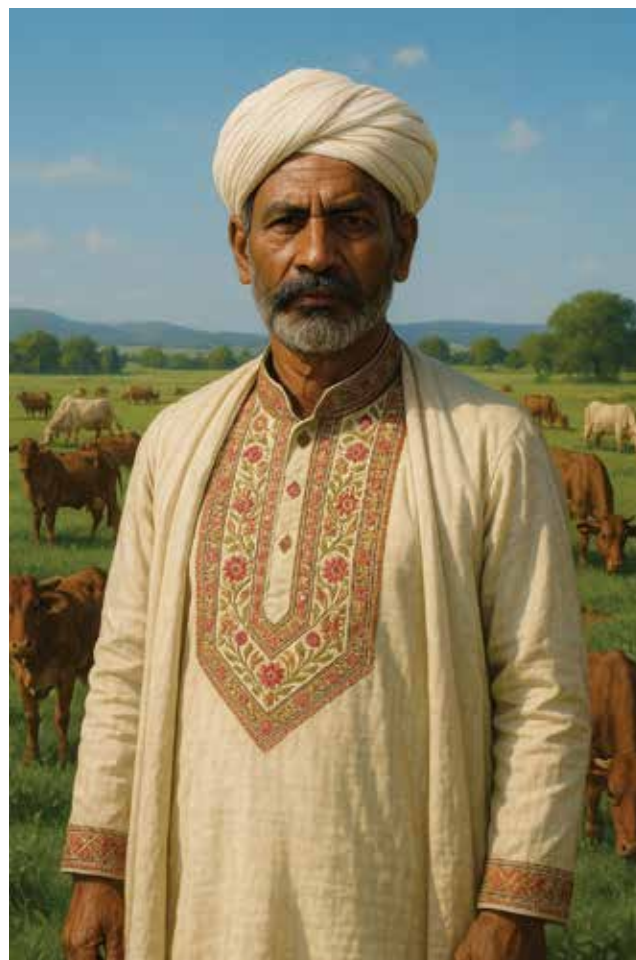
- Pray for a strong movement of the Holy Spirit will bring entire Somali Bantu families into a rich experience of God’s blessing.
- Pray for them to have a disciple-making movement.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to give the Somali Bantu people teachable and understanding hearts.

31 Ghosi Yadav of India

One of the main Yadav subgroups is the Ghosi Yadavs. The term Ghosi refers to a herder. Yadavs believe their main lineage is from the various kings and the Hindu god Krishna. While some remain landless laborers, others have diversified into various professions, including business, teaching, and politics. They have good status among Hindus. This gives them a sense of pride and self-confidence, which can be a barrier to the humility required to accept the gospel.

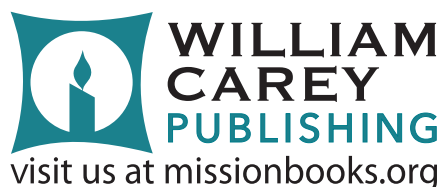
So that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
—2 Thessalonians 1:12

- Pray for the humility it takes to seek and find the one who is the way, the truth, and the life.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to send workers to the Ghosi Yadav community.



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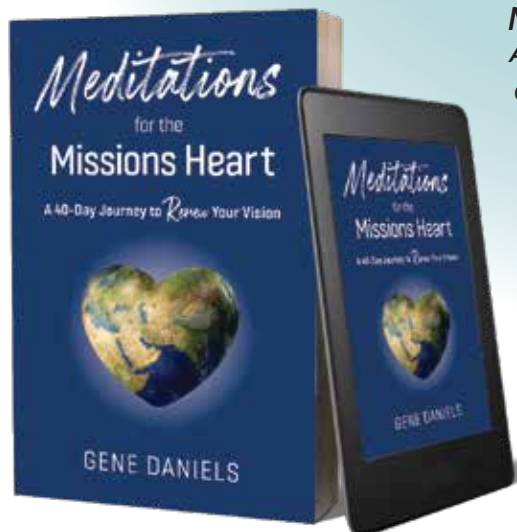
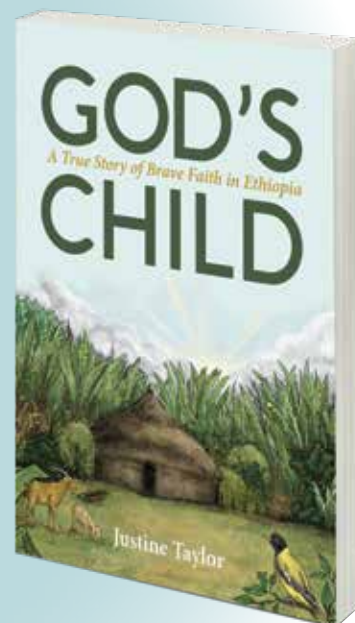
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