

GOD IS WORKING

by Greg Parsons

Director of Global Connections
Frontier Ventures

NORMALLY, MY international travel is to conferences and I usually don't see any tourist sites. Recently, I was traveling internationally as a tourist with others, many of whom don't travel much. It is fascinating to me to see how others view cultural differences. All of us have a foundational "culture" in which we live and work. Often, we don't realize it. Even though going to "tourist" sites means you are watching tourists interact (and not the people who live there as much), it is instructive to see how people interact with different modes of transportation or try new foods, etc.

No matter where I am, I gain great encouragement to hear and see ways God is working, via fellow travelers or through those who minister in the countries long-term. Sitting in my home or office, I'm tempted to either be discouraged or to think that I know what is happening around the world. In my role, people expect me to! But, in fact, it would be arrogant for me to assume that I know *even* 1% of what He is doing anywhere — or even all that results from our own ministry!

In one major city on this recent trip, I explored more in depth with friends in ministry there for 20 years. I was again in awe of God and His way of working through people few people will ever know. I learned about one woman who did an amazing, life-long

ministry with people in need with the Salvation Army. The country's secular government recognized and honored her with a State funeral just a few years ago. Still others were just starting similar ministry with another established work there.

It is pretty obvious that God is working in ways and with peoples that we "know not of." I write about this old idea for several reasons:

First: to encourage all of us in the midst of difficulties and ministry—especially ministry focused on those without clear gospel witness we can "see" and yet for which we long. Perhaps I am speaking to myself with this, since our leadership has recently experienced more challenges. We all have, as Paul described it, "pressures within and without."

Second: God is sovereign (again, no surprise!). He is working and He is patient. We are not. Part of my impatience grows out of our founding vision here at Frontier Ventures: we long to see everyone "come to a knowledge of the truth" and have a relationship with God. But God works in His timing, and somehow—in the midst of his sovereignty—in response to our prayers. (James 4:2c)

Third: One way that God encourages us is by opening the curtain just a little on His work. Perhaps we should expect to see it more often and certainly we should pray that He will work to accomplish His plan—whether we see it or not.

When I got home from this trip, I had an illustration of this in my front

yard. My grass was really long! Actually, only part of it was long. The variety of grass I planted years ago was a fairly short deep green, but doesn't grow fast or spread out. It is also susceptible to invasive grass. But the grass I didn't plant is fast growing and spreads out. It has taken over in certain places and it grows much faster in warm weather, even in the fall.

The grass I planted is an illustration of all what God has called us to do. It is amazing what He allows us to do—it looks pretty good to us. Yet He comes in and replaces some of it which grows faster. It looks different. It may not even be as pretty as what we had in mind, but He adds to it and does things far beyond all we could ask or even think.

I know a number of places God is working in the world where, even if you were there on the ground, you wouldn't know what was happening (I wouldn't either, if I didn't know the workers involved). Breakthroughs among unreached peoples don't normally get measured by church buildings or public recognition. But, quietly—globally—God is working!

Let's ask him to work even more among the peoples where—as best we can tell—not much is visible. Do you have specific missionaries you are praying for every day? Do you have a specific people group (or two!) you are praying earnestly for? Why not share about your prayer focus at www.missionfrontiers.org under this article.

