

MISSIONTM FRONTIERS

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FRONTIER VENTURES

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Email: subscriptions@frontierventures.org
Editorial Office: editor@missionfrontiers.org
Advertising: advertising@missionfrontiers.org
Website: www.missionfrontiers.org
Address: PO Box 41450 | Pasadena CA 91114-8450

Sue Patt, Editor
Mike Riester, Graphic Design

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Happy Holidays, Friends!

By **SUE PATT**

A humble servant

Sue Patt has worked with Frontier Ventures since 1982 in various positions. She lives in the Philadelphia suburbs with her husband, Fran, and her dog, Buddy.

The holiday season brings so many opportunities to reconnect with loved ones far and near, and this issue of *Mission Frontiers* is our way to introduce you to Frontier Ventures through our family of ministries. Lean closer and let Ed McManness, our General Director, begin the introduction. Our initiatives are organized through four functions: **Missiology**, **Formation**, **Innovation**, and **Publishing**. I feel confident that you will find an initiative about which you have not yet heard.

As a mission organization, **Missiology** is the water we swim in, but we are happy to swim with others through the RDW Lectureship, an annual event shared between William Carey International University and Frontier Ventures through the RDW Research Center. We also have a podcast to introduce to you. Finally, the *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* is part of our Missiology team, but we have exciting developments that are not quite ready for this issue. More on that another time.

Spiritual Formation is a deep well of living water as we abide in Christ so that in overflow others can encounter the living Christ. There is no substitute for living water, and our Formation team offers many different initiatives to allow others to drink deeply. Second-Half Collaborative is a 10-month cohort for experienced mission workers. Perspectives USA and Perspectives Global offer our well-known, 15-week paradigm-shifting class. The Institute for Community Transformation provides a wealth of undergraduate classes. Our NEXTGEN initiative offers a cool drink of living water a week at a time.

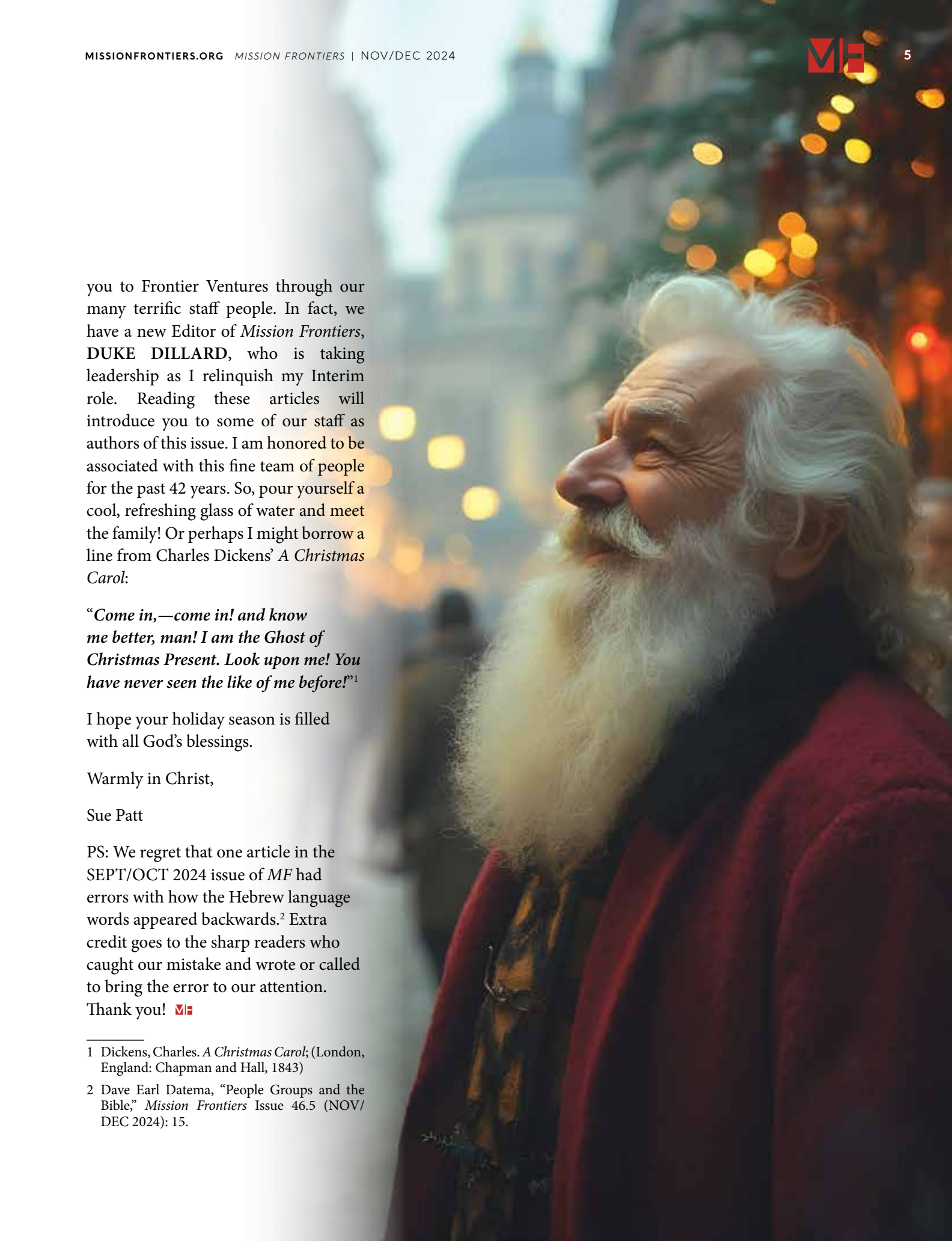
Innovation is essential for bringing the good news of Jesus to the least reached peoples, and our Winter Launch Lab team fosters an ecosystem of

innovation with initiatives including Health for All Nations geared toward health care professionals. This team also interacts with various networks comprised of people mostly outside of Frontier Ventures. Two of these networks include a central focus on Bitcoin and Nomadic Peoples. Earlier this year, an event was held for network innovators. Equipping others through innovative design experiences is highlighted in this issue.

The words you are reading are evidence of our **Publishing** function. *Mission Frontiers* has been producing thought-provoking magazine issues for 46 years, and William Carey Publishing has been creating mission books for 55 years, moving the missiological conversations forward within the global body of Christ.

Finally, from our new Development department, we have a free opportunity to assist you in creating your own will to streamline logistical details for your family when the Lord calls you home to glory. There are creative ways you can protect your assets for your family and provide charitable generosity. We hope you will consider FV for this legacy giving.

This issue of *Mission Frontiers* is a snapshot of our family of ministries. Each initiative invites your participation through prayer and active involvement. (I am aware of at least one specific administrative support role for a volunteer to work with the MF team. Email editor@missionfrontiers.org if you are interested.) We might have instead introduced you to Frontier Ventures through the view of our values, or our aspirations driving us to grow into closer relational connections with global leaders, or through our almost 50-year history. (We turn 50 in 2026, and we plan to celebrate with you all year long!) We might have introduced



you to Frontier Ventures through our many terrific staff people. In fact, we have a new Editor of *Mission Frontiers*, **DUKE DILLARD**, who is taking leadership as I relinquish my Interim role. Reading these articles will introduce you to some of our staff as authors of this issue. I am honored to be associated with this fine team of people for the past 42 years. So, pour yourself a cool, refreshing glass of water and meet the family! Or perhaps I might borrow a line from Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*:


“Come in,—come in! and know me better, man! I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me! You have never seen the like of me before!”¹

I hope your holiday season is filled with all God's blessings.

Warmly in Christ,

Sue Patt

PS: We regret that one article in the SEPT/OCT 2024 issue of *MF* had errors with how the Hebrew language words appeared backwards.² Extra credit goes to the sharp readers who caught our mistake and wrote or called to bring the error to our attention.

Thank you! 

¹ Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol*; (London, England: Chapman and Hall, 1843)

² Dave Earl Datema, “People Groups and the Bible,” *Mission Frontiers* Issue 46.5 (NOV/DEC 2024): 15.

“Hearts on Fire”

By **ED MCMANNESS**

Ed McManness is the Formation Catalyst and General Director (interim) for Frontier Ventures. Ed, and his wife Joan, spent almost 14 years in Indonesia on the island of Java. Ed enjoys biking and kayaking and loves spending time with his grandkids.

“Were not our hearts on fire?”

are the words of two disciples as reported in the gospel of Luke as they hurried back to Jerusalem to tell their friends what happened in the village of Emmaus. I cherish this story of these eager hearts as

I imagine we walk a similar path in mission today. What a joy, 2,000 years later, that the mission of Jesus still ignites holy fires in the hearts of families among the least reached with hope and healing, bringing breakthroughs in God’s ever-expanding presence on earth.


I have been so blessed to meet Christ-followers around the world who have had their hearts ignited on fire by the same Jesus who met those disciples on that dusty road. Whether they heard the good news through a dream or vision, through someone who learned their language, or from a neighbor who knew Jesus— hearts continue to be melted by the flame of God’s love around the globe. That’s the gift of the gospel— changing lives by bringing hope and healing to the nations.

In a recent conversation with my good friend, who has spent three decades declaring the kingdom of God to his brothers and sisters in India, he shared, “the Frontier Ventures program brought us the scriptural reflection and deep encounter with Jesus that we desperately needed. Time spent in God’s Word coupled with intentional times of spiritual formation in Christ helped our leaders share the good news from lives overflowing.”

We love collaborating with leaders around the world in the global body of Christ, like my long-time friend in India. These leaders are taking the good news to the least reached in their nations, to neighboring countries, and around the world. When I was called into mission in 1987, it was the US Center for World Mission that helped to shape my thinking and plans for the adventure ahead to a place that became home to us—the archipelago of Indonesia. My wife and I spent almost 14 years there among the most precious people you will ever meet.

Through reading the *Global Prayer Digest*, published by the US Center, that part of the world was opened to us, and we hoped that we could be a part of God’s blessing for those precious people.





In this issue of *Mission Frontiers*, it is my prayer that the words, “*were not our hearts on fire,*” will resonate throughout the articles you will read. It is our hope and sincere pleasure to share with you all that God is doing through the ministry of Frontier Ventures. We are privileged to continue almost five decades of seeing the light of Jesus the Messiah shine on the peoples around the world.

I’m excited to serve alongside those who contributed the articles in this issue. They share from the rich experience of mission, and from a place of deep encounter with God. I am blessed to be with them as they listen intently to the Spirit of God, as they listen to our partners around the globe, and bring innovative programs and projects and partnerships to what is “on mission” for Frontier Ventures: “*to nurture new ways for least reached peoples to experience fullness of life in Jesus.*”

This is our “family” issue of *Mission Frontiers*—we are inviting you into the Frontier Ventures living room as we share stories of seeing and experiencing, firsthand, the fullness of life in Jesus taking root among least reached peoples. I hope you enjoy reading of the ways our family of ministries are stepping out in faith and nurturing new ideas for communities at the edges of mission to encounter Christ.

Each article will give you a glimpse into one of our exciting initiatives. You will read stories of how we are responding to the invitation of our missional God to be a blessing to the nations through a variety of initiatives. You will read of our educational efforts that transform communities, creatively equipping next generation leaders around the world, bringing much needed healthcare for all nations, and in our ministries that foster inner-life-union with God.

Frontier Ventures has been known for mobilizing the global body of Christ for missions for almost 50 years—and we will continue that call in new ways over the next decade! We are launching new initiatives to mobilize the souls of global leaders to lead out of places of deep encounter with Jesus. Our focus follows the pattern of Jesus’ life and ministry as seen in the gospels:

- *Communion* with the Father,
- *Authentic community* with one another,
- *Mission* to those who have never heard the good news.

It is my prayer that your heart will be ignited on fire for the extraordinary mission of God as you read this issue. God is doing amazing things around the globe, and we are blessed, and humbled, to be part of the very hope and healing Jesus is bringing to the nations. MF

My Journey with The Ralph D. Winter Lectureship

By **ANDY BETTENCOURT**

Andy Bettencourt is a Research Associate at Frontier Ventures, has chaired the Ralph D. Winter Memorial Lectureship, co-hosted The Missions Drop Podcast, assisted the IJFM in their publications, and facilitated innovation with mission groups as a part of the Winter Launch Lab.



An Introduction to the Ralph D. Winter Memorial Lectureship

The Ralph Winter Lectureship has a significant legacy! It has included speakers like Greg Boyd, Amos Yong, Rene Padilla, and Andrew Walls, and it honors the legacy, genius, and curiosity of Ralph Winter, the founder of Frontier Ventures. Each year, we attempt to put on a lectureship that probes the field of missiology and questions of the day. Like our founder, we seek to push these questions toward the edges of mission, where those who have not yet clearly heard the gospel in an understandable form lie.

The Winter Lectureship 2021: Buddhist-Christian Encounters

Four years ago, I was asked to help with this event while I was a volunteer in FV's Winter Launch Lab. The topic was Buddhism and specifically the work of Karl Reichelt, a Norwegian Lutheran missionary to China in the early twentieth century. Reichelt established a Christian monastery for Buddhist monks and found an innovative way of engaging the thought and practices of these monks. His innovative missiological engagement has stirred the thought and reflection of several missions thinkers, some of whom contributed to our conference, including Notto Thelle, Amos Yong, Rory Mackenzie, and Terry Muck. These men encouraged us to more thoroughly engage with Buddhist thought, practices, and people and consider both what the Buddhist may say to us as well as what we may say to the Buddhist on behalf of Christ. This encouragement towards a more comprehensive engagement with those of other faith traditions strikes deep into the heart of our work and ministry at Frontier Ventures.

The Winter Lectureship 2023: Beyond Contextualization

Thus, two years later, we explored the topic of contextualization across religious boundaries and barriers. Kang-San Tan was our lead lecturer and put forth the idea of “inreligionization” in which one may take Christian theology and its elements and have it interact with other religious worlds, communities, and forms of thought. Although many of us weren’t thrilled with the complexity of his terminology, we generally liked the idea of reflecting critically on our own religious heritage as well as offering a hospitable engagement of the heritages of others. We also acknowledged that religious traditions from Islam to Christianity to Hinduism to Buddhism contain a lot of variety and that members of each faith tradition often have profound areas of difference in practice and belief with members of their own broader tradition. Is it necessary for one to leave their birth religious tradition and community to follow Christ? We found this to be a complicated question as each tradition and culture that we come from contains both goodness from God as well as devastating sin from the brokenness of humankind. For Kang-San, this question is quite personal being raised in a Buddhist family and having a brother who is a practicing Buddhist monk. For other speakers, like Darren Duerksen and Harold Netland, it is more theoretical, but this has also brought them into intimate relationship with folks who are navigating the challenges of complicated religious worlds. Anna Travis provided a welcome practitioner’s voice as she

spoke of members of a Muslim community that came to follow Christ and eagerly examined the Scriptures, while remaining connected to their communities and cultures. Another speaker discussed how he has slowly come to more fully engage with persons of other faith traditions after deeply reflecting on the complicated history of mission in India. All too many stories from this place testify to the power dynamics at play between the missionary and the missionized, and have made honest discussion across religious differences nearly impossible in some contexts.

Homogeneity and Hybridity: Revisiting HUP

We have also covered topics like the Homogeneous Unit Principle, which interacts with the challenges of race, class, caste, language, and urbanization. How do we see Christ reflected so richly in many other cultures, languages, and settings yet leave space for Christ to speak into ethnic and cultural divides? This topic is often engaged too hastily and leads to problematic results on either side of the debate. We need people to grow in Christ in their local communities and have patience with that, but we also know that the Bible speaks to the realities of the foreigner, stranger, and outcast in our midst. Furthermore, we know that *Christ has destroyed the dividing wall of hostility* (Ephesians 2:14, NIV) and relational barriers between individuals and groups. Thus, we have a complicated reality especially when we wish to witness to high-identity-peoples who do not yet know Christ and may not yet interact with other communities or persons for a variety of reasons. This led to our conference in 2022, where we had 11 speakers as well as several roundtable discussions to unpack the complicated layers involved in this conversation in a variety of places across the globe. Readers of this article would



be greatly enriched by engaging the *IJFM* issue that recently published much of the content from this conference, *IJFM* Issue 40:1-2 (Published July 2024).

Wisdom for Cross-Cultural Service

Last year, we focused on the field of Missiological Anthropology and heard insights from five seasoned scholars: Darrell Whiteman, Miriam Adeney, Bob Priest, Michael Rynkiewicz, and Dan Shaw. These scholars shared their own stories and journeys in academia and mission about how anthropological study and research has affected their work and faith. They also noted with profound grief the lack of rigorous anthropological study and reflection in the mission community. Despite this, each person has uniquely contributed to the work of mission from their field of expertise. Darrell Whiteman has trained missionaries, mostly in the Global South, for their field work with a short set of anthropological tools that both enriched as well as challenged them. Miriam Adeney has conducted research and study on five continents and helped others tell their stories with their own voices, language, and cultural forms. Bob Priest has engaged with topics from spiritual warfare to sexuality with an impressive depth of research and data. Michael Rynkiewicz has challenged church and mission communities in their understanding of race, rights, and the complexity of culture, which is always contested and never just one thing. Dan Shaw has translated the Bible for the Samo people and carried

along an interesting and slow practice of translation, which sought to profoundly interact with people, their community, culture, and ways of making meaning, so that they could remain Samo in Christ, much like the Jews and Gentiles of the New Testament.

For Further Information and Materials

If you are interested in further diving into the materials mentioned above, please reach out to me, Andy Bettencourt at andy.b@frontierventures.org. I will do my

best to point you in the right direction to some of the articles and recordings that we have obtained from these lectureships. Also, we will hopefully have them published on the Ralph D. Winter Research Center Website soon, rdwrc.wciu.edu.

What's Coming in 2025?

In our upcoming foray into the Ralph D. Winter Memorial Lectureship, we will be exploring the world of urban missiology. Viv Grigg and Danny Hunter of William Carey International University are currently formulating this event, and I will be assisting them as things move forward. We hope to bring another program that engages with questions from around

the world about the work of God's kingdom in different communities, especially those that have yet to interact with a contextually relevant gospel. Stay tuned for more information. This lectureship will happen in spring of 2025 and may be attended virtually or in-person, and of course, we will record all the content and make it available to attendees.

We look forward to continuing to stir the minds, hearts, and actions of those practicing and critically reflecting on missions to the least reached populations of the world! 📺





Ralph D. Winter Research Center

By **DR. DANNY HUNTER**

Danny Hunter is the Director of the Ralph D. Winter Research Center. He earned a PhD in Intercultural Studies from Asbury Theological Seminary in 2021. He lives in Wilmore, KY.

Greetings, *Mission Frontiers* readers! I'm Danny Hunter and I'm the new director of the Ralph D. Winter Research Center. I am very excited about what the Center has done in the past, and where we are headed in the future. The Center exists to further the missiological insights of Dr. Winter and to continue to serve the wider Great Commission community in his pioneering spirit.

The RDWRC is unique in many ways, including its distinct function. While the Center is a constituent institute of William Carey International University, we are actually a joint project between Frontier Ventures and WCIU. That means that our staff, our resources, and our priorities all flow from both institutions. This arrangement gives us an opportunity to be and do things that neither FV nor WCIU can be or do on their own. It also provides a platform for these two sister institutions, both founded by Dr. Winter, to partner closely together. And it puts me, as the Director, in the peculiar position of facilitating a partnership between two institutions with which I have had little personal history until now. I have greatly enjoyed getting to know FV and WCIU and I am quite pleased about the prospect of working with both organizations for a very long time to come.

For those of you who are unacquainted with the Center, we are located near the former campus of WCIU at 1705 N. Sierra Bonita Avenue in Pasadena, CA. The Center houses several special collections, including Dr. Winter's personal papers, many of the personal papers of Dr. Donald McGavran (who founded Fuller's School of World Mission), and the organizational archives of FV and some other Winter-related organizations. We also have Dr. Winter's and Dr. McGavran's personal libraries; nearly all of the volumes published by William Carey Publishing; one of the more extensive collections of South Asian books in the US; and several other books of missiological significance. All those resources are available to anyone who would like to use them, provided they make an appointment. In the future, we'd like to create a more formal program for missionaries on home assignment (from FV and other organizations) to come and do some research into areas of personal interest and professional enrichment, but in the meantime, please feel free to reach out to set up an appointment to visit at rdwrc.wciu.edu/opportunities-research-center.



We have lots of people to thank for making these collections available. Helen Darsie is our Archivist

extraordinaire. Greg Parsons has done an amazing job getting this center started and organized. Both of them are FV staff who are integral parts of the Center's ongoing work to ensure Dr. Winter's legacy continues to impact the study and practice of mission. In addition, we have a small army of volunteers whose tireless work to catalog all of our collections is often hidden but always appreciated.


Still, not everyone can make a trip to Pasadena. In fact, I do most of my work as Director remotely from my home in Wilmore, KY. That's why we have our RDW Research Center website (rdwrc.wciu.edu). Here you'll find all kinds of resources and hidden gems. We curate articles, videos, and book reviews (among other content) that will help you explore how ideas that Dr. Winter cared deeply about are being carried forward today. We are also continually updating the site with special discoveries from our archives. You'll want to explore what Helen has found there (including some rare video footage and audio recordings).



In the future, we plan to make our catalog available to peruse on our website so you can see what we have available before you decide to make the trek to Pasadena. For now, you can reach out and ask us if there is something you are looking for. And eventually, we plan to have most of our archival holdings on our website as well (as searchable PDFs). So, if you find yourself wondering what Dr. Winter thought about unreached people groups, or Korean missionaries, or Guatemalan food, you'll be able to find out in just a few clicks.

One of the Center's strongest contributions to the world of mission is the annual Winter Memorial Lectureship. FV has been instrumental in carrying this important event off every year. We have been fortunate to gather important thinkers in the realm of missiology to address important topics facing us today. As Andy Bettencourt has mentioned elsewhere in this issue, the lectureship is coming off an extraordinarily strong showing this year, and we hope that you will all keep an eye out for us next spring as we confer with a global slate of scholars about mission being done by and alongside the urban poor around the world. We will be publishing specifics, including dates and location, soon. And, as in past years, we will have both in-person and online options available for attendance. We hope to see you there!

Looking toward the future, I've been thinking a lot lately about what it means to be a research center named after Ralph Winter. What is unique about us because we bear that name? What sort of research do we have a responsibility to pursue? I think one answer is that we need to conduct research in three ways. First, we need to do research INTO Dr. Winter and his colleagues/contemporaries. This will mean careful stewardship and expansion of the archive materials that have been entrusted to us. And it will mean making those resources more readily available to researchers around the world. Secondly, we need to do research FROM Dr. Winter. He was a prolific writer and visionary, and the list of interests that he championed is formidable. The Center has a responsibility to delve into these ideas, study them, refine them, and see how they are changing as time passes. And, last but not least, I think we need to also do research BEYOND Dr. Winter. He was always looking toward the next big thing, and he was constantly concerned with the daily realities faced by missionaries. I hope to see the Center get involved in cutting-edge missiological research, with the agenda constructed by the questions being asked by missionaries in the field. This will take time, not to mention close partnerships with several different organizations. But I think we owe it to our namesake to always be searching out new frontiers just beyond our horizons. I am grateful and humbled by the opportunity to direct this kind of institution and I'm excited for what the future holds!

If you have any questions about the Center and where it is headed in the future, I'd be happy to hear from you. Just drop me an email at danny.hunter@wciu.edu. 

Frontier Ventures' Foray into Podcasting

BY **DAVID EARL DATEMA** and **ANDY BETTENCOURT**

Dave Earl Datema (dave.datema@frontierventures.org) serves as Missiology Catalyst for Frontier Ventures. He has served in various roles within Frontier Ventures since 1999. Dave is married with four children and lives in Pasadena, CA.

Andy Bettencourt is a Research Associate at Frontier Ventures, has chaired the Ralph D. Winter Memorial Lectureship, co-hosted The Missions Drop Podcast, assisted the IJFM in their publications, and facilitated innovation with mission groups as a part of the Winter Launch Lab.



An Introduction to The Missions Drop

In the spring of 2023, Andy Bettencourt, Victoria Ky, Amanda Richey, and Dave Datema started brainstorming about developing a new podcast that would highlight the realities surrounding reaching unreached people groups. After interviewing some podcasters and doing our own research, we launched our first season in fall 2023 and our second season in spring 2024. The third season began its release this past fall, 2024.

The purpose of the podcast is summed up in its title: The Missions Drop. It's meant to stir thoughts and questions as well as deliver a bit of content from an academic or practitioner in the mission community. Along with our purpose, our format is also unique. We have four co-hosts, two men and two women. Each episode begins with one of us interviewing a guest. After the interview, the other co-hosts reflect on the interview, sharing what they think are the most significant ideas or simply how it impacted them. We hope that through the guest or one of the co-hosts, our audience will be able to identify with the conversation.

Our Angle

Each episode starts with the question: "What prevents the gospel from creating a ripple effect when it first enters a new people or place?"

That is what The Missions Drop Podcast is all about. Ideally, the gospel works in a people like a drop of water on a lake that spreads out to the edges. However, there are boundaries and barriers that stop the gospel from transforming hearts, minds, bodies, and souls.

At this point, we have categorized these barriers into three primary buckets: cultural, spiritual formation,

and social barriers. Cultural concerns are mainly ethnolinguistic, people groups, and religion. Spiritual formation includes self-awareness, spiritual maturity, and practices. Finally, social barriers include generational differences, gender differences, and socio-economic differences. Obviously, there is some overlap between these categories. Additionally, barriers to the gospel are often multi-faceted, so some episodes will include more than one barrier, and others will focus more tightly on a barrier in a specific context. We are continuing to ask our listeners what types of barriers they would most like to explore, so that we aren't only probing our guests for quality content but also considering what might help our audience grow on their own journey with Christ and community.

A Turn Towards Hope

When we started our focus on barriers, we soon realized that our podcast could develop a discouraging tone. We might focus on what is going wrong in the mission world, and although we want to deeply examine the practices and weaknesses of the mission community, we also want to learn what is going well or what gives our guests hope, even when it may be hard to find in their current context.

This created a shift in our questioning during season 2. We began asking each guest what gives them hope or where they might see opportunities for breakthrough. It also enabled our co-hosts to reflect on how episodes have encouraged us and give praise to guests, co-hosts, and most of all God, rather than simply thinking about our own next step forward (even though we still like to do that for practical reasons).

Our Guests

Our talented guests have included: Terry Wildman (Lead Translator of the First Nations Version Bible), Ted Esler (Executive Director of Missio Nexus), Kim Kargbo (Founder of Accessible Hope International), Leanne Dzubinski (Author and Professor at Asbury Theological Seminary), Vince Bantu (Author and Professor at Fuller Theological Seminary), and Jay Matenga (Author and Executive Director of the WEA's Mission Commission), to name a few. We strive to better represent the body of Christ on our podcast by including guests from around the globe, different cultural heritages, men and women, as well as academics and practitioners. To see our full list of episodes, visit our podcast here, themissionsdrop.libsyn.com. We can also be found on Apple and Spotify.

Current and Future Topics of Exploration

Looking at barriers and solutions or attempts at overcoming these barriers keeps us focused on unreached people groups and the central issues involved in taking the gospel to them. We also have enjoyed covering different areas within spiritual formation, as we have often found that the worker can be a barrier to the gospel and that their ongoing process of maturing in Christ is crucial for building communities that reflect Christ and his gospel.

Some of the topics that we have covered so far include a missiology of work, technology and emerging generations, incarnational friendships, a missiology of well-being, hybridity and people groups, contextualization across religious boundaries, approaching Muslim neighbors, and missions and intimacy with Jesus. Our third season explores peacebuilding in missions, health missions at the edges, people movements in Africa, evangelism among other faiths, and food and frontier mission.

Our Hope for the Future

We hope that our conversations continue the ripple effect of the gospel among our podcast hosts, listeners, guests, and the communities to whom they are connected. In the future, we hope to engage more with listeners: hearing ideas for topics, their challenges, and further questions or comments associated with our episodes and content. We also hope to have more practitioners on the show, so that we may hear more details about day-to-day work in engaging Christ and community at the edges of mission.



Current Needs and Challenges

If you would like to talk with us more about the details of our podcast and suggest a guest or topic, please e-mail us at thedroppodcast@frontierventures.org.

Numbers and Metrics for Success

As far as hard numbers go, our podcast was averaging about 100 listens per episode during season 1. With the addition of season 2, we are growing our audience towards over 150 listens per episode. These numbers are not overwhelming, but we have been encouraged by the feedback that we have heard from our friends and members of the mission community. We hope to develop better channels in the future to hear more about the experiences of our audience and have been happy to hear from a few people who have contacted us, asking permission to share the content in their own spheres of influence or giving us feedback on how we can improve our content.

Beyond numbers, our hope is to stir thought and reflection in the missions community, our own lives, the lives of our guests, and listeners. This is not easily quantifiable. However, some signs of this can be found in both our guests and other members of the mission

community who have used our content in their various spheres of work. This has also opened further interviews and areas to engage. The missions world is small, and the frontier missions world is even smaller, so numbers will not be the best guide for success. Instead, it will be determined by the quality of thought, ideas, and content in the episodes as well as connecting those thoughts and ideas to how they might be lived out by people in the real world. I (Andy) can confidently say that the podcast has brought me closer in relationship to some of our guests and certainly my co-hosts, provided a few stimulating conversations with listeners, and yielded practical changes in how I approach my day-to-day life. And of course, all of us at The Missions Drop are a little bookish, so our bookshelves have grown, as we know that in addition to a 30-minute conversation, an article or book from one of our guests may deepen our thinking and living.

Special thanks to Emily Simmons, Larissa Cisz, Kevin Renel, Dustin Swann, Doug Eli, Victoria Ky, Amanda Richey, and all our guests! We quite literally couldn't have done it without you and are sure we owe more thanks to others who helped make this podcast possible. 🙏



THE MISSIONS DROP



Communion, Community and Sustainable Mission

Flourishing in the 2nd Half of Life

By **JAMEY LEWIS**

Jamey Lewis is a facilitator with the 2nd Half Collaborative or 2HC (2hc.life), an initiative of Frontier Ventures. 2HC is a 10-month cohort to provide encouragement and friendship for global workers in the second half of life.

“It was the first time I said in prayer, ‘I don’t know how long I can do this.’” One of our “2nd Half Collaborative” (2HC) Campfire small group members was talking about a time of depletion and exhaustion in ministry. Another Campfire member talked of his “original dreams being pulled apart.” He had wanted to be all things to all people at all times. Now he is drawn to the potency of being patient and unhurried, with emerging rhythms and ministry contributions very different from that original version of himself.

The depth and honesty of sharing from mission workers that day during our opening 2HC retreat were refreshing. We averaged 19–20 years of experience in mission. But we were brought together not around a common task—such as many of us have experienced on a ministry team—but a common longing, a longing for honesty with God and authentic friendship with others. We also had a common commitment, expressed in a written document, to “listen with reverence for God’s actions in our lives and an openness to each other’s stories.”

The 2nd Half Collaborative—or 2HC for short—is a 10-month online cohort journey for mission workers in the 2nd half of life. Navigating disruption, loss, and the changing needs of family can bring unexpected disorientation for some mission workers in the second half of life. Some long for a simplifying and a deepening of relationship with Jesus. Others need increased capacity for discernment in a time of life and ministry transition, and almost all have expressed how refreshing it is to be alongside others in their 2HC cohort in honest friendship.

Although sponsored by Frontier Ventures, 2HC is open to mission workers from different organizations. 2HC reflects the commitment of Frontier Ventures to be a supportive come-alongside presence to mission workers who are living out fullness of life in Jesus in various places, including hard places and among the least reached. 2HC is not technically a “member-care”



initiative but an initiative fostering and modeling a way to be in mission with:

- a rich inner life of union with God
- an experience of honest and authentic community
- a regula (or rhythms) of sustainable mission.

2HC seeks to encourage the connection in con-temporary mission to ancient, enduring practices of monastic life. This accords with the fact that Frontier Ventures (formerly the US Center for World Mission) was founded by Ralph Winter as a missional order. In many ways, 2HC nurtures a long view in mission resonant with the life of early communities of Christians deeply committed to the “patient ferment” of the gospel.¹

Distinctives of 2HC include a commitment to safe and honest sharing, monthly “stations” of learning, three virtual retreats, one-on-one spiritual direction, one-on-one coaching, and formation through regular spiritual practices. Content for the 10 monthly stations is hosted on an online platform that can be accessed by 2HC members at any time. These 10 stations are formed around three different areas of focus: practices of interiority, practices of authentic community, and practices of sustainable mission. Retreats focus on the sharing of spiritual autobiographies, practices for discernment, and practices of gratitude and blessing.

Some of our monthly stations of learning are: Identity (Beloved), Unhurrying,² Seasons of Life and Grieving Losses, Collaboration, and Developing a Rule of Life.³ Content is kept to a minimum to encourage a four-week learning cycle that presents “bite-sized” chunks of new material, engagement with that material in some practical way, reflection on that engagement, and sharing in a small group. Over the 10 months, we have offered several additional online informal “2HC Café” experiences. One 2HC facilitator has begun to offer occasional 30-minute online times of centering prayer (a way simply to be present—patiently and quietly—to the Lord). In addition, 2HC just hosted its first webinar for 2HC alumni and facilitators: “Shadow Work and Authentic Community.” It is not our intent at 2HC to offer a lot of different programs; instead, we desire to offer relational experiences that foster a consistent, unhurried way of being in mission that often runs counter to activities that pull us toward speed, efficiency, and productivity.

Jesus calls us to bear fruit, fruit that remains ... that lasts. We know from Jesus’ words that lasting fruit comes from our connection as branches to the Vine, who is Jesus. But consider the trellis as well—the trellis that supports the growth of branches connected to the Vine. That trellis consists of those practices that nurture our inner life, connect us authentically to community, and help us keep a sustainable and life-giving pace in mission.

As you have been reading this article, what longings have been stirring in your heart? What do you need to release right now? Who will support you? With whom do you want to be with? What changes do you need to make to experience authentic, supportive community?

Receive all that is good and life-giving, dear friend. You are loved. 📧

¹ See for example our 2HC blog: 2hc.life/blog/ancient-monastic-advice-for-modern-cross-cultural-workers. The term “patient ferment” comes from Alan Kreider’s book, *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church* (Baker Academic, 2016).

² See for example our 2HC blog 2hc.life/blog/unhurrying.

³ For further explanation, see 2hc.life/blog/a-rule-of-life-to-honor-limits-and-longings-of-the-2nd-half-of-life.



Perspectives USA

Rivers of Life through Perspectives

By **JAMES MASON**

James Mason has served as CEO of Perspectives USA since 2012. He has pastored in multiple churches and previously worked as Director of Recruiting for Frontier Ventures. James and his wife, Kelly, have three adult children.

For individuals who experience Perspectives, it's often like a river that begins as a mere trickle in the high mountains. Initially, a student might not discern how the waters will shape the landscape of their life. But as the small stream continues its journey, it gathers strength from countless tributaries and swells into a powerful current, shaping everything in its path—shaping every aspect of how the student views God, the Bible, and even their own life and commitments. Ultimately, students are awash in the reality that they can walk intimately with Jesus as he brings his purposes and transformation to all peoples.

In many cases, this river, having shaped the individual, begins to shape new landscapes. It carries soil to nurture other lives, form new initiatives, influence other places and people. Through the lives of the students, the river now carries and deposits silt that becomes the foundation of new life. The force of the Perspectives experience, often subtle at first, grows in magnitude, transforming landscapes far from its origin.

Stories of downstream transformation through Perspectives take on many different forms. For example, there are stories of mobilization multiplication—as students are mobilized to God's mission, they in turn want to mobilize others. They circle around to launch new Perspectives classes. They begin to mobilize their local church and church leadership. They expand mobilization opportunities to Christians in other cultures, languages, or even countries.



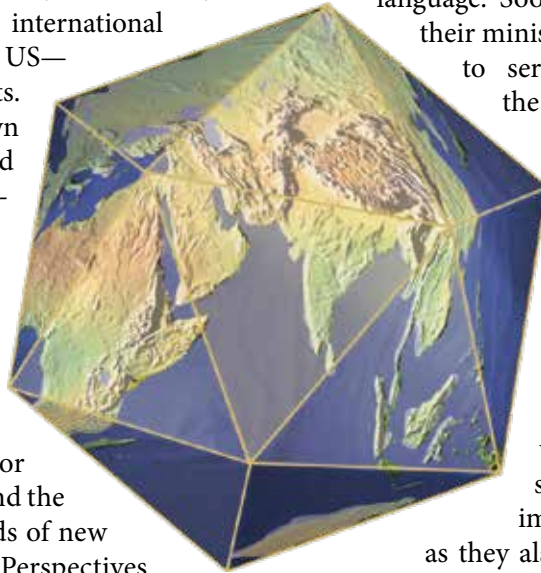
There are many stories of students making new mission commitments and becoming more involved, all of which are deeply rooted in their own personal journeys of transformation.

There are many stories of students making new mission commitments and becoming more involved, all of which are deeply rooted in their own personal journeys of transformation. This could be among unreached peoples in faraway places, in churches, on college campuses, or among international communities here in the US—to name just a few contexts. Churches also have their own stories of spiritual change and involvement because of Perspectives. Countless churches have begun sending teams to the unreached, started prayer initiatives, and reprioritized financial investment in “frontier mission” work.

Other stories of influence or impact within the US and around the world are numerous. Thousands of new churches have been planted by Perspectives students among the unreached around the world and in the US. Tens of thousands of cross-cultural missionaries sent from the US report that Perspectives was a part of their ministry journey. Entire academic institutions have redirected their educational priorities toward the frontiers of global mission. Many Christian leaders have been impacted by Perspectives and are now catalyzing Christward momentum through new institutions, ministries, and business opportunities. I’ll offer three story summaries of such impact:

Story 1—Retired professionals investing in others

Melanie Mitchell, one of our Perspectives USA Regional Directors, recounts that she thought she could see the future in her new friends’ lives when she met them in a Perspectives class.



“Sally” was a nurse practitioner and had already been on a few mission trips and “Eric” was in a very successful company. They both had a heart for the world. I imagined them becoming long-term missionaries when they retired. But God had other plans. The couple started meeting Muslims and other immigrants in different communities in their city. With retirement nearing, they sold their suburban home and moved into the urban center to be closer to their new friends. They became very involved in local ministry to various populations in the area which included teaching English as a second language. Soon other friends joined them in their ministry and a church was established to serve the local community and the various cultures in the area.

There are often gunshots and homicides in this area, but my friends tell me story after story of the changed lives they encounter each day. Though I thought their ministry in the US was preparing them for the field, they found the field in their new community. Several years have now passed, and my sweet friends are still very much impacting those around them even as they also now fight the effects of Eric’s early onset dementia. I am so glad they did not wait to retire to begin ministry as I thought they might. Instead, their ministry started one life and step at a time. Only the Lord knows the number of people that now call on the name of Jesus because of their lives. Theirs is a life well lived, and Perspectives changed their lives forever and mine, too!

Story 2—Single Moms, Hispanic believers, and a movement of Bhutanese churches

Six Lhotshampa Bhutanese churches are now meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, thanks in large part to Perspectives! Cindy Hensley, who expanded her vision through Perspectives, said, “Hearing the instructors’ passion for the unreached inspired me to connect with refugees in my city.”

In 2009, Cindy and a church friend, both single moms, while promoting a Perspectives class at an inner-city

Hispanic church, met a Bhutanese family from the 5,000 Lhotshampa refugees in the area. The Bhutanese women requested to join the class, leading to a weekly family night and the formation of new friendships.

Local Christians, including the Hispanic pastor and Bhutanese believers, engaged with the Bhutanese community through home visits, driving lessons, job assistance, and prayers for the Holy Spirit's guidance. As home Bible studies began, they discovered Bhutanese Christians who had come to faith in refugee camps. As the young believers grew in faith, several Bible studies combined to form a church. Cindy's church and the Hispanic church provided funds to assist a Nepalese pastor to lead this flock while attending seminary. He is also a Perspectives alumnus.

Cindy recalls Dil Maya, a young Hindu mother initially bound by fear, who chose to follow Christ after joining a Bible study. Cindy enthusiastically notes, "Our Bhutanese friends eagerly share the gospel with their community and beyond. This is all the work of God!"

Story 3—Learning, Mobilizing, and Welcoming (told by Jennifer Frye)

"The first [Perspectives] class I took was in 2012. The class was lively and engaging, with students from all walks of life. Everyone seemed eager to learn and to be on mission. I felt like I'd found my tribe! There were many impactful moments—when I understood God's overarching plan of redemption told throughout Scripture, the multitude of times God's love for the nations is mentioned in Scripture, and how people from honor/shame cultures think so differently... I realized how much I had to learn ... I will never forget that first class in 2012. I'll also never forget my sweet communion with God every morning as he revealed himself to me as a loving, missionary God.

The next three years, I helped facilitate classes and my husband, Dave, joined me to learn, grow, and handle all our A/V technical needs. In 2015, God began redirecting me and several other Perspectives alumni to something new that enabled us to put into practice what we were learning.





We discovered something amazing. More refugees resettled in Worcester, Massachusetts than in any other city in New England. According to Acts 17:26–27, we knew that God was moving them on purpose, so the church could rise up and welcome them so that they could find him.”

God prepared us for that time when so many refugees were arriving from Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere in need of friendship and help.

At the same time, a new refugee ministry in Boston was hosting a training. Twelve Perspectives alumni traveled 1½ hours to attend all-day training on three different occasions. God showed up and did something we didn’t expect. He was gathering us and calling us to welcome refugees, many of whom were from unreached people groups. Others were Christians who had lived under great hardship and persecution. Most were Muslims. Our group began meeting weekly to pray, learn, and plan. We sought to understand the needs of refugees in our community. We partnered with a resettlement agency founded by Muslims who knew we were Christians propelled by the love of Jesus and they welcomed us with gratitude. After learning the ropes, we began training other followers of Jesus to serve cross-culturally by befriending families, setting up their first apartments, teaching English and driving, and praying with them. Before long, we became a 501(c)(3)—Worcester Alliance for

Refugee Ministry, WARM. God prepared us for that time when so many refugees were arriving from Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere in need of friendship and help. Since then, we have expanded to western Massachusetts and changed our name to Welcoming Alliance for Refugee Ministry, still affectionately known as WARM. I praise God for using Perspectives to launch cross-cultural missions right in our own backyard and allowing Dave and me to minister and trust God together.

The Vision of Perspectives USA is: *The body of Christ awakened to pursue the fulfillment of God’s global purpose within every people for his glory.* As we pursue this vision, hundreds of staff and volunteers can observe and participate in the transformative “downstream effect” of Perspectives on people’s lives. This committed tribe of mobilizers works countless hours to facilitate a transformational discipleship experience. They do this, in part, by organizing and administering a 15-lesson course. But our team goes far beyond “running classes.” We also give deeply of ourselves to people—to our fellow teammates and especially, to students. We do this through prayer, encouragement, instruction, accountability, equipping, and servanthood. As the students engage deeply in God’s ancient purpose and, as they experience the vibrant Perspectives community, they become a nurturing and unstoppable river of life! 🏡

Perspectives Global Advances Global Sending

By **YVONNE W. HUNEYCUTT**

Yvonne W. Huneycutt (DMin, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary) is on staff with Perspectives Global. She is the author of *Propelled by Hope: The Story of the Perspectives Movement*, William Carey Publishing, 2024. Contact: yvonne.huneycutt@perspectivesglobal.org.

“Please don’t post me to pastor in a rural area!” Such were the cries of many Anglican priests in one diocese of Nigeria, according to the bishop. Now they are *insisting* on being posted in rural areas.

What changed? Nigerians were awakening to God’s global purpose for every tribe and tongue to know, love, worship, and obey Him. They were becoming aware of the task remaining among unreached people groups, including those living in difficult rural areas. They were growing a willingness to sacrifice—no, more than that—a longing to be a part of ushering the nations to the feet of Jesus in worship.

What prompted this mind and heart transformation? The *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* course came to this diocese in Nigeria. Perspectives began in Nigeria in 2002 with a vision of transforming church and mission strategies by educating leaders who influence others. Twenty years later, the results speak for themselves.

Perspectives has impacted many church networks in Nigeria, mobilizing over 14,000 leaders to embrace the mission of God,

with a focus upon unreached people groups. Of the churches and agencies that have embraced Perspectives, many have also been drawn to the unity and collaboration of the Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA). According to NEMA leadership, the membership of the association has grown in part because of the entrance of Perspectives into Nigeria.

Many stories could be told, but we will use the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)¹ as an example. The Anglican Communion in Nigeria is possibly the largest in the world now. It comprises over 150 dioceses, has over 18 million members, and is led by archbishops, bishops, and thousands of parish priests. Perspectives has been welcomed by many of these leaders, including the metropolitan primate of the Church.

¹ The Church of Nigeria does not recognize the authority of the archbishop of Canterbury, and in 2005 broke with the Episcopal Church of America and Canada over theological beliefs on social and moral issues. The Church of Nigeria holds a strong stance on the authority of Scripture and the supremacy of Jesus Christ as the one and only Savior.



When a bishop welcomes Perspectives training to his diocese, numerous parish priests enroll in the course, sometimes at the directive of the bishop! As of 2024, over 1,600 Anglican leaders have received the transformative teachings of the Perspectives course.

One result is a focus on reaching the Muslim diaspora peoples that have relocated from the north of the country to the south. They have established numerous outreaches to the Fulani and Hausa peoples, among others. Many are coming to Christ. There are now churches and discipleship centers led by Muslim-background believers, who are leading their own peoples to the Lord. Beyond that, pastors are being appointed to the north to live amongst Muslim peoples, and not just in Nigeria; missionaries are also being sent into North Africa and the Middle East.²

Perspectives Nigeria is one of over 40 national Perspectives programs in nine languages around the world. As one of the oldest and most mature national programs outside of the US, it continues to instill great hope for the future of Perspectives in mobilizing God's people into God's purpose.

The impact of Perspectives over its 50-year history has been well documented. Awareness increases. Prayer increases. Sending increases. Going increases. Approximately half of the evangelical missionaries from the USA that currently serve overseas are Perspectives alumni. As Perspectives expands globally, we are seeing similar trends in other nations.

National Perspectives programs collaborate within the Perspectives Global Network, served by a small, distributed team called the Perspectives Global Service Office (PGSO). The PGSO and the Perspectives Curriculum Council together make up Perspectives Global, a ministry of Frontier Ventures.

Perspectives Global exists to support the establishment and growth of autonomous, yet interdependent, Perspectives study programs run by indigenous leadership that represent and serve a broad cross-section of the body of Christ in their country. National programs are autonomous, but covenant together around shared vision, values, protocols, and a core curriculum.

² Report from Pastor Victor Idakwoji, NEMA Director of Mobilization and Networking and National Perspectives Coordinator, given to Perspectives Global, May 2024.

The objectives of the Perspectives Global Service Office are to model servant leadership, articulate guiding principles, train national leaders in starting programs, mentor program leaders through all phases of development, and facilitate communication and collaboration across the Perspectives Global Network. Although it is not the only mission mobilization educational program, in many places Perspectives is the tip of the spear in expansive mission-sending to the unreached.



Perspectives Korea, another mature national program, was begun in 2000 with a focus upon college-age youth. Of the 35,000 alumni, over 20% serve at least one year in cross-cultural ministry. Even more noteworthy, the Perspectives course is one of the most significant forces shaping the mission strategy of the Korean church. It has had a great influence on the spread of the unreached peoples movement.


Across the globe in Brazil, mission agencies are asking Perspectives Brazil to *slow down* as they are producing more mission candidates than they can handle! Perspectives started in Brazil in 2009 when many mission leaders were discouraged, thinking the Brazilian church was losing its vision for sending missionaries. Over the past 15 years, they have graduated 22,000 alumni, including almost 4,000 pastors. The strategic emphasis of Perspectives Brazil on God being both a missionary God and a mobilizing God is sending scores of Brazilians to the mission fields, with a particular zeal for going to unreached people groups. The results have been documented by the Brazilian Association of Cross-Cultural Missions (AMTB). Their 2022 research report revealed a *threefold increase* in missionaries sent, from 6,000 in 2006 to more than 18,000 today.

In their 2017 report, they cited Perspectives as one of the key mobilization factors for the growth of Brazilian sending.³

From Africa to Asia to Latin America, Perspectives has influenced the formation of indigenous mission agencies sending out indigenous missionaries, supported by the indigenous church. The frontier mission vision of Perspectives has influenced the goals and strategies of national and regional mission networks. The priority of sending to unreached people groups is paramount in many of these agencies and networks.

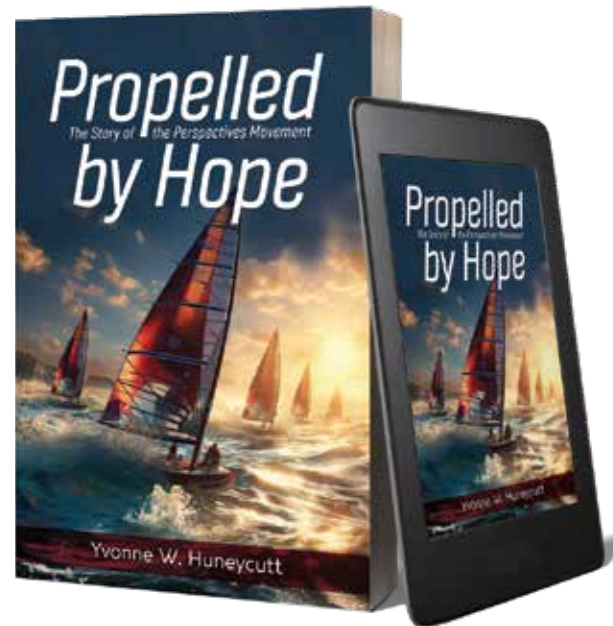
Decades ago, Ralph Winter predicted that sending from the Majority World (or Global South) would overtake missionary sending from the Global North. They would be the new pioneers leading the way in the final frontiers of mission. That is today's reality, and we in Perspectives Global are thrilled to be a part of it. To God be the glory!

Want to know more about Perspectives Global? Subscribe to our newsletter! You will hear stories and praise reports from global programs. Visit our website: perspectivesglobal.org and click on the subscribe button.

We invite our readers to join in praying for Perspectives Global. A virtual prayer meeting is held quarterly to pray for current needs and opportunities of various national programs. Subscribing to the Perspectives Global newsletter will alert you to upcoming prayer events. 



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³ AMTB, "Research Report of the Brazilian Cross-Cultural Missionary Force" (São Paulo, 2017), 7 and 22. ambt.org.br/forca-missionaria-brasileira-transcultural/. Also, AMTB, "Research Report of the Brazilian Missionary Force" (São Paulo, 2022), 5. ambt.org.br/forca-missionaria-brasileira-transcultural-2022/.



The Institute for Community Transformation

Holistic Education for Change

By **TODD POKRIFKA**

Todd and Junia Pokrifka co-direct the Institute for Community Transformation (ICT; www.communitytransformation.org). They have been pastors, cross-cultural church-planters, mission trainers, and academics. Todd taught Theology at Azusa Pacific University for 16 years.

Simple obedience is not optional as one of the markers of a disciple of Jesus, so nine years ago, when my wife Junia and I heard the small, quiet voice of the Lord to lay down our jobs as professors for the sake of world mission, our joyful response was like that of Isaiah: “Here I am! Send me” (Isa 6:8, ESV).

God called us to stake everything—our jobs and worldly possessions—to partner with him in Christ’s commission to make disciples of all nations and to be *shalom*-makers in all creation.

How? By developing a new kind of education that is integrative, holistic, and missional.

To do this, we had to reach back into our experiences in church planting, discipleship, higher education, and cross-cultural work and partner with a team of experts and advisors. It was time for us to harness the power of spirituality, discipleship, knowledge, insight,

practical skills, and wisdom to innovate toward holistic formation for global mission among, and for the sake of, the least reached.

Since its launch in 2020 during the COVID-19 lockdown, the Institute for Community Transformation (ICT) has been serving established and emerging global missional leaders. We activate and empower catalysts of holistic transformational movements and call them into the radical love and obedience of Jesus Christ. We see how strategic and effective our holistic formation is as our learners catalyze kingdom breakthrough on the edges of frontier mission. We are thoroughly convinced that those who wish to join God in his global mission, especially on the frontiers, need to be well-formed and competent in their heart (character), head (mind), and hands (skills). The story of one of our learners illustrates the power and potential of holistic training and formation.

FORMATION

GW is a missionary from Ethiopia who works with Sudanese refugees. Since GW started learning with ICT part-time in the fall of 2023, ICT has been encouraging and empowering GW's impact among several unreached Muslim groups found among Sudanese refugees. GW has been a missionary with his wife for about 11 years in South Sudan.

Despite the horrible violence of the civil war in Sudan, GW believes God has used it to cause many unreached Sudanese peoples to flee Sudan as refugees to have greater access to the gospel. The Lord has recently been accelerating GW's kingdom impact among these least reached Sudanese. His ministry embodies well the values and practices that we emphasize in ICT, including spiritual formation, holistic community development, intercultural competence, and movement dynamics.

To begin with, GW has heartily embraced our emphasis on spiritual formation, character, and relational wholeness as central to his life and ministry. Besides embodying the life of an obedient disciple who makes disciples, GW consistently joins other ICT learners in our annual 40-day and weekly intercession times. He has led our ICT community in prayer for Sudan and the Sudanese, both for the gospel's advance and for God's merciful solution to the ongoing civil war in Sudan, the world's greatest humanitarian crisis. We have seen answers to these prayers. In one case, a Muslim man was dramatically healed after receiving prayers from GW. In response to further prayers, the man received a dream of Jesus that helped him and his wife to become committed followers of and witnesses to Jesus. Due to GW's discipleship and training of the couple, they have led many Muslims to Christ. Prayer and spiritual renewal continue to be a vital part of our ICT program.

In addition, GW's learning experience with ICT exhibits the potential of holistic community development work to open doors for the gospel and to express its transforming power. As part of a course in community transformation, GW did two "seed

With the lens of "appreciative inquiry," he also learned how the Muslim community elders, or sheikhs, already have a capacity to diffuse conflicts and bring greater peace and reconciliation among their neighbors.

projects" to show God's love to non-believers. In one, he mobilized local refugees to build a simple shelter from local materials to protect the people from the searing heat of the sun. This became a natural gathering place for the refugees, a place where Discovery Bible Studies (DBS) happen and where God pours out his Holy Spirit on many in response to GW's prayers. In another seed project, GW worked with community members to build a latrine near a mosque in the refugee camp. The local imam celebrated this act of kindness to the community and encouraged his people to use the latrine and promote better health conditions. GW is working on other seed projects above and beyond the ICT course assignments and is excited to see what doors God will open and how he will increase his kingdom of *shalom* among the poor and vulnerable.

Another emphasis in the ICT curriculum, the promotion of intercultural and inter-religious understanding and competence, has served GW well in his ministry. While he already has strong linguistic and intercultural skills, speaking Sudanese Arabic fluently and adapting to diverse groups, some ICT instruction and assignments in an Intercultural Studies class provided opportunities for further kingdom breakthrough. He learned how to conduct ethnographic interviews and interviewed a couple of men from the Jumjum UPG to better understand why they seem to frequently get into violent conflicts with other groups. He came to understand better their honor-shame culture of revenge. With the lens of "appreciative

inquiry,” he also learned how the Muslim community elders, or *sheikhs*, already have a capacity to diffuse conflicts and bring greater peace and reconciliation among their neighbors. Accordingly, he made plans to work with the *sheikhs* to do peace-making training among the youth and to pray with the Jumjum church he planted for sustainable peace in the wider Jumjum community. GW is currently in ICT’s “Engaging Muslims” course and is receiving online mentoring from our experienced missionaries to Muslims to improve his ways of engaging diverse groups of Muslims.

Finally, GW exemplifies ICT’s esteem for movement dynamics—one of our five Areas of Focus or specialization. He is using DBS to make disciples who make disciples. He has equipped indigenous leaders to multiply disciples. He has planted simple, culturally sensitive churches among several people groups. GW is taking our “Movement Dynamics” class to learn and implement the proven practices, mindsets, and personal qualities that are most conducive to seeing multiplying movements. In the future, he will have the opportunity to take our “Applied Learning in Movement Dynamics” class in which he will develop and implement a specific plan to promote a Jesus movement among a group of people.

The impact of ICT courses and mentoring on GW and his ministry has led him to make plans to pursue an accredited master’s degree through one of ICT’s partnering universities. Under the care of mentors, students can complete ICT’s program and fulfill a set of competencies to receive a degree awarded by the university. As GW continues to implement what he learns according to his unique calling and gifts, every dimension of his life and ministry—personal, vocational, and academic—will continue to be formed, equipped, empowered, and activated for personal flourishing and great fruitfulness even in the most challenging situations.

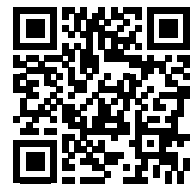
What we see in GW’s life is mirrored in many other ICT learners. Our flexible curriculum allows this impact to reach learners in diverse contexts, including those from other African nations such as Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda. It is also true for our learners from the continents of Asia (Korea, Malaysia and elsewhere in Asia), Europe (Portugal), and North America (Canada and USA).

The impact of ICT is diverse but profound and it is being felt in the lives of both seasoned missional leaders and those who are just beginning to discern a missional calling. Some are seeing economic breakthroughs for their families and ministries through social business training and coaching. Many are seeing many lost people come home to the Father and become disciples of Christ who make disciples. Others have been inspired to launch innovative missional organizations. Virtually every learner is seeing profound transformation in some way—both in their personal lives and in the communities they serve. We are seeing God glorified and his kingdom come among many of the most neglected and vulnerable groups of people on the planet.

God prepared us for that time when so many refugees were arriving from Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere in need of friendship and help.

We invite you to join us in the exciting, unfolding story of ICT. You can join us in prayer (contact us to receive monthly prayer updates!). You can join us as a learner, whether you are preparing for or already involved in missional engagement in your field of service. You may also be able join us as a supporter, mentor, or faculty member. We are committed to coming alongside all those who give their radical “Yes” to Jesus and his global purposes that they may flourish and be fruitful in all areas of life.

To find out more about ICT or to apply to join us, go to our website: communitytransformation.org or reach out to us at info@communitytransformation.org.



The NEXTGEN Movement

In Pursuit of Transformation



By **JIM O'NEILL** (with **STERLING O'NEILL**)

Dr. Jim O'Neill is the Director of Mobilization, Frontier Ventures; Co-founder of NEXTGEN Movement. **Sterling O'Neill** gives attention to formation and leadership development with younger leaders in the global body of Christ along with mobilizing for missions, www.nextgenleader.net.

NEXTGEN Movement is a catalytic, transformational, and collaborative movement where we come together to strengthen and develop younger leaders to care well for their own souls and those they influence, so that Jesus is made known among the least reached peoples. (Check website: nextgenleader.net.)

What transforms?

This question shapes how we press in to serve the next generation of cross-cultural workers. Think of all the challenges confronting those in gospel ministry in their home country, then compound that by all the variables that come with cross-cultural complexity and spiritual warfare.

This question emerged out of my own experience serving in Asia. When our team leader returned home, and I was tasked to lead our field in my 30s, it caused me to grapple with the demands of spiritual battle on so many fronts. It was then I began to appreciate the need to contend well for my own soul in the midst of seeking to bring 'union with God in Christ' to those we were serving in our host culture.

Added to this was another reality which helped to form and give generative impulse to our NEXTGEN Gatherings (as we came to call our events/conferences.) This occurred to me in loud inaudible whispers in my soul while leading overseas but came into focus after returning to the USA to train undergrad and graduate students in formal theological education.





What was missing in our training?

True transformation is needed to address the reality of weakness, suffering, and pain in ministry, for the soul to survive and serve well in missions. I was hearing the same story from my students as they plugged into ministry and echoed to me this same inner refrain.

An idea emerged out of these experiences and insights to shape a collective gathering that could include workers from North America serving internationally along with Majority World young leaders and pastors and Minority Church leaders here in the USA. My wife Sterling, and I then created a safe space for younger leaders of a global variety. We typically host about 50 experienced delegates, ages 25–40, coming for a week to engage in the work of soul and team transformation. There is a glaring need for such transparency in the task of mission to the edges of the unreached.

Twenty years ago, we began our first gathering. We decided to bring workers from around the world together for a week. Our desire was to seek transformation for us all (not just our younger friends). We invited a gifted, multi-cultural Jesus-centered worship team, (see Proskuneo.org). We added a layer of great veterans long on the journey of mission with Jesus to mentor our younger delegates and build a theme that allows us to tend well to our souls over the long haul of global mission. The format took shape with a unique blend of teaching from both veterans, and younger voices to help create the desired space of mutuality and vulnerability in discipleship.

We have come to love and value the rich diversity of God's global harvesters. Often our weeklong

gatherings include 40 ministry organizations, serving in 20-plus nations, including many Majority World younger leaders.

Still, how do we get to that place of soul transformation?

Many communities host trainings of a week and often longer. Does it result in such change? We added an element to enhance life change. In concert with our mentors, extensive small groups process the teaching, worship, and theme content, we asked each mentor to walk with their delegates over the next three months to apply two key takeaways/insights from the gathering.

For the delegates, we ask them to name the applications, hold them well, and seek to apply over the space of a year. If they do so, there is likely glorious transformation that spills over from them to team, to host culture, and to mission among the least reached.

What is the result?

Due to the very organic nature and structure of our movement, we see vibrant movements by NEXTGEN younger leaders in their respective spheres of influence. It gets caught and then reproduced at an organic level in their settings. Structure for the movement to expand and costs are borne at a local level.

One additional piece to this story is taking the NEXTGEN gathering and hosting it internationally. This past March, for the first time, we held the gathering outside the USA in East Africa. Twelve African nations and 37 delegates joined us for the week to process how we might tend well to our souls in order to journey for the long haul of mission with Jesus.





What do the stories sound like coming from 20 years of delegates?

While dramatic, this story from one of our delegates captures some of the transformational threads in our NEXTGEN gatherings.

When I came to my first NEXTGEN, I was more broken than I understood. A close teammate had been assassinated, a close friendship had been torn apart, and my family had been living in an oppressive security context for more than two years. NEXTGEN gave me a place to cry, people to cry and pray with, and I discovered it was okay to take care of myself after being there for everyone else. NEXTGEN made it possible for me to return again to the field, which would include a car bombing at our home, ground combat in our city, and evacuation from the country within the next year. I would never have made it through that season of life and ministry if it had not been for NEXTGEN. I received ministry at NEXTGEN in ways that I have never experienced anywhere else. I met my mentor at NEXTGEN, who has continued to help guide me and coach me with his years of experience. NEXTGEN is a gift that can never be paid back, but the results continue to benefit my team, my family, and every person I minister to.

You can find more stories from our delegates on the NEXTGEN website. We invite delegates to write blogs (nextgenleader.net/blog-2) to each other coming out of the theme of the week. This gives additional value to our younger friends as their voices get heard and the insights gleaned from both the gathering and their experiences enhance the transformative experience.

So, what transforms?

How do we help younger leaders to learn to tend well to their souls? How do mission, transformation, and recruiting intersect a new generation of younger leaders to serve well in the hard places among the unreached? Our NEXTGEN gathering is one attempt to create such important attributes of life change and reproducibility.

Do consider joining us for a future NEXTGEN gathering as God guides you. 



Crossing Barriers at the Winter Launch Lab

How Spiritual Discernment Fuels Global Innovation

By **PAUL DZUBINSKI** and **ANDY BETTENCOURT**

Paul Dzubinski is the Innovation Catalyst of Frontier Ventures and the Director of the Winter Launch Lab. He started ministries and churches in Europe and is fascinated with all kinds of innovation.

Andy Bettencourt is a Research Associate at Frontier Ventures, has chaired the Ralph D. Winter Memorial Lectureship, co-hosted The Missions Drop podcast, assisted the *JFM* in their publications, and facilitated innovation with mission groups as a part of the Winter Launch Lab.

Innovation Through Community Collaboration

You probably recognize iconic artists like Picasso, E.M. Forster, Georgia O'Keeffe, Jackson Pollock, or Andy Warhol. Maybe you know scientists like Robert Oppenheimer, Marie Curie, John Bardeen, or Francis Crick. All these people are both accomplished and famous, but they also owe a good deal of their success to the communities that surrounded them.¹ They are kind of like actors who give Oscar acceptance speeches. They have a community of people to thank.

The same is true of innovators. That is why, in the Winter Launch Lab, we strive to be a community of innovators. There are nine of us, each working in a different area. And even though we live in multiple countries, we encourage one another and help each other to innovate in our unique ministry contexts.


Fostering a Collaborative Innovation Ecosystem

In innovation, this is one part of what is called an innovation ecosystem. In a *Forbes* magazine article, Kalina Terzieva defines an innovation ecosystem as “a collaborative approach where a network of individuals, organizations and institutions work together to generate new ideas, technologies, and business models.” She says that “This approach fosters creativity and allows companies to explore new opportunities while minimizing risks.”² In this same edition of *Mission Frontiers*, you can see an illustration of this in Nate Scholz’s article on page 38.

The current efforts of the Winter Launch Lab involve a wide range of initiatives. They include things like partnering with non-Westerners to share Jesus with unreached people groups, supporting health professionals in underserved communities, and ministering to people serving nomads in Africa. Because of the innovators in the Launch Lab and those with whom we collaborate, we are constructing an innovation ecosystem. Currently, our nine Launch

1 Picasso - School of Paris, E.M. Forster - Bloomsbury Group, Jackson Pollock - Abstract Expressionism NY City, Andy Warhol - The Factory, Robert Oppenheimer - Manhattan Project, John Bardeen - Bell Labs, or Francis Crick - RNA Tie Club

2 Terzieva, Kalina. 2022. “How To Create An Innovation Ecosystem That Drives Business Growth.” November 15, 2022. forbes.com/councils/forbescoachescouncil/2023/05/03/how-to-create-an-innovation-ecosystem-that-drives-business-growth.



Lab members collaborate with over 14 organizations/businesses and more than 35 individuals outside of Frontier Ventures.

Infusing Spiritual Discernment into Innovation

In these efforts, we use or explore two key concepts. The first is the spiritual application of innovative problem-solving. We want spiritual discernment to be at the heart of what we do. Spiritual discernment, in a general sense, can be described as “the capacity to recognize and respond to the presence and the activity of God—both in the ordinary moments and in the larger decisions of our lives.”³ Connecting with God in those ways help us address the second concept. We want our work to bring a holistic gospel for everyone, especially those beyond the traditional borders of world Christianity.

Putting together sensitivity to the Holy Spirit with innovation practices starts with a deep connection with the Scriptures. We root our approach to innovation in Scripture by listening to God’s Spirit. We see Scripture being vital in relationship to the way innovation is approached. We use the gospel of Mark to describe how a team should approach innovation: Mark 8:14–21 Open Mind, Mark 9:2–8 Prayerful Reflection, Mark 14:32–42 Open Will, and then Acts 10 and 15 to Discern New Ways Forward. That spiritual approach to innovation involves “tools and practices of design thinking and systems thinking, but we insist on adding to them group thinking, spiritual discernment, theological grounding, and a missiological focus.”⁴ I like the way Steven Spicer said it, we seek “sustainable transformation in the ways we speak, think, imagine, and act with God to better express Jesus’ gospel in the world. Our goal through this effort is to encourage sustainable innovation in mission praxis among Jesus movements as they follow the Holy Spirit and cross barriers to Jesus.”⁵

³ Barton, Ruth Haley. 2012. *Pursuing God’s Will Together: A Discernment Practice for Leadership Groups*. First Ed 1st Printing Edition. Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Books.

⁴ Paul Dzubinski and Steven Spicer. 2021. “Innovation Grounded in the Spirituality of Frontier Mission.” *Mission Frontiers*, July 1, 2021. missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/innovation-grounded-in-the-spirituality-of-frontier-mission.

⁵ Spicer, Steven. 2020. “Social Innovation in Frontier Mission.” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 37 (2): 81–91.

Pioneering Spiritual Innovation in Buddhist Contexts

An example of this is our long-term innovation project with a team in Buddhist countries. Despite over 200 years of gospel presence there, Christian communities remain small. Why is that? The people taking the gospel to these countries are godly, Spirit-filled, and backed by church and prayer communities. Is it that people in those countries are unreceptive to the gospel? Could it be that the translation of Christian ideas and presentations of them are poorly done? Could it be that workers don't stay long enough to have an impact? Or could it be that workers do not integrate well into society? It is a complex problem.

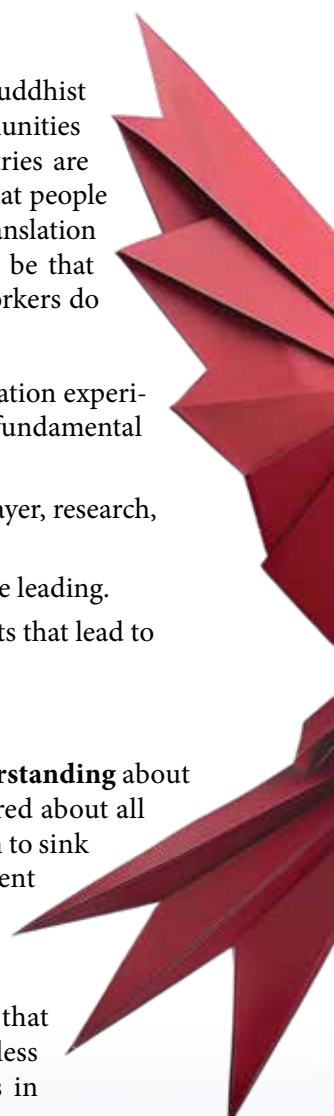
A small group of experienced expats and locals began our in-depth innovation experience. We call it a Transformation Collaborative (tcolab). There are three fundamental elements to a tcolab:

1. **Seek understanding** around your complex gospel problem through prayer, research, and experiential learning.
2. **Prayerfully reflect** on emerging insights and sense where God might be leading.
3. **Discern new ways forward** by designing creative prototype experiments that lead to further innovative insights and breakthroughs.

Barriers in gospel Acceptance

The group began meeting every other week. As they started to **seek understanding** about the issue, it was important to reflect on their own experiences. They shared about all the barriers to gospel acceptance they have seen. Those experiences began to sink deeply into their hearts and minds, yet there was no immediate agreement on how to address those barriers. In fact, the group was divided on ways to move forward. Some wanted to focus on translation issues. This is because the way in which Western Christians have explained the gospel does not connect with Buddhist culture. Others in the group thought that workers and local believers were perceived by their Buddhist friends as less honorable than good Buddhists. They thought that helping Christians in that area was a path forward.

At that point, we moved from their experiences to examine the Jesus movements that have happened among Buddhists. These movements have seen hundreds come to faith. We hoped to discover a way forward by comparing those movements to local established churches that were not growing. They discovered that the established churches had dispositions reflected in their practices, opinions, and/or teachings that actually hinder relationships with Buddhist neighbors and relatives. For example, "The dispositions of the ideal Buddhist monk are noticeably different from those of the ideal Christian leader. Christian leaders learn to confidently and zealously persuade others to put their faith in Christ. They preach and lead with passion. They often use loud voices, work with entrepreneurial energy, dress in Western clothing that reflects the business world of Southeast Asia, and use technology



in a way that projects the power of consumerism.”⁶ When we got to that point, I remember how painful that realization was. We encourage the opposite of the ways Buddhists communicate virtue.

Spiritual Reflection and Innovation

During the Seeking Understanding phase, we always spent some time in prayer and Scripture reading. It was now time to focus on hearing from God. For the **Prayerful Reflection** phase, we did a virtual spiritual retreat. It was too difficult to gather the group from the five countries where they lived. So, for three days, we met over Zoom for prayer, Bible discussions, and sharing about how each of the group was hearing from God. We focused on spiritual practices like listening prayer, Lectio Divina, prayer journaling, and others.

Discerning New Ways Forward

It was time to **Discern New Ways Forward**. They decided to address Christian dispositions toward Buddhists. They then created learning journeys to help Christians see how their dispositions were understood by Buddhist friends and neighbors. The journeys started with discussions in Scripture. Then Buddhist monks were invited to the group. They explained their spiritual practices but also told the Christians the ways Christians have treated them. It was eye opening for the Christians to see how their behaviors sometimes negatively impacted the monks. If you are interested in a thorough analysis of some ideas behind this, please read Stephen Bailey’s excellent article published in *The Asbury Journal*, “Dispositions for Christian Witness Among Theravada Buddhists.”⁷

6 Bailey, Stephen. 2023. “Dispositions for Christian Witness Among Theravada Buddhists.” *The Asbury Journal* 78 (2). place.asburyseminary.edu/asburyjournal/vol78/iss2/3, 268

7 Bailey, Stephen. 2023. “Dispositions for Christian Witness Among Theravada Buddhists.” *The Asbury Journal* 78 (2). place.asburyseminary.edu/asburyjournal/vol78/iss2/3.


The learning journeys ended with discussions among the Christians about the Scriptures and how the learning journey impacted them.

Now that that program has been successful in a couple of contexts, some people would like to take it further. They would like to translate the learning journey, modify it for their local context, and see if it can catch on. We are all excited about that possibility.

Everyone in the tcolab spent considerable time engaging spiritually with this topic. They affirmed the need to have clear Bible translations, unambiguous expression of the gospel message, and understandable terms to communicate Jesus with Buddhist friends and neighbors. But the group discerned that there was a deeper, more holistic need to address the dispositions Christians had toward Buddhists. That is why they built the learning journeys.

Spirituality in Innovation and an Innovation Ecosystem

This tcolab illustrates the Winter Launch Lab’s exploration into bringing together spiritual practices and innovative practices to yield more holistic gospel outcomes. As facilitators of this innovative process, we did not need to be experts in Buddhism. The experts and the outcomes came out of the hearts, minds, and spirits of the tcolab team. Our focus was to bring together innovative practices with spiritual practices and lead the tcolab team through them. It was an honor and a blessing to facilitate the lab for them.

As we continue to develop an innovation ecosystem with collaborators and partners, we will endeavor to explore this mixture of spiritual discernment, Scripture rootedness, innovative systems, innovative practices, and holistic gospel outcomes. 



Health for All Nations at Frontier Ventures

By **MIKE SODERLING** MD/MBA (International Development)

Dr. Michael Soderling was in private practice (OB/GYN) for 10 years before following God's calling to serve in Central America for 11 years. Upon returning to the US in 2012, Mike assumed the role of Director for Health for All Nations, a project of Frontier Ventures. It is his calling to connect, convene, and catalyze toward the goal of health (*shalom*) for all nations (*ethne*).

The year was 2008, the setting was Fuller Theological Seminary, and the annual West Coast Healthcare Missions conference. This was the 5th year of this gathering of what I would now call those with an interest in global health initiatives from a Christ-centered mindset. At the time, there was growing criticism about short-term, health-related mission outreaches. This author's context at the time was a full-time commitment in Guatemala which had started in 2001. It is where I witnessed first-hand the mostly downside elements of this sort of outreach. We were a group of only six individuals, but we had a big vision. Rather than continue to be simply critical of what we saw happening, we decided to do something to positively influence the Church and her efforts at helping people become healthier.

What started as the Best Practices in Global Health Missions group has since evolved into its present form as Health for All Nations. Our name was carefully chosen since the slogan "Health for All" is still often quoted in the secular world as it refers to the mantra that came out of the Alma Ata global health meeting in 1978. That slogan was "health for all by the year 2000." However, by the year 2000, the global health situation had likely gotten worse. It is still a dream for many. For us, health means something much deeper than what it means for entities such as the World Health Organization, which still defines health as "... a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Our belief is that for true health to be experienced, one must also be in a committed relationship with the God of the universe through his son Jesus, the Christ. This is an integrated life where human existence (mind/body/spirit) flourishes as much as possible in one's context.

Health for All Nations has sought to fill the gaps in the Church's understanding of health, and once she has that full biblical understanding to then begin to apply that understanding where human needs are the greatest, especially in contexts where the name of Jesus is not yet known. To that end, we have a website dedicated to best practices in global health missions.

Next, we recognized the fact that there was no global health-focused journal published from a Christian worldview. Interested parties were convened at the Global Missions Health Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, in 2012 and the pieces were put in place with the first edition published in June of 2014. For the past 10 years, *Christian Journal for Global Health* has been publishing articles from a Christian worldview that may have otherwise garnered no interest from secular global-health publishers. The journal's exposure, credibility, and viewership are steadily growing.


In 2013, we identified the fact that the Lausanne Movement had little to say about the essential contribution that healthcare ministries have played and are playing in the name of Jesus in the most difficult parts of the world. Very little existed in the movement's documents in her previous three congresses regarding health and whole-person care. After petitioning the LM leadership we were granted what has become the newest issue network within this global

organization. We have contributed extensively to the Lausanne Movement including several documents, a Global Classroom, an issue of the *Lausanne Global Analysis* completely focused on health, a “Difficult Terms” video on health, contribution to the State of the Great Commission report, attendance at the Global Workplace Forum, and Younger Leaders’ Gathering. This author serves as co-Catalyst for the HFAN Network and contributed significantly to the Lausanne 4 Congress in Seoul in September 2024, mostly by assisting in addressing GAP 13, Wholistic Health. This will occur by the formation of Action Hubs during and after the congress which will carry on the work necessary to overcome this gap.

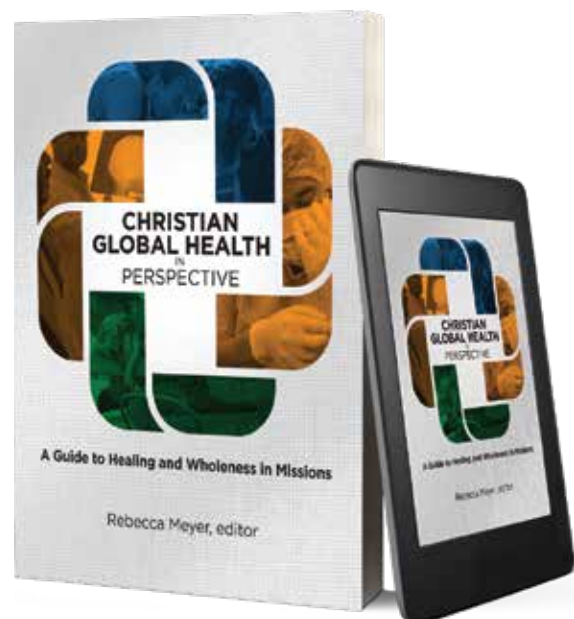
Next, we identified a significant gap in the content of the *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* course. Though the course purported to be about the world Christian movement, there was next to nothing about the essential contribution that Christian healthcare outreach had made and is making in the world. After meeting with the Perspectives leadership, it was clear there was no room in the curriculum for adding what we thought was essential for filling this gap. They did, however, bless our effort at developing a similar course, *Christian Global Health in Perspective*. This course came about after a consultation at Wheaton College in Illinois in 2018 attended by 25 highly regarded global health leaders, theologians, historians, and authors. At this gathering, the ground was laid for the development of this course based on a similar framework: Section One, the biblical basis (for health in mission in this case), Section Two, the historical perspective on healthcare missions, Section Three, the cultural uniqueness of doing healthcare in other contexts, and Section Four on Leadership, Innovation, and Strategy. We have taught this course to a global cohort twice a year since the fall of 2012 and have received rave reviews.

Similar efforts (to awaken the Church to her essential calling to care for the whole person in the way of Jesus) have been made with the World Evangelical Alliance and Micah Global. Within the WEA, there now exists the Global Strategy Forum (GSF)—which they describe as their think tank—has recently added a health sphere as part of their focus. We will be attending and contributing to the GSF gathering in Bangkok just prior to the Lausanne 4 Congress. Efforts are being made to coordinate activities between Lausanne, WEA, GSF, and Micah Global, the last of which is very committed to this cause.

Next, we identified the fact that there was no center for global health based at a Christian university, at least not one with a foundation firmly established in our understanding of health based on Scripture. To establish such an entity was the original reason this author moved to Pasadena in 2014. The original intention 10 years ago was to join forces with William Carey International University to develop this center as it was their founder’s (Ralph D. Winter) dream that WCIU would birth many such centers/institutes, to address the roots of human suffering. The goal of starting this center is on the cusp of becoming a reality. This will likely be called the Centre for Global Health at WCIU.

Health for All Nations is deeply committed and involved with the RDW Launch Lab (the innovation element within Frontier Ventures) as we all seek to facilitate innovations that overcome the complex challenges facing the Church, especially the challenges present at the frontiers of mission. See the article by Paul Dzubinski for more about the Winter Launch Lab. Within the context of the WLL, we believe we will continue to facilitate the development of solutions to address the roots of human suffering. 

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Missions Innovators Gather to Reflect on the Spirituality of Innovation

By **NATE SCHOLZ**

Nate Scholz, Innovation Associate at Ralph Winter Launch Lab at Frontier Ventures. Facilitating adoption of adaptive leadership and cultivating serendipity to convene ministry networks. Author of *Coffee & Orange Blossoms: 7 Years & 15 Days in Tyre, Lebanon*. Nate.S@frontierventures.org.

This year, the Ralph Winter Launch Lab at Frontier Ventures hosted an unusual three-day gathering in Scottsdale, Arizona. Thirty prominent missions innovators representing 18 organizations participated by designing our event “on the fly.” We practiced a new model for gathering, known as a “*nonference*,” to draw out relevant topics and organize breakout sessions into a collaborative agenda. We called the event *Inno+Faith 2024*.

Introduction and Background

The Ralph Winter Launch Lab at Frontier Ventures is a hub for pioneering new approaches in missions. Named after Dr. Ralph Winter, a visionary in the field of missiology, the Launch Lab seeks to cultivate innovative strategies that address the ever-evolving challenges of spreading the gospel. Innovation in missions is crucial as it enables us to adapt to cultural shifts, technological advancements, and emerging global trends, ensuring that the message of Christ remains relevant and impactful.

Participant Experiences and Insights

The Inno+Faith 2024 gathering brought together a remarkable group of missions innovators, each with their own insights and perspectives that combined to inspire powerful conversations, unleashed by the gathering format. Kim Kargbo, CEO and Founder of Accessible Hope International, said “I went into this event not knowing exactly what to expect, but once the concept was explained and we found a rhythm, there was great synergy and camaraderie among the participants as we co-created the ideas and conversations for our time together under the direction of the Holy Spirit.” Liam Savage of OneHope shared, “I love how the carefully curated group was given freedom to explore and how the exploration was both so fun, surprisingly focused, and productive with the right people in the room. The relationship time was surprisingly rewarding!” Samuel Chiang from the World Evangelical Alliance remarked, “There was mutual respect in the room and many who are highly experienced did not push their agenda.”

Outcomes and Next Steps

The Inno+Faith 2024 event yielded several tangible outcomes. One of the most significant was the formation of new collaborative networks among participants. The promise of these networks is to work on joint projects, leveraging their combined expertise to tackle complex challenges in missions. Of course, success is not guaranteed, and progress depends on the continued margin and incentive of the participants despite their already stretched work capacity.

For instance, a partnership has been formed to develop an online community of practice for missions innovators. This platform will provide a space for ongoing dialogue, resource

sharing, and mutual support. This group is exploring how to take the next step and build a communal sense of church family within the environment. The event also sparked the creation of project teams focused on rethinking value creation in missions, developing new financial models, and providing models for ending outdated missions structures with dignity.

Reflection on Spiritual Discernment and Innovation

One of the central themes of Inno+Faith 2024 was the integration of spiritual discernment with innovation. As missions innovators, it's easy to become enamored with new technologies and strategies. However, without grounding our work in spiritual discernment, we risk pursuing innovations that are misaligned with God's purposes. During the event, we emphasized the importance of prayer, reflection, and seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance in all stages of the innovation process. This approach not only ensures that our efforts are in line with God's will but also brings a deeper sense of purpose and direction to our work.

Paul Dzubinski of Frontier Ventures led a discussion group that made plans to host a symposium on the topic for the broader missions community, "I was encouraged at how strongly my colleagues wanted spiritual discernment to be an integrated part of their missions innovation practice."

Personal reflection has been a crucial part of my own spiritual and vocational journey. Through my work with the Ralph Winter Launch Lab, I have seen how the Holy Spirit can inspire breakthrough ideas and guide us through complex challenges. The Launch Lab attempts to foster a culture of spiritual discernment in the decision-making process of the ministry leaders we engage. We create innovations that are not only effective but also deeply transformative.

An Innovative Approach to Gathering

Many of the innovation specialists who attended Inno+Faith 2024 are exploring the advent of *technical* innovations, like the impact of artificial intelligence on Bible translation. As conveners, the Winter Launch Lab team practiced *social* innovation by designing a different meeting experience. What better way to stimulate ideas among missions innovators than to innovate a new way of gathering them? We're pleased to share the model that we call the *nonference*.

A nonference is a different way to hold a meeting that equalizes power, enables the addressing of real-time needs, and unleashes collaborative creativity. Done correctly, nonferences can even birth crucially needed networks.

We view a nonference as simply a gathering that is not a conference. As the name suggests it is an alternative to holding conferences. We aren't suggesting there is anything inherently bad about conferences, but they do have a specific use-case scenario. So, what is the difference?

A conference is a great thing to attend if you are embarking on a field of interest and need to absorb resources and information that is offered to you on that topic. Generally, you will be participating in the activity of consuming information that others have prepared for you, but you'll likely find it challenging to discover the other people at the event who share your interests. Where do you go for a more interactive gathering format?

A nonference is designed to minimize prepared presentations and maximize the facilitation of convening the right discussions between the right people. Nonference planners pay less attention to content. Instead, they cultivate serendipity by focusing on carefully convening the space and time for the meeting and providing the optimal level of structure. One thing that nonferences all have in common is the simple layout of chairs in a circle. Each event will also have a core theme stated, to attract the attendance of a specifically interested group of attendees. The primary ingredient for this kind of gathering is an activity called "Open Space Technology (OST)."

Open Space Technology is a dynamic and flexible method for organizing discussions, developed by Harrison Owen.¹ OST is designed to harness the collective creativity and wisdom of participants. Unlike traditional conferences with predetermined agendas, OST begins with a blank slate, allowing attendees to co-create the schedule based on their interests and expertise.

The process starts with participants seated in a circle. The facilitator announces that the agenda has not yet been planned and invites attendees to propose topics


¹ Owen, Harrison. 2008. *Open Space Technology: A Users Guide* San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

for discussion. Each person who wishes to convene a topic writes their topic on a sticky note, announces it to the group, and places it on a schedule grid that designates times and meeting spaces. During a 7-minute “marketplace,” anyone who wants to rearrange or combine similar topics can work together to negotiate changes. After that, the delegates choose the first topic they’d like to discuss and head to the assigned space. This “just in time” approach ensures that the most relevant and pressing issues are addressed by capturing the most pertinent concerns of the specific people in the room.

Does Your Spirit Resonate with These Ideas?

Are you a missions innovator looking to engage with these topics and contribute to ongoing discussions? We invite you to join us in this journey of integrating innovation and faith. To get involved, email winterlaunchlab@frontierventures.org with your expressed interest.

For readers who are ministering among Muslim diaspora in North America, and who would like to experience the nonconference way of gathering, Vision 5:9 is hosting Merge 2025 in January. There is room for 200 to register. Contact the organizers to learn more at medinafocus@vision59.com.

We trust that God will continue to attract the right people with the necessary puzzle pieces to reveal his kingdom among the nations in new and creative ways. Nonconferences are one effective tool to empower missions. Pausing for spiritual discernment is crucial. 

Mission Frontiers Magazine

Casting Vision for Breakthroughs in All Peoples

By **RICK WOOD**, Assistant Editor for *Mission Frontiers*

Rick Wood started as Managing Editor for *Mission Frontiers* in 1990 under Dr. Ralph Winter. Rick took over for Dr. Winter as Editor of *MF* in 2009. In 2024, Rick took on the position of Assistant Editor.

What difference do words make? We are inundated with words every minute of every day. It is hard to separate out the truly significant from just noise. It can be exhausting, but when we do make that distinction, the results can be earth-shaking and life-changing. When the apostle John wrote, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God,” it changed everything. When Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church, it started a revolution of faith. And for 46 years, we have published *Mission Frontiers* magazine in the hope that the words we publish will likewise change the course of world evangelization—catalyzing kingdom breakthrough in every people group so that every person may have access to the gospel.

In every issue of *MF*, we seek to inspire, encourage, and equip every faithful follower of Jesus to effective action on behalf of the unreached peoples so that kingdom movements will emerge in every people group on earth. We seek to provide the best strategies and insights so that we can work with the Holy Spirit to overcome obstacles and see increased progress in reaching the unreached. Following are some examples of how our many words made a difference.

MF Casts the Vision that Births a New Network

In our May–Aug 1996 issue of *MF*, we featured the topic of “Worship and Missions.” One of our readers was Dr. Robin Harris. She told her story in our Sept/Oct 2014 issue.

“God launched my personal journey into ethnodoxology (ethnic worship) with the 1996 May/Aug edition of *MF*. In the late ’90s, I was beginning a decade of cross-cultural service with my husband and family in Siberia, and that *MF* issue, hand-carried to us on the field, rocked my world. Its seminal articles by pioneers in arts and mission served as a clarion call to service for me and others in this movement. The issue presented a vision for combining worship and local arts in ministry—an idea that changed our lives forever.”¹

Robin went on to edit the *Ethnodoxology Handbook and Manual* and founded a whole new movement that became known as the Global Ethnodoxology Network. In our Sept/Oct 2023 issue of *MF* we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the creation of this network.



In that issue, the late Jo-Ann Richards Golfe tells her story, starting on page 11, by saying, “I remember that 1996 May/Aug *Mission Frontiers* issue like it was yesterday. When I read Tom Avery and Jack Popje’s articles, light bulbs went off in my head. I immediately said to myself: “That’s what I want to do!” I had already accepted God’s invitation to join him in global mission, but I had no idea specifically what my role was until I read those two articles.”²

1 Harris, Robin, “Editorial,” *Mission Frontiers Magazine* 36, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 2014) 4

2 Richards-Golfe, Jo-Ann, “Seven Core Values that Guide GEN,” *Mission Frontiers Magazine* 45, no. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 2023) 11

The Global Ethnodoxology Network now involves hundreds of practitioners who are working tirelessly to bring meaningful, heartfelt, indigenous worship to all peoples. This network has literally changed the course of world evangelization—and they are just getting started. At *MF*, we are overjoyed to have played a small part in the creation of this essential network.

This is the power of the printed word in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

MF Helps to Catalyzes New Movements

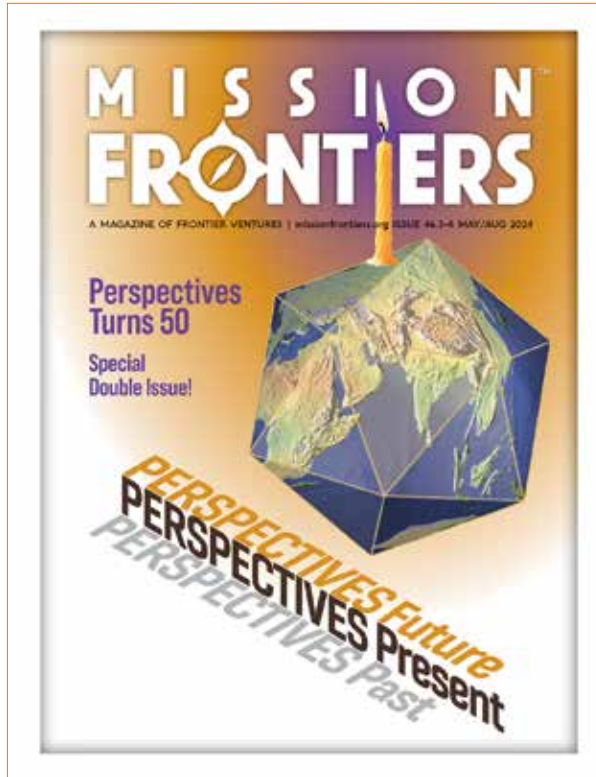
In the Mar/Apr 2000 issue of *MF*, we reprinted portions of the booklet, *Church Planting Movements* by Dr. David Garrison.³ At that time, there were just a handful of movements where disciples were making new disciples and churches were planting new churches. The principles of multiplication of faith from one generation to another were revolutionary. Since the year 2000, the number of these movements have been doubling every few years so that today there are over 2,000 of these kingdom movements with over 110 million people involved. While we cannot claim credit for all this progress, at a critical time in history *MF* was there casting the vision for a powerful new strategy for ministry that has resulted in tremendous progress.

50 Unbelievable Years, 1974–2024

In 1974, Dr. Ralph Winter began calling the global church to reach the “hidden” or unreached peoples. He founded the U.S. Center for World Mission, now Frontier Ventures, the Perspectives course and *Mission Frontiers* magazine to wake up the church to the remaining missionary task. Through the vision cast by *Mission Frontiers* and other ministries, many people joined this effort to reach out to Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Tribal peoples and more. I was one of those who came alongside to help wake up the church. I joined Dr. Winter to help produce *Mission Frontiers* in 1990.

The results have been breathtaking. It took from the time of Jesus until 1974 to get to the point where 40% of the world lived in people groups that had access to the gospel. In just the past 50 years, another

3 Garrison, David, “Church Planting Movements,” *Mission Frontiers Magazine* 22, no. 2 (March-April 2000)



35% of the world gained access to the gospel for a total of 75% having access to the gospel. This means that almost as much progress in world evangelization has been made in the past 50 years as in the previous 1,950 years. Could it be that Frontier Ventures and its publication, *Mission Frontiers*, have been part of the greatest move of God in the last 2,000 years? I think it is more than coincidental that our efforts to mobilize the Church to reach the unreached peoples have coincided precisely with this tremendous progress. Can we take credit for all this progress? Of course not. Thousands, if not millions, of people have made this progress possible. But neither can we say that our efforts at mobilizing the Church through the written word had nothing to do

with it. Like the person who calls the fire department to put out a fire cannot take all the credit for putting out the fire, the fire would not have been put out without that person calling the fire department for help.

In every endeavor in life that involves lots of people, success depends on visionary leaders who can point the way forward and provide effective strategies for reaching the goal. That is what we have sought to do through *Mission Frontiers* and Frontier Ventures.

As you can see from the stories above, we have had a good measure of success in mobilizing the global body of Christ with the vision necessary to complete world evangelization.

Throughout our 46 years of service, we have sought to be faithful in mobilizing the church with the vision to reach the unreached peoples. Fortunately, thousands of others have joined with us in this task and the results have been spectacular. We invite you to join with us in completing the task of bringing the gospel to every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.

Here are some things you can do to help:

1. Tell others about *MF* and encourage them to subscribe.
2. Download the PDF of each issue or your favorite articles and share them with others.
3. Give to *MF* and to Frontier Ventures to help us carry on the work.
4. Put *MF* or Frontier Ventures in your will so your giving may continue after your passing.
5. Pray for us as we seek to extend the boundaries of the kingdom to every people.

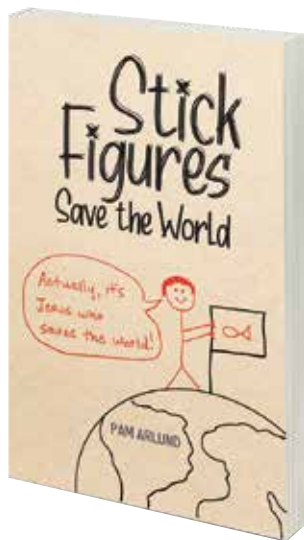
Together we can work toward that day when every person in every people will have access to the gospel and Jesus will receive the worship and glory he deserves. The best is yet to come. ❏

The Legacy and Vision of William Carey Publishing

By **MELISSA HICKS**

Melissa Hicks (MDiv, Princeton Theological Seminary) is the senior editor at William Carey Publishing.

William Carey Publishing (WCP) publishes resources that edify, equip, and empower disciples of Jesus to make disciples of Jesus. We love hearing how our books make a difference in the kingdom, and we are humbled to be part of what God is doing. Here is a testimony from a reader—this is just one glimpse of the impact our books have. She describes how *Stick Figures Save the World: Drawing Simply to Share Jesus Well*, has transformed the ACTeens program at her church and encouraged a group of young girls to share Jesus' stories with newfound courage.



I'm a member of Whitesburg Baptist Church. My husband heard you speak there during his Perspectives course and knew I would love your book, *Stick Figures Save the World*.

I get to help with the ACTeens program at Whitesburg on Wednesday nights, and we are going to go through *Stick Figures* this semester. I read it and mentioned it to a friend of mine who directs the ACTeens program, she

read it and passed it along to her daughter who is a missionary overseas, and the list keeps going. We have all devoured *Stick Figures Save the World* like our favorite cookie!

I mostly just wanted to say: THANK YOU for this book! It has taken the "scary" out of telling Jesus stories, and the Lord *IS* using it. It has given me the courage to tell his stories with unbelievers.

Thank you again for this book. Immense gratitude and love coming from the Rocket city to you and the Lord!

This story is a testament to the power of storytelling (with stick figures) and faith, reminding all of us that

even the simplest of tales can have a world-changing effect! Testimonies like this remind us why we do our work, and we continually pray that our books help catalyze kingdom breakthrough.

We do everything possible to get resources into the hands of those who need them, and sometimes we have to be very creative. For example, earlier this year we were contacted by a mission agency in Namibia. They needed 100 copies of *New Funding Models* for an upcoming conference. Getting print books into Africa affordably is a constant challenge. Thankfully, OM agreed to transport the books on one of their ships headed from the USA to Africa, and a couple of months later, when the ship docked at Walvis Bay, the books were successfully "hand delivered" to the customer. We were very thankful!

We have an incredible history, and each stage of WCP's history reminds us of God's faithfulness. In the late 1960s, the faculty at Fuller Seminary's School of World Mission saw the need to start a publishing function, in order to make the school's steady stream of theses available to a wider audience. They asked Ralph Winter to figure out how to do that. Dr. Allen Swanson, one of Dr. Winter's students, recalled:

One day he [Dr. Winter] came into class waving a thesis manuscript in hand (mine) and announced what a tragedy it is to leave such writings to collect dust in library archives, and thus was born "mini-publishing" and William Carey Library.

As a result, William Carey Library (later rebranded as William Carey Publishing) played an important role in getting into the hands of missionaries and missiologists the incredible research and new insights that the school was producing. Before long, the whole Winter family was running a publishing house from their garage, which evolved into a major contributor to the global church growth and frontier mission movements.

After 55 years, WCP still publishes resources to shape and advance the missiological conversation in the world. Our goal is to promote insights and initiatives leading to mission breakthroughs among all peoples. Those breakthroughs or mission frontiers include the evangelization and empowerment of unreached peoples and the discovery of new strategies and methods of ministry and mobilization. We especially seek to assist the work of the mission executive, field missionary, church leader, and the student of world mission.

To date WCP has published over 500 titles and sold over 1 million mission-related books, more than a quarter-million of which are through the Perspectives on the World Christian Movement program. Ralph Winter once made the observation that *WCP is not in the book publishing business, but in the information business. We seek to be at the forefront of disseminating the essential knowledge the global church requires to finish the task of world evangelization.*

We covet your prayers for several upcoming projects and future goals:

1. **Audiobooks**—We are getting more requests for audiobooks, which are expensive to produce.
2. **Translations**—We are also getting more requests for our books to be translated, which can be an expensive and lengthy process. This often requires finding another publisher with whom to partner so that books can have better local distribution.
3. **eBook Reader App**—This is a future goal that would help us get books securely to believers around the world.
4. **International Distribution**—We are thankful for the progress in global print-on-demand and the relationships we've made with international printers. However, we still have challenges getting our books into the hands of readers because of the high price of shipping. Therefore, we pray for more print options in strategic countries.
5. **Perspectives Curriculum**—There will be a lot of work with translations of the 5th edition of *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*. The current edition of the book is in eight languages, including Thai, Chinese, and Arabic, and they will all need to be updated for the next edition so that the mobilization course can continue to make an impact worldwide.
6. **Kingdom Reach**—We are always looking for ways to expand the reach of our books so that Jesus followers around the world have access to the resources they need and for the church to grow.

Would you like to check out our current titles? Go to: missionbooks.org. Do you want to make sure you don't miss any good publications? Sign up for our newsletter at: William Carey Publishing (list-manage.com)—you'll also get a free ebook on your birthday. If you have any questions, please contact us at: publishing@wclbooks.com. Many thanks! 📧



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Impact of a Movement

One more thought ...

By **GREG H. PARSONS**

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

Almost 700 of us gathered in July 2024 for the 50th Anniversary of the Perspectives course. That group included some 140 from around the globe—all representing about 250,000+ alumni since 1974. I have been to *many* mission-focused events and this was a great event on several levels:

Baseline Understanding of the Issues

Since everyone had taken the Perspectives course, we all had the foundational understanding of the mission of God to “bring about obedience of faith among all gentiles” (Roman 1:5). I’ve often been to events where I wished we could pause the event, have everyone take Perspectives, and then start again!

Relational Connections

Everyone came with or met friends they knew because of the course. You could see deep relationships reflected in hallway discussions and other interaction. For those of us who were involved early in the movement, this was deep and sweet.

Wise interaction

Questions and interaction during workshops reflected a deeper knowledge than typical events. We could move beyond Perspectives base knowledge quickly.

Excellent General Sessions

I confess I can be quick to judge “plenary” speakers at large events. But I was so proud of our Perspectives team in the way they pulled this together and ran the event. The context was excellent.

A number of those presentations reflected the impact of the Perspectives movement. Beyond the number of alumni, or the people at this event (and many who could not get visas to attend from around the world), there were the stories of people who have served cross-culturally to establish fellowships of Jesus followers in new people groups and places.



Becky Lewis, second daughter of Ralph Winter, presented a global statistical update, which was not unlike her father’s presentation at Lausanne in 1974. She pointed out that when Perspectives started, 60% of the world were in Frontier People Groups (less than .1% Christian of any kind). Now, that is only 25%!

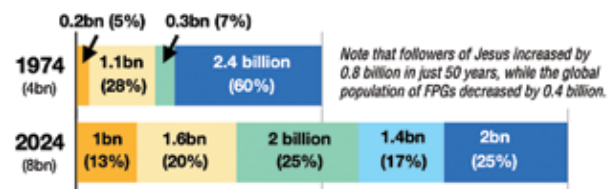


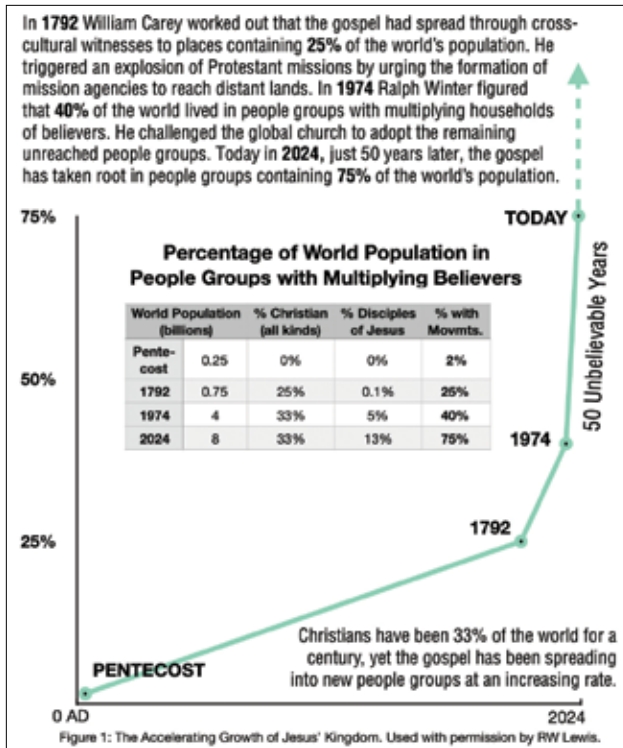
Figure 3: The World in 2024: 8 Billion People from JoshuaProject.net/GreatProgress
Used with Permission by RW Lewis and Chris Maynard.
Video explanation in multiple languages available at JoshuaProject.net/Frontier

In those 50 years, the population of the world increased from four billion to eight billion, and still, Christians (of all kinds) remained 33% of the world’s population. (See chart on the following page.)¹

A key, long-term leader from the Latin American movement shared on Friday evening. Allan Matamoros outlined the impact of the vision of the Unreached and Perspectives on the prayer and sending of cross-cultural workers. He noted many other events, organizations and other resources as well. It was a stunning, encouraging message!²

1 See joshuaproject.net/greatprogress for a PDF with all these details.

2 You can watch these presentations for a donation (to help cover the costs of the event) at: www.perspectives.org



*business was a front for a clandestine operation, and it took Carranca two years to uncover how extraordinary their true mission was: to convert Afghans to Christianity in a nation where such a conversion can be deadly.*⁴

After reading the book, I would have called the Brazilian workers “cross-cultural servants of Jesus who were trying to share about the love of God” in a very difficult place. They needed to be very careful. So, yes, in a way clandestine, and perhaps illegal, but not wrong!

The review of the book continued,

Their story may sound like an extreme case of religious fervor, but it's part of a striking phenomenon: the expansion of the evangelical movement in the Global South, and the growing role that Latin Americans play in it—a development that has received ample attention from academia but not enough from journalism. Carranca's book arrives to fill that void.

Allan mentioned a book written by a Brazilian reporter named Adriana Carranca. Her book alternates chapters between the background of the growing movement in Latin America and the story of several Brazilians who were sent out to hard places and suffered. She outlines much of what you might have read in *Mission Frontiers* in the 1980–90s. People who influenced the movement from both Latin America (such as Luis Bush) and organizations you would know about (if you have tracked with us) such as COMIBAM. I personally know many of the organizations and people mentioned.

The book was reviewed in the *New Yorker*,³ noting that Adriana,

...heard about a married couple from her home country who were running a pizza-delivery business in Kabul. They had to be mercenaries, or drug dealers, Carranca thought, and she wondered about the plausibility of anyone believing that the pair, who at the time had two young children, would cross the world just to sell pizza. Indeed, the

Sprinkled through the book were clear examples of the impact of the mobilization movement in Latin America. She shared about early pioneers, both Latins who encouraged her and missionaries to Latin America with a passion to see sending increase. The Perspectives course was part of that, as was our small global network of Centers for World Mission, and later Perspectives Global—which seeks to serve those who want to see similar impact from Perspectives in their nation.

Now, the largest Perspectives program outside the U.S. is in Brazil. So much more could be said about the movement, but it is encouraging to think that God has been willing to answer so many of our prayers and bless the service of our staff, ministry partners, and churches over these years. In turn, we are blessed too. And Frontier Ventures is seeking to continue to be a blessing to “bring about the obedience of faith” among all peoples. ❏

³ “The Surprising Rise of Latin American Evangelical Missionaries” by Graciela Mochkofsky, *New Yorker*, April 30, 2024. [newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-surprising-rise-of-latin-american-evangelical-missionaries](https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-surprising-rise-of-latin-american-evangelical-missionaries)

⁴ I have been avoiding the word *conversion* because that English word has many unnecessary Western and “religious” connotations. We are not trying to get people to change their religion! We are trying see them do what the translated word *convert* means, which at its core is the idea of a turning, turn away, twist, change, change direction. It is used of a new branch in a plant!