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A THRIVING CHURCH FOR EVERY PEOPLE

# ETHNOS

MAGAZINE



The Changing Context  
of the Unreached

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## ETHNOS magazine

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Cover photo by Dale Stroud



## FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friend,

50 years ago, things were different. In many ways, they were simpler.

50 years ago, when Ethnos Canada needed a space for hosting mission conferences, local believers went to the bush, cut down trees, and brought the trunks to our campus. A simple pole structure was built, trusses were added and it was closed in with metal siding. Voila—a conference centre and gymnasium.

As you will read on page 16, that rustic structure needs replacing. With a vision to challenge the next generation of cross-cultural church planters, equip them well, and support them over their years of ministry, Ethnos Canada is stepping out in faith, trusting the Lord to provide a new multi-purpose building.

But things have changed. Standards are higher. Engineered drawings and building permits are needed. For anyone paying attention to the price of building materials, you can imagine the challenges of estimating the cost of an 8,000 sq ft building.

Planting thriving churches among unreached people groups was a lot simpler 50 years ago. It wasn't easy, but it has gotten more complex. Imagine moving your family overseas in 2021. It is still doable, but more challenging.

***Just like it is harder today than 50 years ago to build a multi-purpose building, the complexities of completing the Great Commission have increased.***

This issue of Ethnos Magazine focuses on the challenges and opportunities we find today. While understanding and adapting to this rapidly changing world can be daunting, we need to remember that Jesus is the One who is building His Church. He is providing the wisdom needed to get the Good News out to those who still are needing to hear it.

Let's stay encouraged—we serve a God who provides.

Yours in Christ,

*Tim Whatley*

Tim Whatley  
Executive Director, Ethnos Canada



# NEWS AROUND THE WORLD



On January 11, 2021, the Dem people group of the Asia-Pacific region began hearing the chronological Bible teaching for the first time. Four missionary families began teaching Bible lessons five days a week for 13 weeks. On the first day, the Dem were so excited to come that they overflowed the building! After that, there were more than 400 daily attendees.

In mid-April, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus was shared with the Dem. The Teall family wrote, “When the lesson ended, it was pretty anticlimactic. Everyone kind of just sat there, and then people got up and started to go home ... Was this it??? Slowly, our team gathered in the teaching building, quietly waiting and wondering what God was doing. And then the most beautiful thing

happened. Little groups of people started forming in the teaching building, waiting for someone on our team to come and talk. Quietly, people started asking questions and sharing their thoughts about the teaching. How special it was to sit and quietly listen to people share their hearts! There were several professions of faith that first day, and several people who were hungry but still had questions. [Over] the next few days, hours and hours were spent talking with people after the lessons. People we had prayed for over the years were wrestling with what Jesus had done for them on the cross! Our team was literally able to witness the scales fall from peoples’ eyes as they realized their sin and that only Jesus could pay the penalty for their sin. Hallelujah, what a Saviour!”





## THE KALANGUYA BIBLE

A translation which began in 1969 in the Kalanguya language of the Philippines is now complete—5050 copies of the entire Kalanguya Bible! The New Testament, along with Genesis and Exodus, was first published in 1983. After that, a much needed second printing of the Revised New Testament was published in 2001, updated to reflect language changes and better spiritual understanding on the part of the believers. Work on the Old Testament was then taken on by the Kalanguya Translation Team with the original translator, Bob Ambrosius, as their mentor and consultant. Praise God that it was finished and at the printers by the fall of 2019. It was intended to be off the press by March 2020, but COVID-19 issues delayed printing and restricted the distribution of the completed Bible. It was finally in their hands by July 2020! Faithful Kalanguya church leaders planned the dedications of the Bible in several key locations so that all of the more than 33 churches would have a part. Praise God for all He has done over the years and that the Kalanguya people have God's Word in their own language!



## BANWAON BAPTISMS

Years ago, the Banwaon people of the Philippines received the gospel. Since then, many Banwaon have believed in Jesus and have spread the gospel to other villages in their area. Now they lead several of their own churches while Australian missionaries Albert and Lynne work on discipleship and Bible translation. Recently, the believers decided to have baptisms. Interested believers were thoroughly taught and interviewed to ensure they had a clear understanding of the gospel and baptism. But the baptisms were delayed because of COVID-19. Finally, as restrictions lessened and more people were prepared, the Banwaon baptized, not one, but 99 believers! Celebrate with us the evidence of 99 individuals' faith in Jesus and the growing maturity of their church.

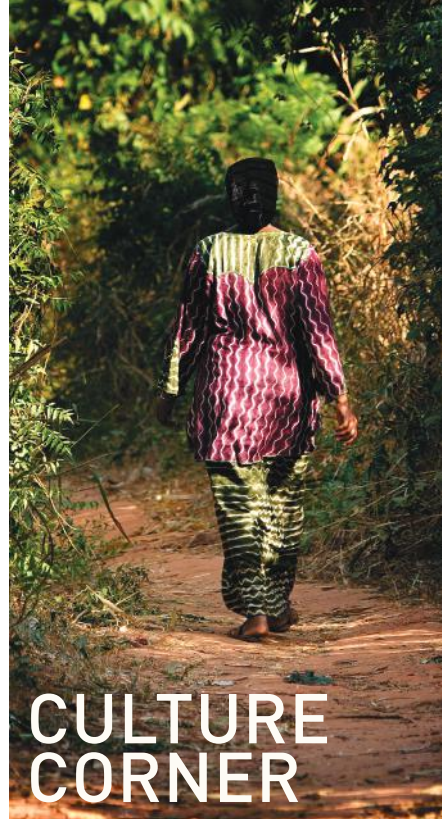


## NEWS FROM THE AKOLET PEOPLE

Missionaries Adam and Julie Martin recently reported some good news concerning the Akolet people in Papua New Guinea. They wrote:

“Two young women, Rau and Feli, were each being taught from creation to Christ. Wait for it—both have now placed their faith in Christ! Praise God! Please pray for these two young ladies to be grounded in their faith.

“Do you remember back in 2016 when we had a break-in to our house? Wait for it—one of the thieves, a young man, recently approached the Bible teachers and said he wants to hear the same teaching Rau and Feli did. Wow! Please pray for his salvation!”



## CULTURE CORNER

### *Ask for the Road*

Ethnos360 missionary Susie shared this fun cultural tidbit from Burkina Faso:

If you were to visit someone in Burkina Faso, it would be rude for the host to suggest [you] should leave. If [you overstayed and the host were] late for a meeting or missed it completely, [the host] can often be easily excused by [saying], “I had company.” But if you want to leave someone's house, you would say something like, “Well, this has been wonderful, but I'm going to ask for the road.” Then your host gets to decide if they “give you the road” (let you leave) or not. If they don't want you to leave, they say, “No,” and then you stay and ask again later, at which point they may or may not give you the road.

Sometimes, to have fun and to show that they really like you, your host may answer your request for the road by saying that you can have half the road. That means that you can leave but that there is still half the road left so that you can come back again soon!





Photo by Dale Stroud





# The Changing Context of the Unreached:

## Embracing the Messiness of Missions

### **What picture comes to mind when you hear the word *missions*?**

For many, the picture would involve Western missionaries residing among a remote, unreached people group. The missionaries learn the language, present the gospel and establish churches.

Pioneering missions has always been among the most challenging types of mission work. And in the more than 75 years of our existence, Ethnos Canada and our network of global partners have gained monumental insights into effective discipleship among unreached people groups.

Larry Brown, CEO of Ethnos360 explains: “I think when we first started as an organization, ... it was difficult, but in some ways, it was pretty definable. You go into a people group. That people group was pretty isolated. ... It was easy to identify the one language, the culture. You see how they relate to other language groups



or cultures. But you were working with a pretty set known culture and language.”

That picture would be very accurate.  
At least, it used to be.

## FIVE FACTORS

### “A tangled ball of yarn.”

That’s how Larry Goring, Director of the International Ministries Team serving Ethnos and its global partners, pictures the complexities of missions today.

From the time of Ethnos’ inception in 1942 until today, the world has changed drastically, impacting unreached peoples. Larry Brown pointed out, “The world is very small today, and no country is insulated from things that are happening globally.”

Once a people group has been identified as being truly unreached, as discussed in “Who Are the Unreached of the World?” in the previous issue, Ethnos and our global partners consider how best to reach them.

A thorough consideration of various factors which impact an unreached people group gives us a place to *start* to untangle that ball of yarn. As each strand is explored, we gain a clearer understanding of how we might best engage with those people.

We consider five specific factors regarding an unreached people. Those factors are *physical environment, culture, readiness to listen, access and positioning*.

And each of these factors is examined along a spectrum of least impact to most impact.

All of that may sound a bit theoretical. So, let’s explore the first strand—the physical environment.

## Physical Environment

Of the five factors, physical environment may be the most tangible and least difficult to discern.

Larry Goring explained that a people group’s physical context can vary from traditional homeland settings, like the mountain top villages of Papua New Guinea with the iconic round houses to the slums of the world’s megacities. Cell phones and internet seem to be everywhere.

Some groups of unreached peoples live much the same way their families did two or three generations ago, but they are in the minority. Marked by isolation and lack of change, they are often the picture that springs to mind at the mention of “missions.”

Other groups remain less isolated and adjust to outside influences, moving them toward integration with the larger national culture.



As we consider the various complexities of missions today, we’ll discuss how some of these factors affect the work to reach the Triqui people.

In 2015, the Triqui people of Mexico were featured in Ethnos magazine ([ethnos.ca/the-joy-of-yes](http://ethnos.ca/the-joy-of-yes)).





*“The world is very small today, and no country is insulated from things that are happening globally.”*

Photos by Dale Stroud

Still other groups have experienced severe or rapid change regarding their physical environment. This could be a result of such things as deforestation or changes in property ownership. Many leave and seek employment elsewhere, resulting in demographic changes.

Further along the spectrum would be groups that have been relocated or displaced from their traditional homelands. The people may relocate because of urbanization, unproductive lands or pollution.

At the end of the physical environment spectrum would be groups that are displaced because of war, disaster or other catastrophes. These people may live in urban slum groups or refugee camps.

The Triqui are a displaced people group. Traditionally from the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca, many Triqui people have migrated to the state of Baja California in Mexico in order to escape violence that has overtaken their homeland.

“The context is challenging,” said Peter Hypki, field chairman of Misión Pro-Indígena, one of Ethnos Canada’s global partners. “Baja California was described during an International Ministries Team visit years back as one of the most complex missions environments in the world. There are multiple displaced people groups.” Though there is much mission work being done in the area, little is done in the heart language of the Triqui people.

Physical environment is just one factor that we seek to understand about an unreached people group. Let’s examine the next factor—culture.

### **Culture**

*Culture* is a little word that represents a lot. It is essentially the totality of shared beliefs, attitudes and values of a people. Language is a verbal



representation of a people's culture. And worldview is the way that a people understand the world around them.

When our teams examine how a people's culture, language and worldview have responded and adapted to change, we're examining an area of major significance.

Let's consider the spectrum of cultural responses to change, again from least impact to most impact.

Some groups resist outside influences, groups that are stalwart in their holding of their culture. But these groups are the minority.

Others selectively respond to globalization, such as by adopting areas of technology, education and bilingualism. But the heart of the culture remains strong.

Rapid cultural change is next on the spectrum. People begin to abandon their cultural norms.

In more extreme cases of rapid change, the culture does not have adequate time to adjust. Instead, it collapses, and there is little sense of cultural cohesion.

At the furthest end of this spectrum of cultural change is *human* collapse. Substance abuse,

human trafficking, civil unrest, war and even loss of the will to live is not uncommon.

### Willingness to Listen

The next factor is a group's willingness to listen to the gospel message.

Some are eager to listen. As examples, animists may be excited to learn of another spirit that might benefit them, while polytheists may be eager to add to their assemblage of spirits. Though people may be willing to listen, that doesn't necessarily mean that the spiritual soil has been prepared.

Other potential listeners may be indifferent or are distracted by materialism.

In many cases there is resistance or even complete opposition to the gospel. This often occurs in the context of major world religions.

Larry Goring explained, "Each of the major religions seem to be building a cultural crust of sorts around their followers," keeping them at a distance from the truths of Scripture. Major religions have roots in all aspects of a people's way of life.



Many Triquis living in Baja California, Mexico, still speak their indigenous language and wear traditional clothing. But some of the younger generation of Triquis have never seen their cultural homeland.





At the end of the spectrum is the increasing trend toward open opposition to the gospel and persecution of believers.

“Without a doubt, the work and efforts of local and foreign ministries to reach indigenous people have affected syncretism,” Eduardo Meléndez, missionary to the Triqui people, said. “Indigenous people come from a background, where before, by [attending church, giving, praying] and being in an environment ‘where God is,’ it makes them feel that they are in good standing with God.”

Tom Carlton, with Misión Pro-Indígena, added that “it can be hard for people to be interested and open to the teaching. They already believe that they understand what Christianity is about.”

Also, the urban context provides “alternatives for entertainment... such as: markets, parks, beaches, bars, internet, phones, satellite TV and more,” Eduardo said. “These can be a distraction for many unbelieving Triquis, who are not hungry for God, being very easily caught up with the new [things available.]”

## Access

“Access” is the ability for someone with the gospel to share it with a people.

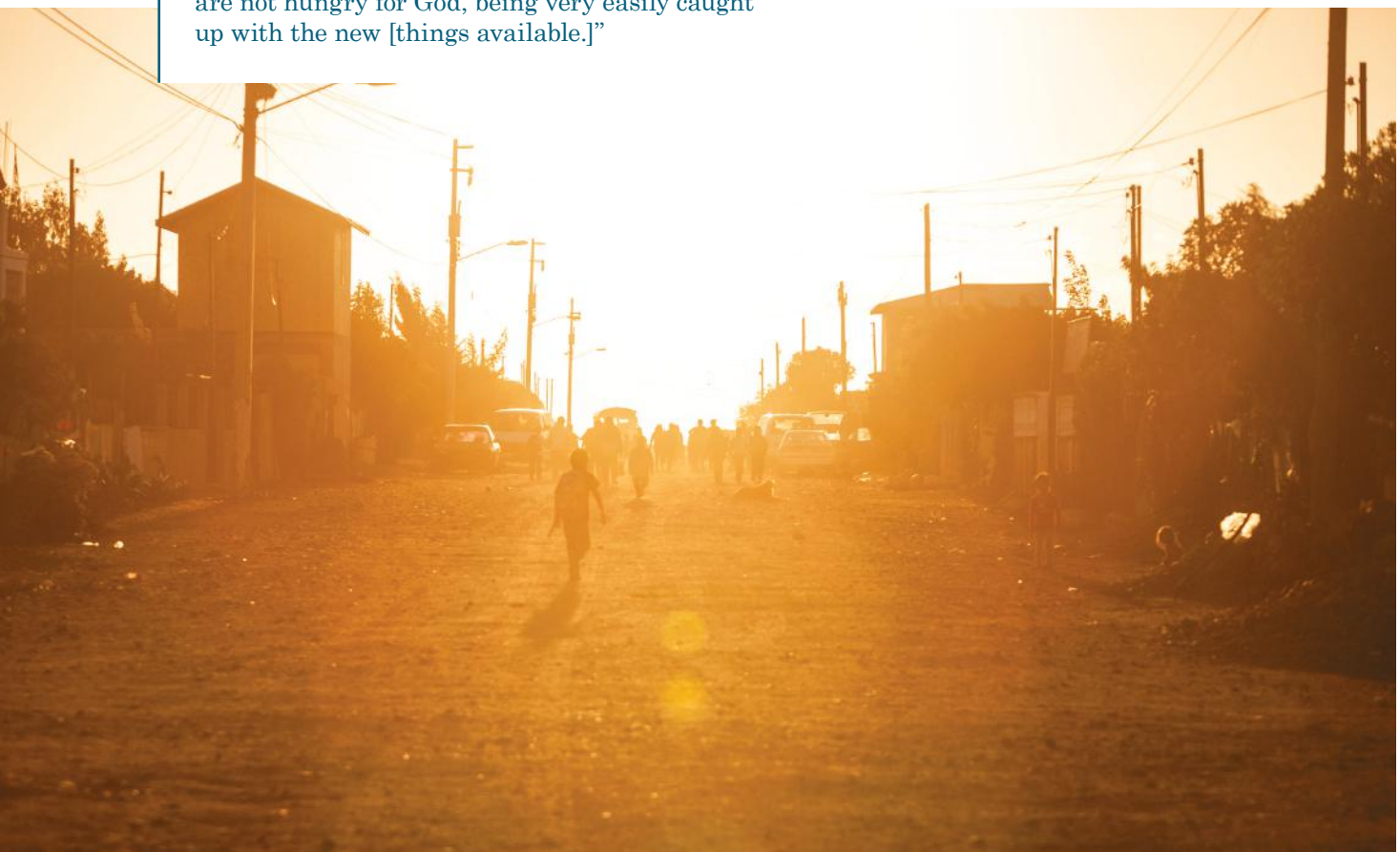
“*Who can have access?*” and “*What people group?*” are the key questions.

Access to much of the unreached world is restricted or even closed to Canadian missionaries. However, Ethnos, as part of a multinational team, can participate in many ways in the global effort of our partners around the world.

Looking at the spectrum of access, in a handful of places unreached groups invite missionaries to come live with them and teach. Their governments have very little restriction placed on missionaries’ activity. But this is increasingly rare.

Instead, there is usually some level of restriction. Larry Goring noted, “Most countries that are home to unreached peoples require mountains of paperwork, permits, fees and special requirements.”

Further restricted locations only grant limited access due to religious opposition or growing restrictions on Westerners.





*“... if we want to do what we say we do,  
as far as reaching the unreachable,  
we [had] better embrace the messiness of it.”*

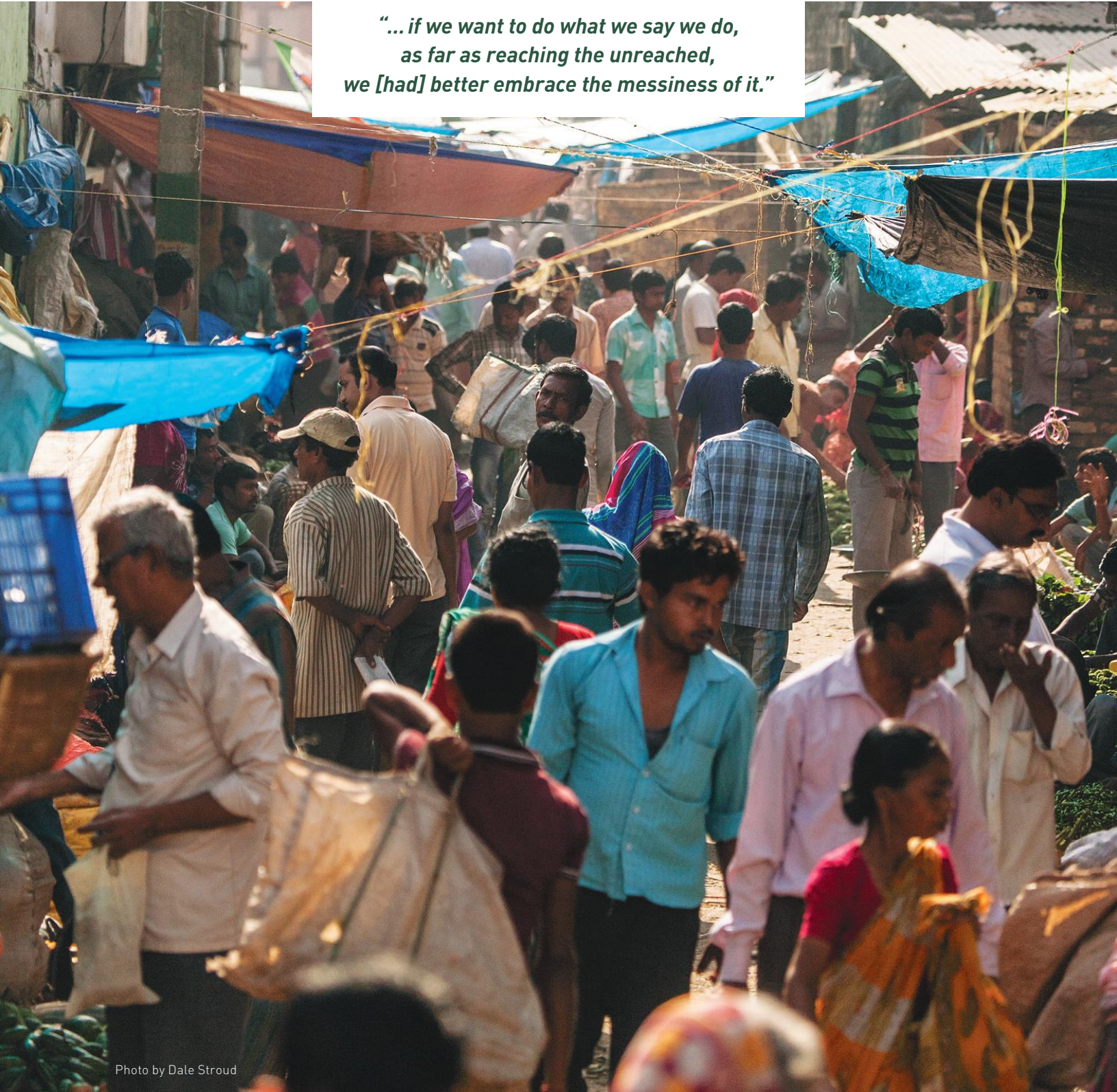


Photo by Dale Stroud



On the far end of the spectrum are locations that do not allow access. The country could be closed to outsiders. Or the country might be open, but access to indigenous peoples is restricted.

“With the right relationships of trust, a Mexican has no problem being heard by the Triqui or another group,” said Eduardo. They will listen to foreigners, but there is a different dynamic.

### Positioning

Clearly, the challenges to ministry among unreached people groups are increasing. Their contexts are becoming less stable. Their cultures are collapsing. They are becoming less open to the gospel. Access to them is becoming more limited.

Larry Goring summed it up like this: “So that’s the messy situation that’s more the reality of where we’re at. ... The majority of the unreached of the world are in those kinds of situations.

“And if we want to do what we say we do, as far as reaching the unreached, we [had] better embrace the messiness of it.”

How can Ethnos and our global partners embrace the messiness of the current picture of missions? The answer is “positioning.”

“Positioning” is essentially taking steps toward the goal of bringing the gospel to the unreached, though the entire path may not be clear.

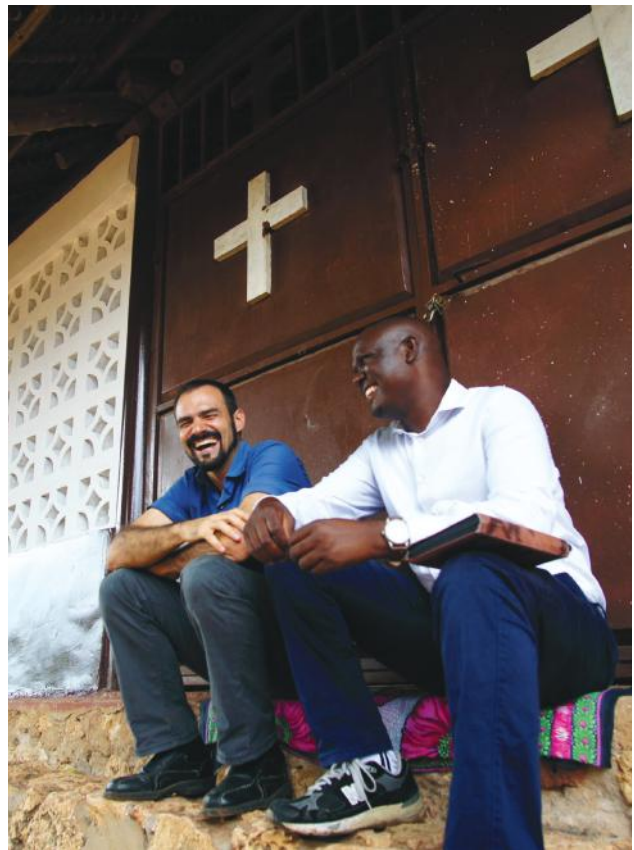
We no longer assume that any given family can go to any location to reach any unreached people group. But perhaps that family can do something to move closer to accomplishing that, joining local co-workers along the way.

So Ethnos seeks to partner with believers who do have the access and the knowledge of the unreached in order that we can share our learning and experience with them, and we can learn from them about how best to reach the unreached. In many cases, Ethnos members may not be the ones who disciple the unreached directly. But we may help equip others to do so. Each situation looks different.

Larry Brown likes to tell the students in Ethnos training, “Look, we’re not going to be able to present you a plan from A to Z. But here are the first couple of steps...”



The Triqui Team: Miguel Ángel Peña, Eduardo and Veronica Meléndez and their son, and Griselda Villalba





He continued, “We’ve gone into some of these areas, really with great faith that God is going to lead us. ... But He’s not going to reveal it as we just sit here, back in our home country. We’ve got to have people in there that help us learn and understand.” Through those relationships and through other Christians who do understand the context and the opportunities, we can discern the next steps.

Larry Goring likened it to climbing the first mountain in front of us to be able to see the next challenge that lies beyond us.

He continued that it really comes down to, “Would it be better to do something? Or would it be better to do nothing at all? Because that’s really the choice. As a mission, we want to face the challenges head on and say, ‘Yes, by God’s grace we will try.’

“So, this process of positioning is doing everything we possibly can toward that end. Not just

saying at the starting gate, ‘Oh, that’s impossible. That’s too hard.’ But always keep moving, keep trusting God to open the next door.”

“It is worth recognizing that [we are] learning this new way of doing missions and making adjustments whenever possible to achieve the objectives,” said Eduardo.

### CHANGING THE GOAL?

Understanding these complexities—trying to untangle this ball of yarn—to get a better understanding of how to reach the unreached may sound a lot different than what missions looked like years ago. With all these changes, the question naturally arises, “Has the goal of Ethnos changed?”

Larry Brown answered that directly. “Does a change in context mean a change in our purpose? Absolutely not.”



*“He is not going to reveal it as we just sit here, back in our home country.”*

He emphasized that “the end result that we want to see continues to be a maturing church in whatever context that is.”

“In everything we do, we want to be able to connect the dots and say, ‘Is that moving us to reach unreached people groups?’”

## MOVING FORWARD

As Ethnos and our global partners continue to assist the Church to reach the unreached of the world, we move forward with great confidence.

Over our years as an organization, God has been pleased to teach us much. And He continues to give us insights into reaching the unreached.

But that is not where our confidence lies.

As we consider the increasing difficulties encountered in reaching the unreached today, we look to God’s Word. Christ said, “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

One day innumerable people from “all nations,

tribes, peoples and tongues” (Rev 7:9 NKJV) will stand before His throne praising Him.

Based on the truths of Scripture, Larry Brown said of unreached peoples living in difficult contexts, “We’re confident that God wants these people reached too.”



Sent by Calvary Monument Bible Church in Paradise, Pennsylvania, and Westside Community Chapel in Amboy, New York, David Pierce, his wife, Michelle, and their six children, served in Papua New Guinea for 13 years. As God closed doors there, He opened new doors of service with Ethnos360’s Ministry Advancement team in Sanford, Florida.





# Caring for MKs

A missionary once asked his son, “Where do you feel most at home?” His son replied, “Airports!” He had spent most of his youth as a “missionary kid” (MK\*) in Latin America and then moved to the United States to attend college. For him, as it is for many MKs, the idea of *home* is complex. Ask an MK, “Where’s home?” and they may consider several things: *Do you mean where I was born? In what country did I grow up? What country or countries hold my passport? Where does my family live now? Where do I live now?* Many feel like they live between worlds. No wonder

MKs might say they feel most at home in an airport, a place where people are either coming or going but constantly moving and a bit unsettled.

Many missionary kids will spend most of their formative years in a foreign country, which becomes “home” to them in a much deeper way than it does for their parents. Fast forward to when those MKs move from their foreign “home” country to a country that is foreign to them, even though their passport says they are citizens. The MK Care Team counts it a privilege to journey alongside the MKs during this

transition.

Direct connection to our families and MKs is vitally important in order to grow trust and awareness. Connecting early is important to establish the foundation of a relationship that will continue into the MKs’ adulthood, giving parents the confidence that their adult MKs are not struggling alone. The Team strives to journey alongside missionary kids and their families. It’s an extraordinary expedition!

—Pete Ammerman, MK Care Director, Ethnos360 USA

# Creating Space for Emotions

For many MKs, it isn’t easy to process all of the emotions associated with moving from one country and culture to another.

Holly Dyck is one of several missionaries serving on Ethnos Canada’s MK Care Team.

With the goal of seeing families thriving in cross-cultural ministry, being a resource and support begins before the missionary family even leaves the first time. Formal class time for adults, special events, small group family sessions and special one-on-one sessions with children all help to round out the resources for the family. For example, airport simulations help minimize unknowns, which reduces fear.

And then once families are

overseas, regular calls and debriefs help remind the MKs and their families that what they are experiencing, emotions included, is normal.

The care provided comes in many forms: care packages, emails, encouraging notes, and

even on-field visits to ease them through the unique challenges.

If you or your church would like to learn how you can support MKs you know, please email [MKcare@ethnos.ca](mailto:MKcare@ethnos.ca)



*\*“An MK is someone who grew up as a child of missionaries. MKs are part of a larger group called Third Culture Kids (TCKs). TCKs are described as people who have spent a significant part of their developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK frequently builds relationships with all the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture may be assimilated into the TCK’s life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background.” (David Pollock and Ruth van Reken)*

## Pray. SURROUNDED BY PRAYER

The Dinangat people group received the gospel years ago. Koen and Anne-Laure Verdonck, support missionaries in Papua New Guinea, reported the following: “The kids at that time have grown into adults now, and they wanted to hear the teaching again. Nineteen young people came to know the Lord and have been baptized. One of the young women comes from village S, where the believers would have liked us to go to do teaching, but the people did

not want the gospel there. We hope that the Lord will open the door there now.” Pray that God would draw these dear people to Himself.

Then another Dinangat village asked for the gospel teaching. This is very good news, as they also did not want to hear it before. Now village S is surrounded by villages that have believers. They will be surrounded with prayers as well. We hope that they, too, will want to listen one day.



# INTERFACE

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# Preparing. FOR ONGOING IMPACT.

The Ethnos campus in Durham, Ontario, has been used to mobilize, equip and support missionaries since 1968.

For almost 50 years, a rustic pole structure has served many purposes, including conference centre and gymnasium. It is no longer cost-effective to maintain nor operate, so a replacement building is needed.

With your support of this project, more believers will be challenged to engage in the Great Commission at recruitment events, more missionary candidates will be equipped for cross-cultural church planting,

and more missionaries on the front-lines will be provided the support they need.

For more information, visit:

[go.ethnos.ca/campus-centre](http://go.ethnos.ca/campus-centre)



## Your generosity changes everything

God is using your generosity to establish thriving churches among unreached people groups.

And for this, Ethnos Canada is grateful.

When it comes to more complex gifts, specifically planned end-of-life gifts, Ethnos Canada recommends you reach out to Abundance Canada for advice.

To learn more visit [abundance.ca](http://abundance.ca) or call 1-800-772-3257



Photo by BBH Singapore on Unsplash

## Praise. A TENDER NEW LIFE

Our spiritual family is growing! R is a Tepehuan friend who has had a terrible time in her life. We have known R since she was a child. Her story is filled with tremendous suffering, both from her wrong choices and from evil men. Yet, although her story is filled with a lot of challenges, Jesus is redeeming R! Just before we left, R found Starr. She bemoaned that we were leaving, as she wanted to continue to learn how to read. Starr left her with evangelistic audio lessons on her phone. That was in January. R reached out to Starr last week and told her that she had listened to all 39 lessons.

Those lessons tell the story from Genesis to the ascension of Christ in Acts 1. R proclaims that she is trusting in Christ. How can I help you understand who she is and what this means? Her poverty, her depravity, her deep needs from wounds and hurts: read the gospels and watch the broken and destitute who come to Jesus. R would fit right in! Would you pray for R? **A new life. So tender, so beautiful, so needy of care!**

—by Matt and Starr Arnold  
*Itinerant ministry to the  
Tepehuan, Mexico*



# WAYUMI

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# DAVE & JUDY WRIGHT

Ministry in Country:  
Church Engagement in Canada

Sending Church:  
Osler Mission Chapel, Osler, SK, Canada



**D**ave and Judy both grew up in Christian homes and in churches that believed in preaching the gospel to ALL nations, so both were well exposed to missions. But it was an Ethnos missionary with his real-life accounts of reaching the hidden peoples of the world that ignited in Dave a huge passion to reach them for Christ.

Judy's desire to grow in her relationship with the Lord led her to Bible school. There, God challenged her into missions, and there God brought her and Dave together to pursue God's passion for the unreached.

They married in 1990 and signed on for Ethnos missions

training in 1992. For the next four years, they made every effort to prepare for the field, with Dave in construction and Judy in medical training. Then in 1996 they set out for their first assignment in Papua New Guinea.

They served in a number of support roles before joining a church planting team among the Mengen people. Then came the day when the team had translated sufficient Scripture to share "the gospel of Christ...the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" in the heart language of the people and within the context of their culture. A church was born as God gloriously set free a people once enslaved by sin. Though the

church experiences growing pains, it continues to mature.

While on furlough in 2015, a Woodland Cree Elder/evangelist pursued Dave, eager to learn how to effectively build a church that would continue to mature. He asked if what had been developed by Ethnos overseas could be shared with his people here. This was the beginning of 'Establish – A foundational disciple-making series.' Now, through Establish, God is beginning to bless both aboriginal and non-aboriginal churches right here in Canada.

**Connect with Dave and Judy**  
[ethnos.ca/dave-and-judy-wright/](http://ethnos.ca/dave-and-judy-wright/)

*Pray* AS MATERIALS ARE DEVELOPED

**Established in Christ—Empowered to Disciple**

Establish is a foundational disciple-making series that seeks to establish ALL people in Christ and empower them to make disciples.

[establishseries.com](http://establishseries.com)

Watch an interview with Woodland Cree Elder Norm McCallum.

**Establish**  
FOUNDATIONAL DISCIPLE-MAKING



# DENITTA HANNA

Ministry in Country:  
Receptionist at Ethnos Canada Home Office

Sending Church:  
Liberty Evangelical Free Church, Pella, IA, USA

*“I would love to  
come and work  
with you...”*

**D**enitta grew up in Brazil. Her parents served Ethnos among the Káapor people. After high school she attended Ethnos' Bible college where she met Dave Hanna who shared her burden for unreached people groups. They were married and served with Ethnos Canada in Latin America and Papua New Guinea.

God's Word says: Isaiah 55:8-9 *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”*

If God's ways are so much higher and better than our own, it should not be surprising that we cannot always understand what God is doing or how what He allows is good. Dave and Denitta had to leave Latin America before the last two tribes heard the gospel. “God, don't you care about the Shiriana or Yanomá peoples?” The truth is that God loves them even more than any human can. God's Word says: 2 Peter 3:9 *“God is not willing for any to perish but that all should come to repentance.”*

Next God took the Hanna's to Papua New Guinea. Denitta learned the language so that she

could share the gospel with her friends but two weeks before Bible teaching was scheduled to begin, they had to leave the country. “God, is it me? Am I the problem? Do you desire my friends to die and go to Hell rather than hear the gospel from me?” But God had to lead her to the truth of whom God is and the truth of whom He says she is.

1 Corinthians 1:9, Amplified Bible *“God is faithful (reliable, trustworthy, And therefore ever true to His promise, And He can be depended on)”*

Dave and Denitta resigned from Ethnos Canada and God led them to northern Manitoba. 80% of the population in their town was First Nations people. To their surprise, the people did not want to hear about the “white man's God.” They prayed for open doors to share truth about God and Dave was diagnosed with stage IV cancer. Dave shared that God is trustworthy no matter what.

Psalms 111:1,7 *“Praise the LORD... All He does is just and good.”*

The people could identify with the pain of cancer and from then on Dave could share anything he wanted about God and the people would not shut him up. But Dave died a year after he was diagnosed

with cancer. Truth still remains: 2 Samuel 22:31 *“As for God, His way is perfect.”*

With open doors for Bible teaching, Denitta expected to stay and retire in Manitoba, but God did the unthinkable and asked her to move to Iowa to help care for her parents. After her Dad died, Ethnos Canada contacted her and asked if she would consider coming back to work for them as a receptionist.

Denitta laughed at them, “I would love to come and work with you, but let's be realistic, who would support a single widowed missionary working home support?”... But that is exactly what God is doing. Denitta is excited to see what God has in mind.

Jeremiah 29:11 *“For I know the plans that I have for you,” declared the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

Denitta desires to walk with God and be where God wants her, doing what God wants.

Psalms 86:11 *“Teach me your ways, O LORD, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honour You.”*

**Connect with Denitta Hanna**  
[ethnos.ca/denitta-hanna/](http://ethnos.ca/denitta-hanna/)



# FIRST RESPONDERS

*The call came in: A massive building had collapsed with many trapped inside. The first responders arrived on the scene and could hear the cries for help. It was going to be a long day. They knew they were only hearing the cries of a few. Many more were buried beyond earshot. To get everyone out of the debris would require careful planning, teamwork and sacrifice. They would need to remove all the layers of debris safely and carefully.*

This scenario is a picture of the realities—call them layers of debris—that confront all followers of Jesus today. The first layer, sin, has turned God's perfect and pristine creation into a danger zone of debris and rubble. Since Adam chose to disobey God's very clear and precise instructions, sin has separated us from God. Paul, in the first three chapters of the book of Romans, helps us understand that we are not just victims of another man's choice, but our own sinful choices heap on more layers of debris.

Yet God, in His love, has a rescue plan. His Son has secured our rescue through His death, burial,

resurrection and ascension. Paul makes it so very clear that this good news of what Jesus accomplished is the power of God for our rescue, for our salvation. Paul goes on to remind us that, as followers of Jesus, we have been commissioned to take that news to every person. This is so very important, because that which saves a person—faith in Christ—comes from hearing the good news of the person and work of Christ. Paul declares that his own personal mission is to keep pushing the message further and further out to where it had not yet been proclaimed. Paul was a man on a rescue mission. He kept pushing deeper and deeper into the debris, to get down to those crying for help.

Today, more than 6,000 people groups live buried deep inside the rubble and the debris, separated from the love of God. They often live in remote places, speak unwritten languages, fear evil spirits, and suffer disease and poverty. These factors stand between them and the message of Jesus. Missionaries have become adept at building airstrips, developing ways to access the isolated, sharpening techniques to learn languages, and finding ways to understand the intricate belief systems that block the Creator and His Rescuer. The gospel has penetrated more language groups in the past 100 years than in any previous generation!

Mission leaders of our day often say, “All the easy-to-reach places have been reached. That which is left in fulfilling the Great Commission are the places that are not easy.” Another has observed, “Many of the remaining unreached peoples of the world seemingly have been prepared against the gospel.”

I have lived the realities of those two statements! The challenge of people living in hard-to-reach places remains. Yet today a host of new challenges confront us. Some of the reasons they are hard to reach have nothing to do with jungles, mountains and rivers, but everything to do with religious extremism and political idealism. In many places of the world, the cost of being a Christian can be your life.

Another complex and challenging layer of debris is the confusion surrounding the person and work

of Jesus Christ. Our enemy has twisted the name of Jesus among the world’s religions as another prophet in the line of prophets; or a folk hero who can be used by witch doctors to bring healing, a good harvest or protection from curses. This challenge will require the rescuer to exercise disciplined thought, loving patience and persistent teaching to bring a biblical understanding of who Jesus is and what He has accomplished.

Yet another layer of debris is instability. On a broad level, many face the instability of seeing their homelands invaded by raiders who exploit them and their lands. Another growing trend is the displacement of entire people groups from their homelands. Instability deeply impacts families and individuals.

A final layer of debris is one of the hardest to clear away: the reality that those we go to rescue may hate us. They may believe we are their enemies. This is nothing new. Ponder the plight of the Old Testament prophets and remember how our Saviour was received. Yet He came. He not only came, but He patiently loved them. He healed them. He consoled them. He lived among them. He spoke their language. He taught them, patiently. Some believed, but many didn’t.

As we move toward the unreached, it is more important than ever that we do so with the mentality of a first responder. We need to move with careful planning, committed teamwork and loving patience.

One huge advantage over the first responder in this world is that we go in complete dependence on Christ. We go determined and confident in His presence, as He promised to be with us until the end of the age.

*The camera zooms in on her as she climbs from the debris. Her helmet is off-kilter, and her coat is stained, yet she emerges from the smoke carrying a survivor. Once clear of the rubble, she lifts the young boy onto a waiting gurney where others attend to his wounds. Her day has just started.*

—Matt Arnold

*Ethnos360 USA, Executive Leadership Team  
Itinerant Missionary to the Tepehuan, Mexico*



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