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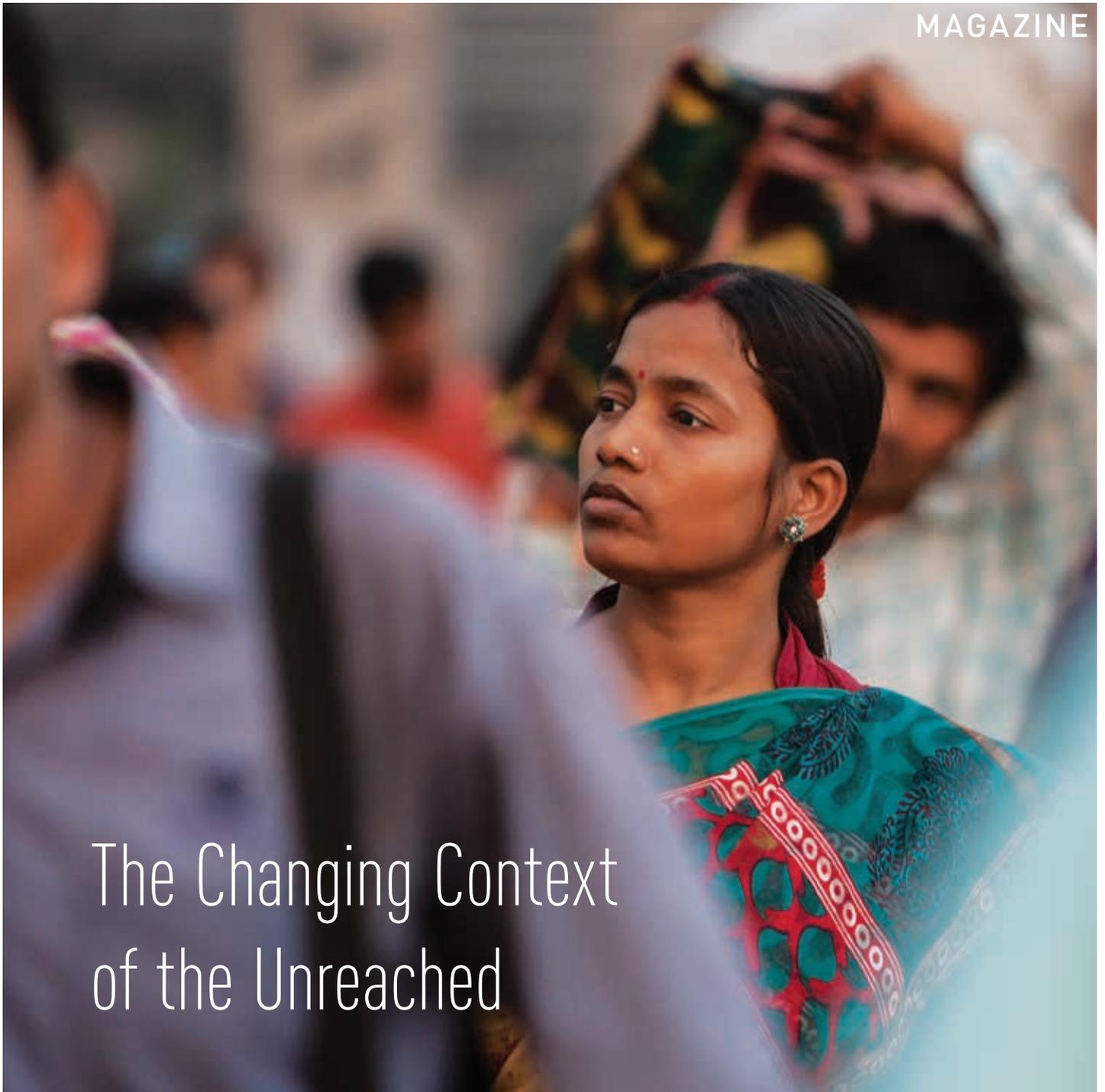
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A THRIVING CHURCH FOR EVERY PEOPLE

ETHNOS 360

MAGAZINE



The Changing Context
of the Unreached

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FROM OUR CEO

Dear Friend,

Type in “The Changing World” on the internet, and it will list almost one billion results! This past year has been a stark reminder of just how quickly the world is changing. *Disrupted* and *uncertainty* are the words used to describe the 21st century.

When we evaluate ministry effectiveness, we look seriously at the context we are stepping into and how this is rapidly changing. By *context* we mean, what will the ministry environment be like? What is the worldview? What changes are the local people having to adapt to? How can we live among the people groups, and who has the greatest access to them for ministry? How can we develop sustainable ministry? What is the government’s view on foreign “religious workers”? This issue of the Ethnos360 magazine focuses on these changes and the challenges and opportunities we find within these contexts. We are blessed with many international colleagues within the global network of partners who minister alongside us in understanding and evaluating how best to engage in these changing contexts.

While understanding and adapting to this rapidly changing world can be daunting, I am encouraged as I read Hebrew 1:3: “upholding all things by the word of His power.” The picture here is that we do not see Christ’s work in sustaining His creation and plans as if He were laboring under the burden of it or as if He were an “Atlas-like” figure holding up the universe as a dead weight because of all that is going on. Not at all! The word *upholds* indicates that He is carrying it along, bearing it continuously toward His final plans!

Because it is His Church and He is the One who is doing the building, we have great confidence as we seek Him for wisdom in getting the Good News out to those who still are needing to hear it.

Yours in Christ,

Larry M. Brown, Ethnos360 CEO

NEWS AROUND THE WORLD



DEM BIBLE TEACHING

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 Savior!”



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.

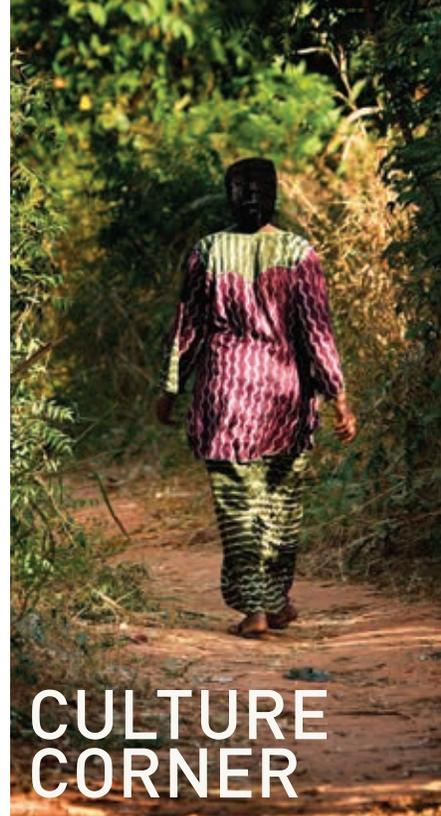


NEWS FROM THE AKOLET PEOPLE

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 so rude for the host to suggest [you] should leave that, if [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, Ethnos360 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 Ethnos360 and its global partners, pictures the complexities of missions today.

From the time of Ethnos360’s 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, Ethnos360 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 Ethnos360 magazine (ethnos360.org/magazine/stories/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 Ethnos360’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.

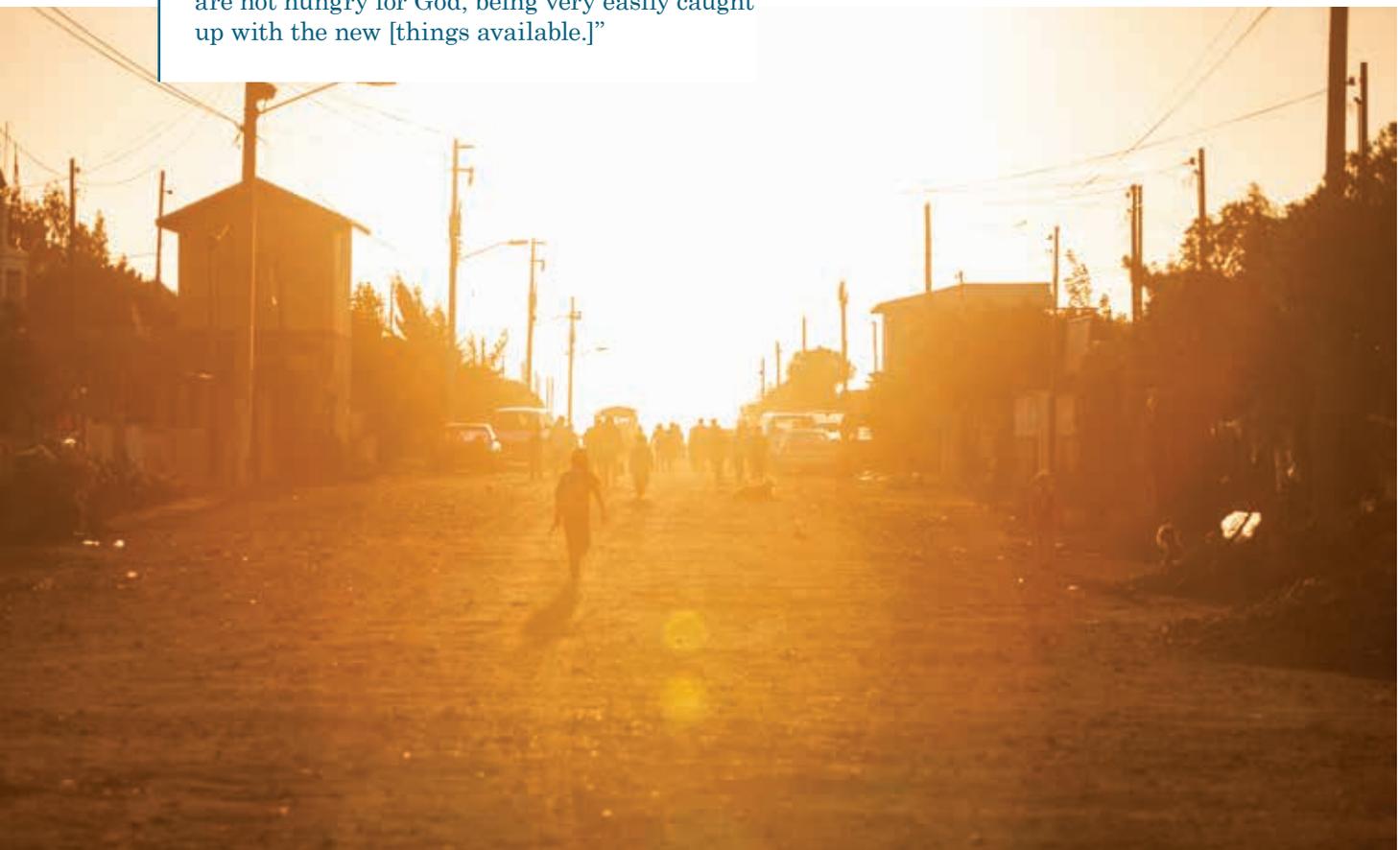
“*Who can have access?*” and “*What people group?*” are the key questions.

Access to much of the unreached world is restricted or even closed to American missionaries. However, Ethnos360, as part of a multinational team, can participate in many ways in the global effort of our partners around the world.

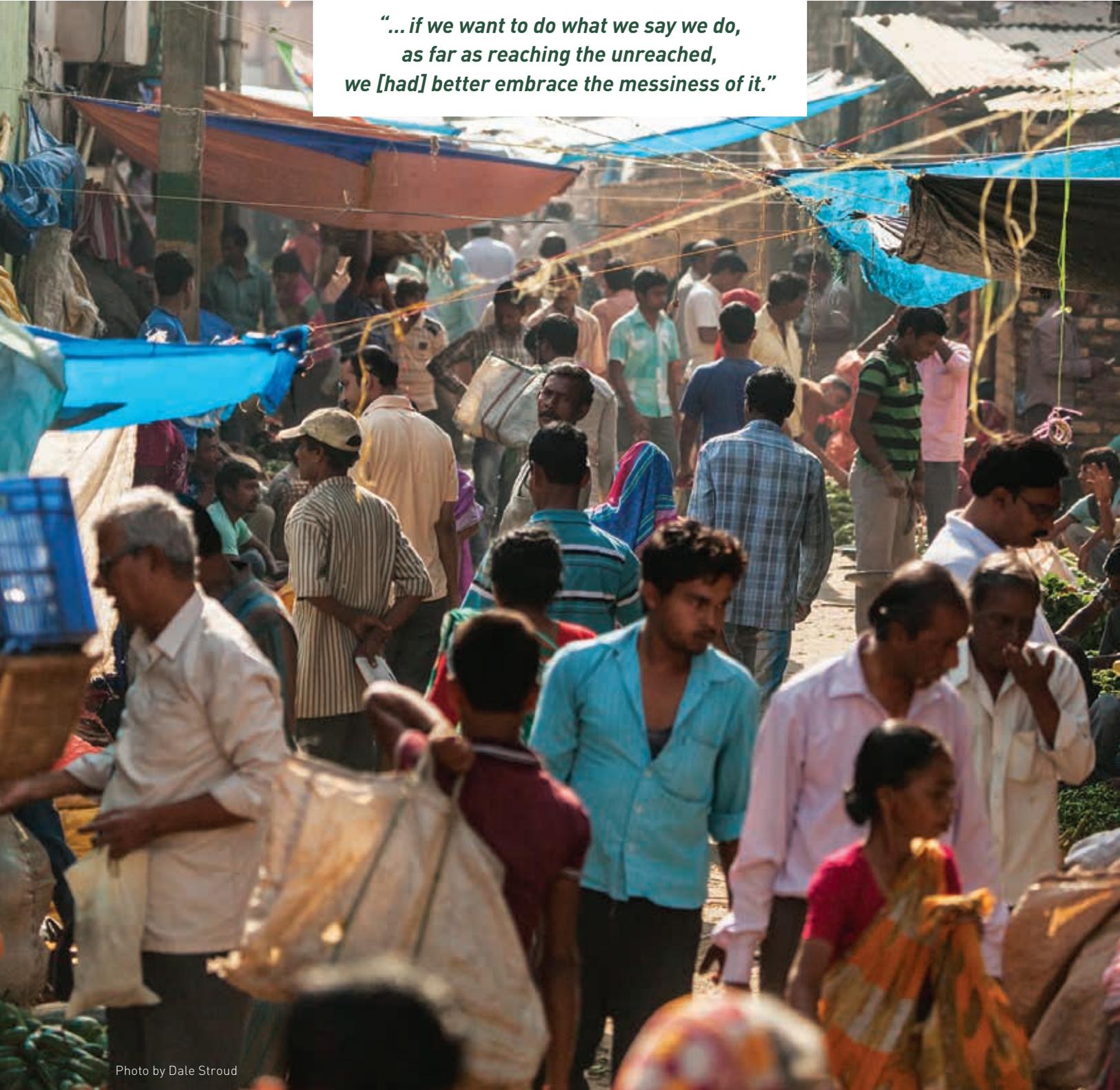
Looking at the spectrum of access, in a handful of places unreached groups invite missionaries to come live with them and teach. Their governments have very little restriction placed on missionaries’ activity. But this is increasingly rare.

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 unreached,
we [had] better embrace the messiness of it.”*



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 Ethnos360 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.

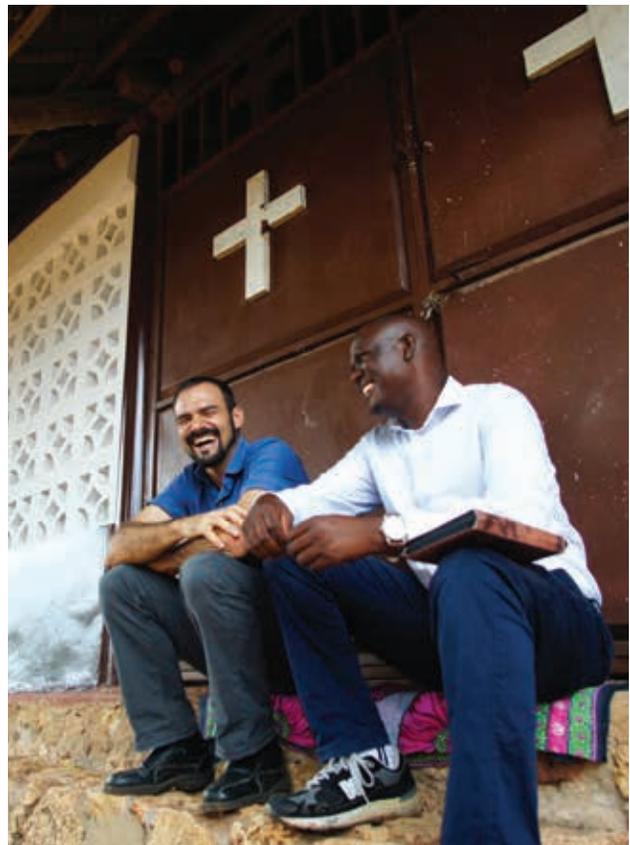
We no longer assume that any given family can go to any location to reach any unreached people group. But perhaps that family can do something to move closer to accomplishing that, joining local co-workers along the way.

So Ethnos360 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, Ethnos360 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 Ethnos360 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 Ethnos360 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 Ethnos360 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.



The MK Care Team

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 Ethnos360 MK Care Team counts it a privilege to journey alongside the MKs during this transition.

The MK Care Team exists to provide care, resources and support for more than 1,100 MKs, starting from birth to 22 years of age, as well as for their parents. MK Care comes in the form of care packages, emails, encouraging notes, and even on-field visits to ease them through the unique challenges of an MK. This also includes the USA home staff MKs who have their own unique challenges.

By supporting the parents, the MK Care Team can help cultivate healthy families, enabling them to fulfill their missionary role of establishing indigenous churches and of raising children on the mission field.

The program seeks to provide the care, resources and support by focusing on four cornerstones:

CARE: Face-to-face or virtual visits (when possible), annual events and gatherings for MKs and one-on-one assistance. These are ways that the MKs can begin to understand the ministry of encouragement and to develop that level of trust with the Team.

CONNECTION: Maintain lines of communication with the MK and their family annually.

A quarterly newsletter offers tips for cross-cultural ministry parenting, highlights MK resources and provides interactivities for families.

CENTRAL: An MK Care Central Website serves as a one-stop-shop for relevant MK Resources, MK Education support and up-to-date Program information. This website is slated to launch soon. It will be available for the MKs and families that have registered with the MK Care Team.

COMMUNITY: Provide access to relevant MK and family community platforms. Direct connections between the families and MKs are very helpful and actively fight isolation. The Team will maintain an online community built to foster these connections. This is facilitated through private Facebook groups established for our MKs and parents to foster connections and to share stories, resources and tips. The Team will also utilize public social media platforms (Instagram and Facebook) to assist in building and strengthening community among the MKs and parents.

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

**“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)*

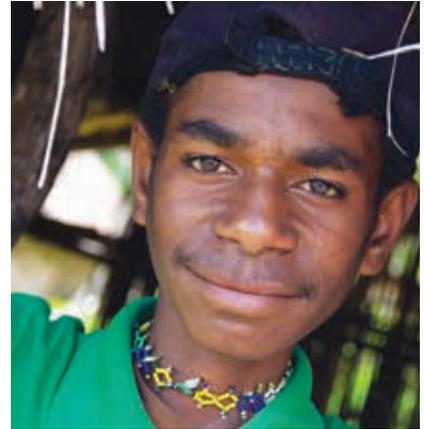


Pray. SURROUNDED BY PRAYER

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.



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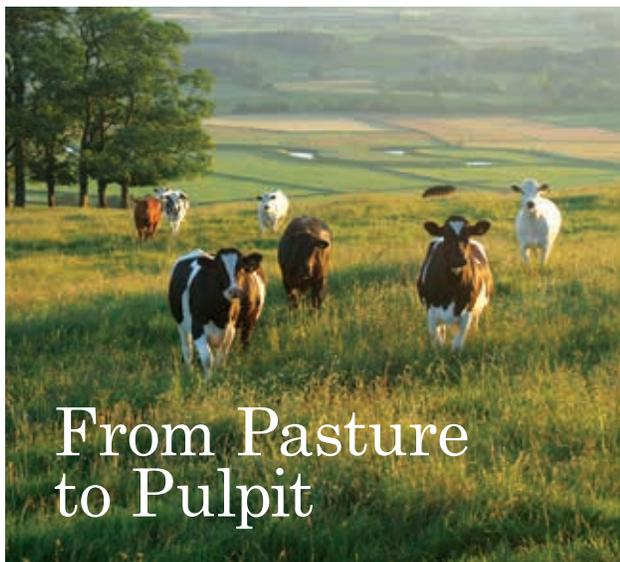
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Praise. A TENDER NEW LIFE

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.

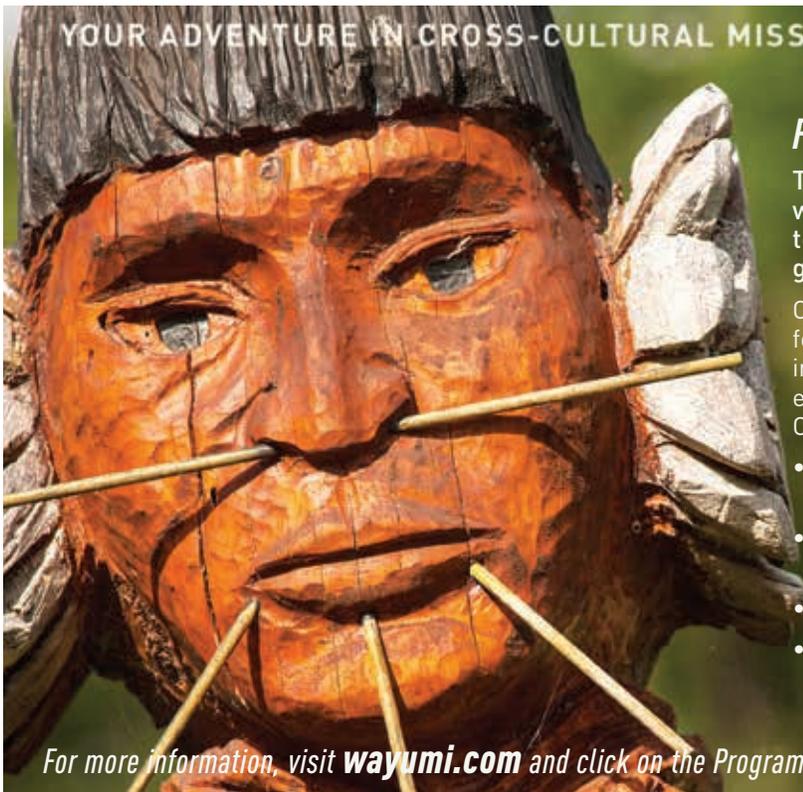
Those lessons tell the story from Genesis to the Ascension of Christ in Acts 1. R proclaims that she is trusting in Christ. How can I help you understand who she is and what this means? Her poverty, her depravity, her deep needs from wounds and hurts: read the gospels and watch the broken and destitute 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



WAYUMI

YOUR ADVENTURE IN CROSS-CULTURAL MISSIONS... IN PENNSYLVANIA.



FALL WEEKEND RETREATS!

The Wayumi retreat experience will open your eyes to what it takes to reach the still-unreached people groups of the world.

Come to our campus in Pennsylvania for a weekend retreat as a group, an individual or a family. Choose from several weekends during September and October. You will discover:

- What God is doing today to reach the unreached
- What missionaries experience while teaching them
- The cultural and language challenges
- The various ministries supporting the missionaries

For more information, visit wayumi.com and click on the Programs menu tab, then on Retreats for Groups.

CONNECT WITH *new missionaries!*

DREW & GRACE SANFORD

AND DAUGHTERS
NORA & EMMELYN

Ministry in Country:
Church Planters in Papua New Guinea

Sending Church:
Skiff Lake Bible Church, Clarklake, Michigan



Both Drew and Grace were raised in Christian homes with parents who were very intentional about instilling a love of Christ in them and teaching them about God and His Word from a very young age.

“God was so gracious to have allowed both of us to grow up in homes where the importance of foreign missions was greatly valued,” they said.

That principle continued to be emphasized when they entered Ethnos360 Bible Institute. “As we

went through the training there, we were continually met with real examples of the incredible need for missionaries to take the Good News of Christ to the ends of the earth. We found it impossible to sit through two entire years of training that is completely devoted to the Bible and not come away from it with a burden for those who have never heard a single word of it.”

After completing their training with Ethnos360 in 2018, the Lord raised up a team of senders to

pray for them and support them in their future ministry.

Drew and Grace arrived in Papua New Guinea in September 2020.

“We hope that one day as we follow the Lord’s leading, He will allow us to participate in the establishing and developing of a mature church, a functioning body of believers whose lives are characterized by a deep relationship with the one true God.”

Connect with the Sanfords at ethnos360.org/missionaries/drew-and-grace-sanford



MEGAN LEWIS

Ministry in Country:
School Teacher in Papua New Guinea

Sending Church:
Cut Bank Community Bible Church, Cut Bank, Montana

“He answered
my prayers
better than
I could have
imagined.”

Megan had a heart for missions since she first came to Christ in high school. But God really grew her faith and desire to serve Him while in college.

She prayed about serving Him overseas, using her teaching degree to do that. “I wanted to be able to be a part of the work God was doing to bring His gospel to all parts of the world, but I also wanted to work with high school

and middle school students and impact their lives for Christ.”

While in college, a group called the Traveling Team came to one of her Cru meetings, discussing how they could use their degrees in a missions context. One of the organizations presented was Ethnos360, which Megan was already familiar with. The church she grew up in supported Ethnos360 missionaries.

Additionally, a teacher moved to Megan’s hometown who had just returned from Papua New Guinea where she had been teaching with Ethnos360. She became a friend of the family, and Megan learned what it would look like to be a schoolteacher overseas as part of the church planting team.

Megan continued to pray and waited on God. After graduation and teaching for two years in the USA, the Lord opened some doors and closed others allowing her to teach in Papua New Guinea.

She has just finished her second year teaching at Numonohi Christian Academy.

“I have loved where God brought me. He answered my prayers better than I could have imagined. I am able to teach middle schoolers and high schoolers but also help support the spread of His Good News by teaching the children of fellow missionaries.”

Learn more about serving as a schoolteacher with Ethnos360 at ethnos360.org/teach-abroad

Connect with Megan Lewis at ethnos360.org/missionaries/megan-lewis

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 Savior 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.

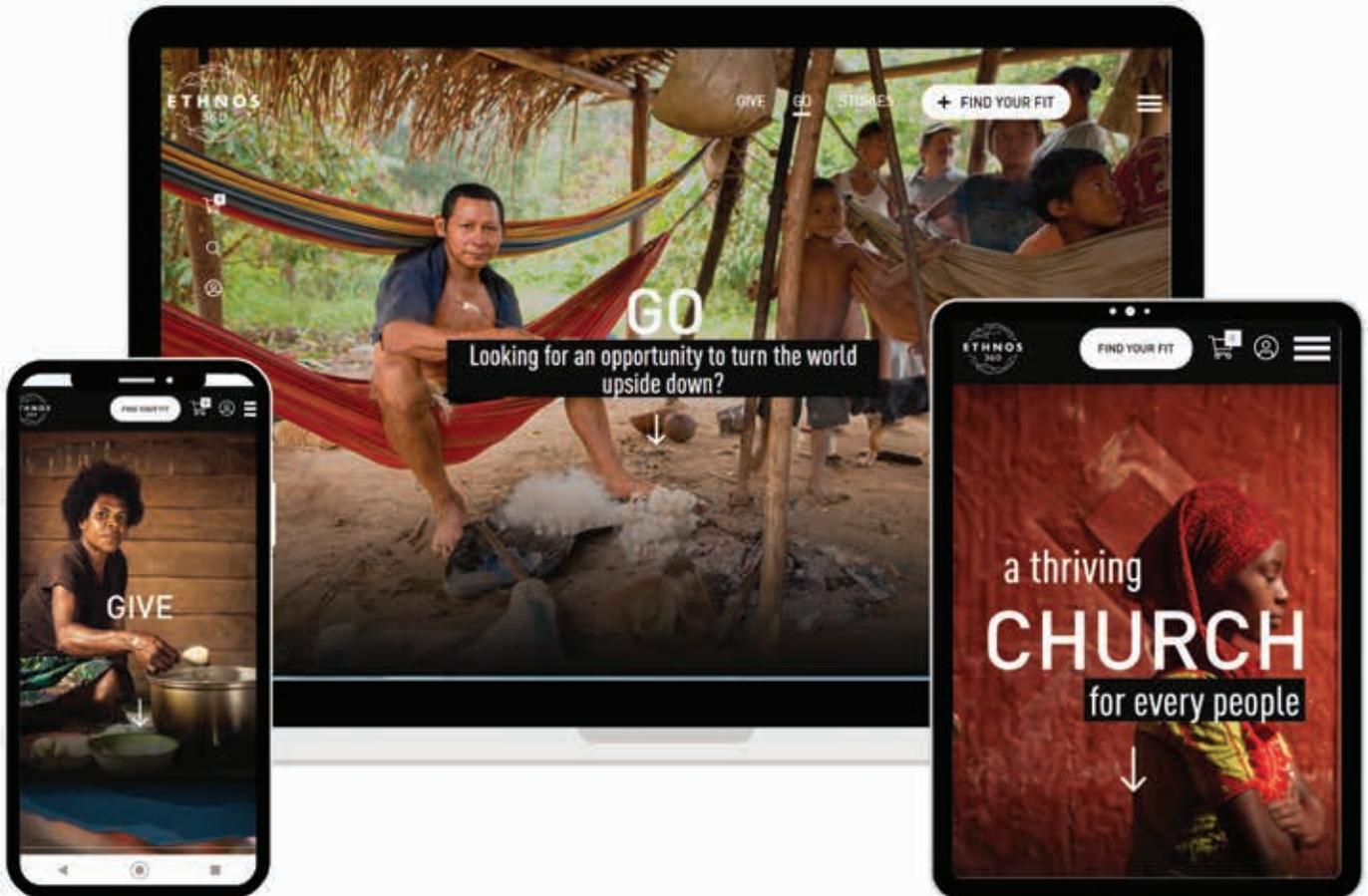
As we move toward the unreached, it is more important than ever that we do so with the mentality of a first responder. We need to move with careful planning, committed teamwork and loving patience.

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
Executive Leadership Team
Itinerant Missionary to the Tepehuan, Mexico

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Changing the look but keeping the purpose