

abwe

Open Initiative Action Guide

Helping You Go to the Unreached



Unreached People Groups Are the Next Frontier for Global Missions

A people group is designated “unreached” when less than two percent of the population is evangelical Christian. We estimate there are about 6,741 unreached people groups in the world.

That’s 3.15 billion people.



For every 30 missionaries that go to the reached, roughly one missionary goes to the unreached.



One third of humanity has never heard the name of Jesus.



More than 40 percent of the world’s population live in closed countries with little to no gospel witness.

We believe God is calling a generation of missionaries to take the gospel to hard-to-reach places and people.

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20

God's Heart Is for the Nations

He is redeeming a people from every tribe and people group on the earth.

The unreached are still unreached because they are difficult to reach.

But why?

- Dominant religions like Islam, Buddhism, or Hinduism are often hostile towards the gospel and strongly blind a people group for generations.
- All over the world, restrictive governments shut out outside influences, making it challenging for Christian workers and the gospel to enter. Many times, visas are very difficult to acquire. Laws or political entities may prohibit openly sharing the gospel.
- People groups who have been entrenched in falsehood for generations are passionately resistant to new thought or change, causing uncertainty, fear, and in some cases, violence against those who accept or proclaim the gospel.

“And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.”

Mark 13:10-11



A History of Hard Work

From our beginning nearly 100 years ago, ABWE's missionaries have been bringing the good news of the gospel to the ends of the earth. Why? Because the mission didn't start with us.

“Go and make disciples of all nations.” – Jesus, Matthew 28:19

Our vision has always been to fulfill the Great Commission by multiplying leaders, churches, and missions movements among every people.

And, yes, that includes closed countries and unreached peoples. With over 60 years of working with unreached people groups, our goal has always been the same: to help churches send individuals to the hardest places so they can reach the unreached with the gospel of Jesus. Right now, we have 125 teammates serving unreached people groups in difficult locations and 200 churches planted among unreached peoples throughout the world.

“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’”

Romans 10:14-15



What's Your Role?

Jesus' command to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:18) wasn't given to Christians as a mere volunteer opportunity but as a command to be obeyed through faithful service over our lifetime.

How are you living, spending your time, and sharing your resources with that truth in view as a follower of Christ?

We all have a role in the Great Commission, and there are many hands and feet needed to do the work of reaching the lost with the gospel. For some of us, serving Christ will involve leaving our homes to move overseas and live among an unreached people group. For others, it will involve faithfully, sacrificially giving our time and resources to send missionaries and support ministry to unreached people groups.

The following steps outline how you can get involved in reaching the unreached with the greatest news they will ever receive.

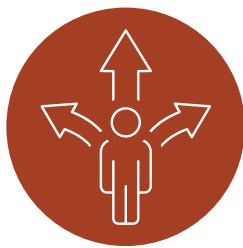
Learn



Pray

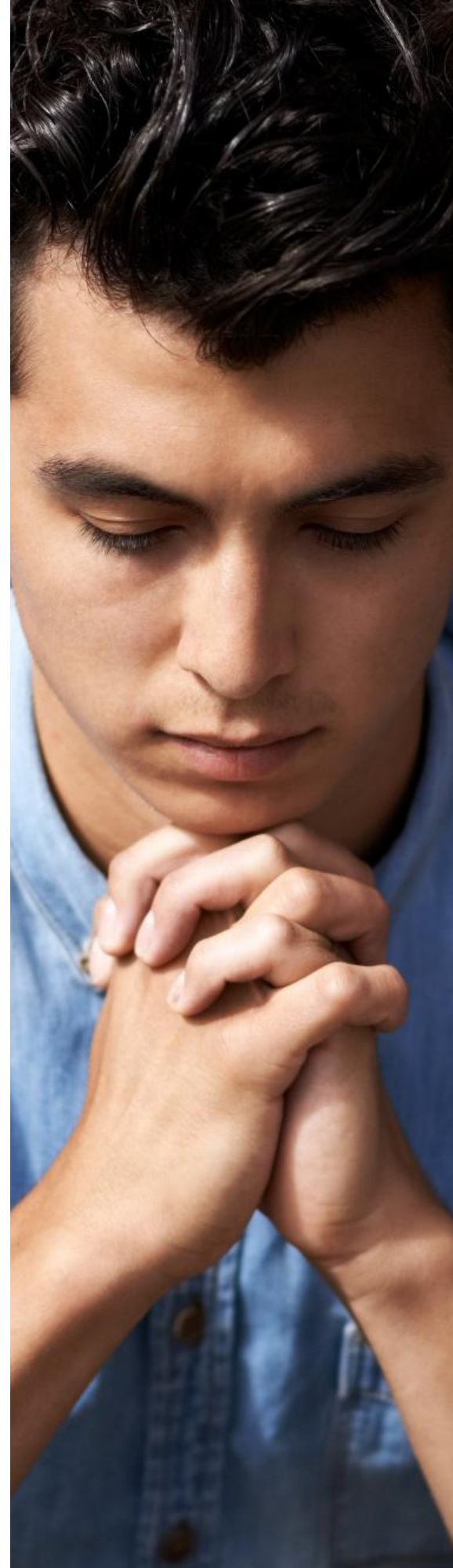


Decide



“And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’”

Matthew 4:19



LEARN



We believe God is calling a generation to go to the hard-to-reach areas of the globe and reach the unreached with the gospel. We started the Open Initiative to help get workers to these next frontiers.



Caribbean Melting Pot

A melting pot of unreached people groups living every day without Christ lies beyond the resorts of the Caribbean. Few realize the astonishing number of Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims migrating to this area, leaving restrictive countries for new homes in which evangelism is legal. Large populations of Hindus and Muslims now live in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and Suriname. Church planting teams are forming and partnering with local believers with the intent to reach multiple migrant people groups from the 10/40 Window.



Syrian Refugees

The world's largest refugee and displacement crisis continues after more than a decade. Approximately 6.8 million refugees have been scattered across the Middle East and Europe, placing them within reach of established communities of believers. After so many years of devastation and living in a constant state of transition, the trauma of war has caused many Syrians to become disillusioned with Islam and more open to hearing the gospel. ABWE missionaries are already ministering to displaced Syrians in Western Europe as God continues to open doors.



The Fulani

Spread across 19 North, Central, and West African countries, the Fulani comprise 38 million people—the world's largest nomadic people group. Nearly 100 percent are Muslim. Known as the “defenders of Islam,” they have a history of militancy, and social conflicts continue between Fulani herdsmen and local farmers. The nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyles of the Fulani have presented a challenge for sustained ministry, but there are several opportunities to reach those traveling with their herds and those settled in communities.



South Asians

Over 800 unreached people groups live in the complex cultures of South Asia. Approximately 98 percent of this region's population is Muslim. Many devoutly enforce the tenets of Islam, and danger exists for those who would call themselves Christian. We are targeting one specific South Asian people group and believe God will open a strategic door for the gospel.



Southeast Asians

The people groups living on Southeast Asia's many tropical islands and islets are marked by diversity, from rural villages to bustling metropolises, and present one of the most challenging and rewarding opportunities in missions. Individuals within this region are deeply bound by orthodox and folk Islam and are often hostile to the gospel. Few believers exist in this region. We have identified one unreached Southeast Asian people group as critical to reach, and new teams are already forming to minister to this group often overlooked by missionaries.



The Japanese in Tokyo

Japanese culture has developed from a unique blend of ancient traditions and Western practices. This modern, educated, and technologically advanced country is the largest unreached nation that is legally open to missionaries. Although the Japanese embrace both Buddhism and Shintoism, most are functionally agnostic. Few Japanese have access to the gospel, and the evangelical churches that exist are rapidly shrinking as members age. We have identified Tokyo as strategically important for church planting and are mobilizing teammates to focus on this massive urban region.

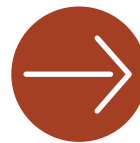


The Seventh Unreached People Group

Our seventh unreached people group has yet to be selected. We are seeking to remain open to the Lord's leading through the local churches we serve, and trust that he will soon identify this final new field to open.

“A great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.”

Revelation 7:9



Learn more about the Open Initiative at abwe.org/open.

Ready to talk? Get in touch with an experienced team leader. open@abwe.org.

PRAY



It's more important than ever for the church to remember the importance of prayer. God hears and acts upon the petitions of the righteous.

We must also remember that the Great Commission is God's mission. He holds the authority and sovereignty over all efforts to spread his glorious name throughout the globe. As we seek to follow him in his mission of reaching the unreached, it is crucial to stay in close communication with him through prayer.

Our goal is to ignite Great Commission prayer—prayer that helps the church mobilize and send laborers into the harvest fields. It was through prayer that the Holy Spirit directed the church at Antioch to send Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:2-3). And it is through prayer that we are strengthened and empowered by God to confront the forces opposing his work (Ephesians 6:18).

Reaching the unreached for Christ is a team effort. Let's join hands and fold them in prayer together. And let's ask God to work in and through us for the sake of his name.

How do I start?

- Get our weekly prayer devotionals every Tuesday by visiting abwe.org/pray.
- Pull a couple friends together for focused times of prayer for missions and missionaries serving the unreached.
- Inquire with your pastors about what opportunities your church may have to serve unreached people groups and pray about those possibilities.
- Ask your church leadership to allow you to host a time of prayer for missions.

“Therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

Matthew 9:38





What should I pray for?

- Pray that God's name would be glorified throughout the earth (Luke 11:2).
- Pray that the Lord of the harvest would send laborers to unreached people groups (Luke 10:2).
- Pray that God would open doors for sharing the gospel (Colossians 4:3-4).
- Pray that you would have clarity and boldness in proclaiming the gospel where you are. Pray the same for missionaries serving unreached people groups (Ephesians 6:19-20).
- Pray for missionaries to know God and his Word more deeply (1 John 5:14).
- Pray that God would provide for the material needs of missionaries (Luke 10:3).
- Pray that times of difficulty would lead missionaries to rely on God (2 Corinthians 1:7-9), and that missionaries experiencing seasons of weariness, doubt, or fear would remember God's promises of grace and power perfected in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:8-10).
- Pray that missionaries and the local believers they serve would be protected from unbelievers looking to cause harm (Romans 15:30-32; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2).
- Pray for unity among missionaries, local believers, and sending churches (John 17:20-21).
- Pray that God would help you draw closer in your relationship with him. Pray for forgiveness for sin and protection from temptation. Ask him to guide you in determining your role in reaching the unreached (Luke 11:4; Colossians 1:10; James 1:5).

“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”

James 1:5

DECIDE



Have you ever considered, “Am I called to be a missionary?”

A missionary’s calling begins when a follower of Christ decides to serve God in any location.

A prospective missionary must then mature by studying Scripture, seeking the Lord earnestly through prayer, learning theology, serving in the local church, showing hospitality, practicing local evangelism, and interacting with people in their community from other cultures and language groups.

But how does that person then reach an overseas mission field or restricted-access country?

Our goal at ABWE is to come alongside you and your local church to help prepare you for the mission field. When you partner with us, you gain more than just our decades of expertise, you also receive access to:

- Support in planning, strategy, and training for the field
- Mentorship and encouragement in a life of ministry
- Experienced team members who have been at work on the mission field
- Assistance and advice when learning a new language and culture
- Expert coaching in financial support raising



Have a question about your first steps? Contact us at mobilization@abwe.org.

“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

Galatians 6:9



What does it look like to be a missionary to an unreached people group?

As you pray about your future, evaluate your training and giftings, and speak with trusted advisors, you can begin to picture what your life might look like as an overseas missionary. Here's a glimpse into what many missionaries to unreached people groups may expect:

- You arrive in your new country, get to know your team, and find housing, schools, stores, and transportation as you settle into your new life. While it can seem daunting to navigate different systems of doing everything, it is often exciting to explore a new country and experience new sights, tastes, and traditions.
- You will likely enter the country through a means that brings value to the local community and allows you to obtain a visa to reside in that location. Many missionaries work in healthcare, education, or community service. Others run their own business or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or use their work experience to find employment in international corporations.
- You invest in learning the language, dedicating years to studying words, phrases, and grammar to clearly communicate the gospel, discuss life issues, lead Bible studies, and function proficiently in your location.
- You seek to understand the local culture—the deep-seated history, religion, family patterns, politics, social influences, and traditions—so you can better understand and relate to your local friends in ways that are meaningful to them.
- You build relationships with your co-workers, neighbors, and teachers. You may frequent the same shops each week or join a community club or sports team to make local friends. As you share your life with them, you will look for opportunities to share the gospel, answer questions, and demonstrate Christ's influence on your life. You may be the first believer your local friends have ever met.
- You gather with and disciple local believers, helping them grow in their relationship with God. You walk with them as brothers and sisters in Christ through difficult circumstances, including discrimination, hostility, or even physical violence from their family, community, or employers because of their faith.
- You prioritize your own spiritual walk with God, which becomes even more vital when you live among unreached people groups in spiritual darkness.
- You persevere through the difficulties and discouragements common to areas with extreme climates or fewer resources because you know the great joy of making Christ known among those who have never heard his name.



Take Your Next Step in Missions

The Great Commission is a monumental task, and we all have a role to play. But where do we start?

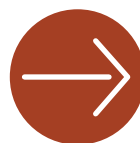
ABWE's 24-Hour Demo will help you explore opportunities on the mission field, introduce you to missionaries serving right now, and connect you with other like-minded individuals discerning their calling. If you've already embraced a call to the nations, want to help your church take a new step in missions, or are mildly curious about the mission field, there's no better first step than to join us at this event!



Learn more and register at abwe.org/demo.

Talk to the Team

To take the next step in reaching the unreached with the gospel, we encourage you to talk to a teammate. Our experienced missionaries and mobilization teammates are available to help you navigate the process and answer your questions. Simply email open@abwe.org with your inquiry. We look forward to hearing from you and supporting you on your journey of spreading the love of Christ to those who have yet to hear. Join the ABWE Open Initiative today.



Email open@abwe.org.

