



MINISTRY THROUGH MEDIA

Update on the
Worldwide Ministry
of The HOPE . . .

Two Questions	1
Good News from Distant Lands	3
Highlighting 4 of Our Current HOPE Projects	4
· The HOPE for India	
· The Hebrew HOPE	
· The Roma HOPE	
· The Tribal HOPE	
Stay Connected	4
Links to The HOPE Community	

Two Questions Answered

Why is America in Such Sad Shape? Why do We do What We Do?

A friend of mine who is now in heaven used to say, "Your problem is that you don't know what your problem is. You think you know what your problem is, but you don't, and that is your main problem."

Few would disagree, America is in sad shape. And yet, at the same time, few would agree on the root problem. Many confuse symptoms with the problem. Many are addressing the effects rather than the cause. At the risk of being perceived as pretentious, I would humbly like to share with you what I believe could be the problem, or at least a major part of the problem. Like many problems, it can't be explained in a "sound bite," but I will do my best to be concise.

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He gave His followers (all of them for all time) a mission. Known as the Great Commission, we find it recorded (though not in the same words) in all the Gospels. Basically, our mission is to take the Gospel into all the world, making disciples of people from all nations. I believe God blessed His Church in America to play a strategic role in the completion of this mission. But have we done that? Do most American Christians even understand what the Great Commission is and why it is important?

The Breadth and Depth of Our Mission

Jesus said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19). The word "nations" is translated from the Greek word "ethne," which literally means "people groups." Biblically speaking, nations are people groups who are distinct and separated from other groups of people due to things like language, culture, religion, geopolitical boundaries, etc.

There are 195 countries in the world today, but there are at least 16,000 ethnolinguistic people groups. Many, if not most, would qualify as Biblical nations.

Current research indicates that over 3,000 of these people groups have yet to receive the Gospel. Missiologists identify them as "unreached."

Notice also from Matthew 28:19, Jesus said "all" nations. Fast forwarding to Revelation 7:9, we find "a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb..." Verses like these define the *breadth* of the Great Commission . . . all nations.

To understand the depth of the Great Commission, consider 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." The "promise" in verse 9 is the promised return of Christ. While the Bible doesn't reveal the exact time of His return, this verse does tell us why He has not yet returned. God's love for those who have yet to turn to Him is so great that He is waiting for them. These people could be in an unreached nation or they could be in your neighborhood. 2 Peter 3:9 defines the *depth* of the Great Commission . . . every person who is yet to come.

The Difference Between Unreached People Groups and Unserved People

To be clear, missiologists use the term "unreached" to describe a people group in which there is no community of Christ-followers capable of evangelizing their own people group. This does not describe America. Yes, there are many in America who have yet to turn to Jesus. They are "unserved." But missiologists would not say they belong to an unreached people group. Most people in America could find a Bible-believing Church or a Christian to help them learn about Jesus. In many other places this is not the case. "Unreached" people groups have very little or no Christian presence.



Why is the Great Commission Important?

Actually, the Great Commission is *not* the most important thing. To quote Dr. John Piper, "Missions is not the ultimate goal of the Church. The glory of God is the ultimate goal of the Church - because it's the ultimate goal of God. The final goal of all things is that God might be worshipped with white-hot affection by a redeemed company of countless persons from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. Missions exists because worship (such as we see in Revelation 7:9) doesn't. When the kingdom finally comes in glory, missions will cease. Missions is penultimate, worship is ultimate."

So then, the Great Commission is important because worship is important; and worship is important because the glory of God is important; and worship will not be complete until the Great Commission is completed. This is important to our Father, so it should be important to us. (I know I've used the word "important" 9 times. There's a reason!)

So, How Are We Doing with the Mission?

After two millennia, there are still thousands of unreached people groups in the world. Not many years ago, a study revealed that American Christians spend 95% of offerings on home-based ministry (i.e., programs, domestic outreach, facilities, etc.), 4.5% on cross-cultural efforts in already reached people groups, and only .5% to reach the truly unreached.* Our emphasis on ministry in America versus missions to the unreached is appallingly lopsided. Another study put it this way, for every \$1,000 earned by Christians in America, 1¢ goes to reach the unreached.* The mission has been compromised!

Back to the Problem

OK, so God's mission to reach the unreached is really important and the American Church (at least at this time in history) has lost sight of that. What does this have to do with the condition of America? The short answer is everything! America did not become great because she possessed some intrinsic national goodness. America became the most prosperous and powerful nation on earth because God had a purpose for the Church in America. And when the Church loses her way, America follows. I believe God blessed America so the Body of Christ in America might have a key role in completing the Great Commission. But, what happens when God blesses people for a purpose and they use that blessing for something other than its intended purpose?

From the Old Testament, we can see what happened with Israel. In fact, we can observe a cyclical pattern. It always began with a faith response to revelation from God, which led to obedience. This brought blessing and abundance. But eventually, there came a shift toward selfishness and then apostasy, which then resulted in judgment, bondage and finally brokenness. When the people repented, God healed them and the cycle began again.

While I would not equate America - or the American Church - with Israel, some principles apply to all God's people for all time. I believe the cycle that was indicative of Israel applies to us. Thus, I believe we would do well to ask, "Where is the American Church in this cycle?"

I believe God's hand is no longer strong on America as it once was. Judgment and/or discipline often begins when God pulls back His hand, leaving people to their own devices. This results in spiritual blindness, as was often the case with Israel (Deu.29:2-4, Isa.6:9-10). People who are spiritually blind cannot see relationships of spiritual cause and effect, nor can they fully grasp their need for supernatural healing. Thus, they try to remedy their situation by dealing with symptoms rather than root problems, which is futile.

Things are ramping up for the 2016 National elections. A huge amount of resource will be spent on this. But more than the "right" people in office, America needs the kind of healing that comes only from God, and often only after God's people repent. God promised Israel if "My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14). Will America be healed?

When God pulls back His hand of protection, people are vulnerable to evil. Could this describe us? Think about it; a million babies a year murdered by abortion, hundreds of millions of dollars spent on sex trafficking, a rising frequency of wanton violence and terror, a growing acceptance of perverse behavior and an increasing disdain for those who name Jesus as their God. Could it be that many of the things that are wrong with America today are really symptoms of a deeper problem? If God is pulling His hand from America because the American Church has been disobedient to her mission, then America's only hope is for God's people to repent and recommit to God's passionate purpose to reach the unreached.

A Final Thought

The passionate longing of a father's heart is for his children. A few years ago, there was a movie called "Taken." A young girl went to Europe and was abducted by a sex trafficking ring. When her father in the U.S. learned of it, he immediately dropped everything with a total commitment to do whatever was necessary to rescue her. His passion to free his daughter was intense. He would not be stopped by anything.

Somewhere in the world, at this very moment, there is a soul, chosen by our Father to be His son or daughter, and yet held captive by powerful evil forces. In fact, there are many such souls. Our Father desires to bring His children, our brothers and sisters, home. He has equipped us, blessed us and empowered us for this purpose. He is calling us to commit to the mission.

Whether God heals America or not, I want to do all I can to help fulfill the desire of my Father's heart to free His children. At Mars Hill, this is why we do what we do, and we invite you to join us!

- *Until All Have Heard*,
Fred Carpenter - President, Mars Hill

* Contact Mars Hill for sources.

Good News from (and for) Distant Lands

Like cold water to a weary soul, so is good news from a distant land - Proverbs 25:25

At Mars Hill, it's not uncommon to hear a "Praise God!" coming from a co-worker's office. It's likely they've just heard good news regarding The HOPE in a distant land. God has done so many wonderful things with The HOPE over the past year, there is no way we could highlight them all in a single update, such as this one. That's why we encourage you to follow us on some of the social media sites listed on the back page. That's where you'll get some of the good news that refreshes our souls on a regular basis. The following are just some of the kinds of things that show us God's hand in this ministry. We praise Him for it all!

HOPE in Haiti (Evangelism and Discipleship) - In the past few years, thousands of people in Haiti have reportedly come to faith in Christ after evangelistic screenings of The HOPE. We rejoice over these reports, but there is another growing story, just as exciting. According to one of our ministry partners, "The light of God is burning in Northwest Haiti, brighter and brighter!" Two Haitian men, bi-vocational pastors, are systematically leading groups through in-depth 12-week Bible Study courses using The HOPE movie and Study Guide. Participants pay \$7.50 to cover the cost of their own study guide. That's a lot of money in Haiti. At the end of the study, participants attending at least 10 sessions get their money back. Those who complete the study receive a certificate. This has been going on for a few years, and new groups are still starting up.



Haiti - at the end of The HOPE Bible Study - students shown receiving a certificate and a new Bible

HOPE in Hard Places - A few months ago, we received a report from a missionary in a closed access country where people are beaten and imprisoned for trusting in Jesus. We cannot give his name or location for security reasons, but this brother told us that in the past few years, he and his wife have given out about a thousand copies of The HOPE. He told us that many of his associates think very highly of The HOPE and its effectiveness in the Muslim world. He wanted to pass on his thanks to those who made such a tool possible, which we believe includes all those who pray for and help fund this ministry.



The HOPE is being used on campuses across the U.S. to reach International students like these.

HOPE for International Students - There are now over 800,000 International students in the U.S. The HOPE continues to be a primary tool for Bridges (the International student ministry of Cru, *Campus Crusade for Christ*) to reach International students with the Gospel. Many of these students return to their home countries as professionals, positioned to have a great impact for Christ. Using The HOPE in evangelistic Bible Studies, Bridges says that the metanarrative presentation of the Gospel in The HOPE is ideal for students who lack the underpinnings of a Biblical worldview. We are so very thankful for our continuing partnership with Bridges!

HOPE on the Internet - So far this year, over 100,000 people have visited TheHOPEProject.com, our ministry website. Most came from predominantly Muslim countries. From those regions, 79 people prayed to receive Christ; 313 people wanted to know more about what it means to follow Christ. Also from those areas, we received a plethora of threatening hate mail.

HOPE via Satellite - In March, The Spanish HOPE was broadcast to a potential audience of hundreds of millions from Mexico to Argentina, and 29 countries in between. Several times this year, on Islamic holy days, The Urdu HOPE was broadcast nationwide in Pakistan. The Farsi HOPE was aired multiple times by Sat 7 in Iran, with other ministries planning to do the same in coming months.

HOPE in More Languages - Year-to-date we've completed 4 new versions of The HOPE: Farsi, Turka, Southern Sama and Hebrew. This brings our total of completed versions to 65. We have over 20 new translation projects in process and expect to complete a few of these before year-end. In The Turka HOPE, an influential chief (shown right) introduces The HOPE by explaining his journey from animism to Christ; a bold move in his culture. As with many of our partners, his involvement in The HOPE was not without personal risk.



This Turka chief shares his journey to Christ in hope of reaching many of the 30,000 Turka in Burkina Faso.

Highlighting 4 of Our Current HOPE Projects

The HOPE for India

India - with 1.25 billion people and 1,900 unreached people groups - may be the greatest remaining mountain to climb to complete the Great Commission. The HOPE for India is our project to translate and utilize The HOPE in 10 of the largest language groups in India.



In terms of unreached people groups, India is the most unreached country on earth.

These languages are gateway languages from which smaller language versions of The HOPE can be created. Each language in the project is surrounded by advisory teams of Indian ministry leaders. Our advisory teams of Indian ministry leaders now total well over 50.

To view a flipbook presentation on this project: <http://thehopeforindiainvitation.thehopeproject.com/>.

THE HEBREW HOPE

In spreading the Gospel, God places a priority on reaching the Jew (*to the Jew first*, Rom.1:16). Wherever Paul planted a Church, he went first to the Jews of that city. This fall, we completed the Hebrew version of The HOPE!



Where Jews Live Today

There are about 15 million Jews in the world. About 75% live in the U.S. and Israel (5.5 & 6 million, respectively). Without a homeland for thousands of years, the remaining Jewish population is scattered around the world. As many as 9 million Jews still speak Hebrew.

No one comes to Yeshua (the Hebrew name for Jesus) unless the Father draws him (John 6:44). To this day, there is a veil over the hearts of many Jews, preventing them from seeing the connection between the old and new covenant (2 Cor.3:14-15). But someday (we believe soon) that veil will be lifted and The Hebrew HOPE will be there to help them meet their Messiah!

The Roma HOPE

Often known as "Gypsies," as many as 12 million Roma people are scattered around the world, mostly in Europe. Much like the Jews, even through oppression, they have maintained a distinct identity, largely due to strong traditions and family ties. There are 7 Roma languages, each



A Roma man passing values to the children one a heart language for many. With our long time friend, David Zeoli, we are now producing 4 Roma versions of The HOPE.

THE TRIBAL HOPE

In May, representatives from Mars Hill attended a consultation in Guatemala. Sponsored by SIL (Wycliffe) - the subject: adapting The HOPE for the tribal/animist cultures of our world. Animism is the belief that spirits inhabit everything and that supernatural powers, other than a



Participants included Christian workers from the Incan, Aztec, and Mayan cultures and staff from SIL, Wycliffe and New Tribes Mission.

Single creator God, control the universe. We are grateful for our partners in this project, and we are working for the completion of The Tribal HOPE in 2016.

Stay Connected



Be inspired and challenged. Get our weekly staff devotionals delivered straight to your inbox. / www.devosfromthehill.org



Join The HOPE community. Learn what God is doing around the world with The HOPE. / www.facebook.com/TheHOPEforAll



Watch just about every completed translation of The HOPE online, and share with friends. / <https://vimeo.com/marshillproductions>



Stay "linked-in." Share updates and insightful posts with your professional network. / www.linkedin.com/company/mars-hill-productions



Get updates in 140 words or less. Retweet as the Spirit leads to promote The HOPE in the twittersphere / <https://twitter.com/TheHOPEforAll>



The HOPE is a project of Mars•Hill, a non-profit ministry dedicated to ministry through media. For more than 35 years, award-winning Mars•Hill films and videos have been used around the world to introduce thousands of people to Jesus Christ.

The Mars Hill website - www.mars-hill.org
email us at hopeinfo@mars-hill.org

The HOPE Partnering website - <http://www.hopepartnering.com/>
The HOPE Ministry website - www.TheHOPEProject.com

4711 Lexington Blvd., Missouri City, Texas, 77459 / (281) 403 - 1463