

Frontier Peoples: An Introduction

Robby Butler

God promised Abraham (Abram) that God would bless all the families of earth through Abraham's seed. Today the Word of God is strengthening whole families and healing broken ones in many parts of the world. Yet there remain large pockets of great brokenness, conflict, poverty and suffering, where God's blessing is not yet known "far as the curse is found."

Almost forty years ago, the concept of *Unreached* peoples was introduced to prioritize groups lacking movements spreading God's presence and blessing within their midst. Researchers chose to consider less than 2% (one in 50) of the families in a group enjoying God's presence as measurable evidence that such a group was *Unreached*-and thus in need of pioneer missionary work to pursue God for a multiplying movement bringing the blessing of His Holy Spirit.

Today, researchers estimate the number of *Unreached* groups at about [7,000](#). And through the persistent efforts of [Finishing the Task](#), the number of groups with no work among them at all is steadily declining. Furthermore, researchers have also recognized that, just as a single spark can start a fire, wherever the Bible has acceptance and even a small following within a people, the Bible can ignite a fire to bless that community, its families and its whole people group.

Researchers have therefore begun prioritizing [over 4,000](#) *Frontier* peoples where almost no families at all (one in 1,000 or less) are Christ-followers or embrace the Bible as God's Word. Such *Frontier* peoples are deeply suspicious of church-planting models that draw individuals from their families into gatherings of strangers, and commonly misinterpret mission efforts as an imperialistic Western agenda to create pro-Western allies.

Among *Frontier* peoples, regular evangelism of individuals (at the expense of family relationships) is counterproductive, corroborating community-wide fears that Christendom is intent on breaking up their families and communities. In this context we *must* pursue many multiplying movements of small, reproducing churches and disciples.

The good news is that movements require far less funding and missionary presence than regular evangelism yet have far broader impact. One team can start a movement capable of blessing populations of 500,000 or more. And just since 1995 movements have multiplied from a handful with a few thousand disciples, to more than [650 movements, with 50 million](#) disciples in rapidly reproducing family-based churches.

The [24:14 Coalition](#) now facilitates a global network of experienced movement leaders and catalysts, collaborating to rapidly multiply movements in every *Frontier* people-with the shared goal of work at least begun in every *Unreached* people and place by the end of 2025.

Additional resources:

[24:14 Coalition](#)

[Joshua Project](#)

[Mission Frontiers](#)

[Vision 5:9](#)

[Astonishing-Progress](#)

No Place Left saga: [Hastening](#) and [Rebirth](#)

[Stubborn Perseverance](#)