

# Encouraging Developments

By Robby Butler

Behind the global turmoil that preoccupies so much of the world's attention, God is quietly reaping the greatest spiritual harvest in history, while preparing an even greater harvest.

And at the center of this global outpouring is prayer, along with the intentional pursuit of movements, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to motivate and equip disciples and small churches to reproduce rather than just gather believers to receive ministry.

Following are the most significant developments I have seen over the past year in this global revolution with links to related resources. Suggestions for improving or expanding this list are welcome.

## 1. Focused Prayer

In May of 2017, global prayer network leaders met with mission leaders to focus prayer on the remaining missionary task. This has birthed a growing global focus on prayer for movements to complete the Great Commission. [Watch an inspiring video.](#)

## 2. Closure Focus

Shortly after this focus on prayer, the 24:14 Coalition formed—dedicated to pursuing movements of rapidly multiplying small churches and disciples in every remaining unreached people and place by 2025. [Read about the coalition](#) or [watch a video update.](#)

## 3. New Awareness

The trust environment created by formation of the 24:14 Coalition led many movement leaders to share with each other what God was doing. This jumped the April 2017 estimate (162 movements with 20 million new disciples) to a 2017 year-end confidence of nearly 650 movements with 50 million new disciples. (I detailed this new awareness in a Mar/Apr 2018 Mission Frontiers article, which I later [revised and posted](#)

[here.](#))

#### 4. Rediscovery of Movements Strategy

The July/August 2018 Mission Frontiers is dedicated to revealing the pivotal relevance to movement practitioners of the parable Jesus himself entitled “The Parable of the Sower” (Matthew 13:18). We have often misunderstood and misapplied this parable to be teaching us what kind of soil or seed we should be, when in fact it points to the strategy Jesus modeled as a sower. [Read the articles.](#)

#### 5. Refugee Dynamics

God is using the global refugee crisis to bring blessing to peoples that were previously isolated from the gospel. ([Read observations from our 2017 participation in refugee ministry in Europe](#)).

#### 6. Family Blessing

Movements—the Word of God blessing families and other relational networks—are an important corrective to the tendency of most evangelism and church planting efforts to focus on individuals without regard for their family relationships. I excerpted two books on this for the [Mar/Apr 2016 Mission Frontiers](#). My friend Chuck White drafted an [article correcting a common misuse of scripture to win individuals away from their families](#). I hope to have this expanded to a clarification that God’s intent to bless families is the foundation for discipling nations.

#### 7. Fear Exposed

Satan’s hold over most unreached peoples is partly through their fear that Christianity will tear apart their families and communities. Evangelism that pulls individuals away from their families compounds this fear. Movements correct this problem by blessing families. At the September 2017 meeting of the International Society of Frontier Missiology, I presented an adaptation of McGavran’s article explaining this dynamic. [Read an updated version.](#)

#### 8. Disparity Recognized

India has long received only the prayer and laborers proportionate to its classification as a country, while in fact India has a larger population and more complexity than most continents. While most countries receive an average of one missionary for every thousand people in their unreached people groups, India receives only one missionary per 46,000. India is home to nearly half the population of all unreached people groups and has more complexity and need than all of Africa. Awareness of this disparity of needs and resources is stimulating increased prayer and efforts toward starting movements on the Indian subcontinent (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh). [Here's the data.](#)

## 9. Frontier People Groups

In early 2018, the concept of frontier people groups (less than one Christian family of any kind per 1,000 families) brought fresh clarity to the remaining task. [Read about frontier people groups.](#)

## 10. Prayer Focus Continued

God continues stirring global prayer for movements among the largest remaining frontier people groups. A small team of global prayer network leaders has pulled together a [31-day prayer guide for the largest frontier people groups](#) (revision in process).

## 11. Reliance on the Holy Spirit

Steve Smith's [Spirit Walk: The Extraordinary Power of Acts for Ordinary People](#) reintroduces the ancient fruitfulness of following the Holy Spirit's leading in the pursuit of movements.

## 12. Movement Training Hubs

The [24:14 Coalition update in the July/Aug 2018 Mission Frontiers](#) reports on the significant development of intentional movement training hubs to accelerate the equipping of more disciples to start movements among peoples that most need them.

## 13. Annual Increase of Believers

If the data I am now studying is correct, for the first time in history the annual population increase of believers will soon surpass the annual increase of non-believers, and shortly thereafter the number of non-believers in the world will start decreasing. See my [draft chapter for an upcoming book](#) on the 24:14 Coalition.

Never in history has the Holy Spirit prompted such global collaboration in focused prayer and labor toward biblical, multiplying discipleship among the peoples and places still waiting in darkness.

*He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."  
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:20).*

Again, I [welcome your suggestions](#) for improving or expanding this list.

Thank you, Robby, for this great list. And thank you, God, for the way you are at work in our day bringing the abundant life of Jesus to all peoples.

*Adapted from [Extraordinary Global Kingdom Developments](#), June 24, 2018.*

#### **About Shane Bennett**

Monthly Practical Mobilization articles are written by Shane Bennett.

Shane has been connecting with Muslim immigrants in Europe for more than 15 years. If your heart is stirred by the recent refugee crisis, he can help you find accessible, helpful ways to take action, including both long- and short-term work in Sicily and elsewhere.

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