

HOW WILL WE REACH THE UNREACHED?

By Bob Young

How often do you think about, pray about, the many people in the world who will **never hear the gospel** in their lifetime if nothing changes? What if the church maintains the status quo? Estimates suggest that only about 1% of mission money given through the churches goes to gospel outreach to people who have little or no access or contact with the gospel. Most mission work centers on locations where the gospel has already gone!

How many people will be born, live, die, and enter eternity without hearing about the One who makes everlasting life possible? Are you thinking millions? You have not grasped the problem! The number is measured in billions!

Something must change! If the genuinely unreached could be easily reached, the gospel would have gone a long time ago. Too few North American mission programs and missionaries are willing to focus on reaching the unreached. Why? In part, because numerous barriers exist.

Political barriers make it difficult to reach out in countries where evangelizing can result in being arrested or killed. As I travel, I frequently depend on locals to do the teaching. I am a facilitator. Often North Americans are not welcome. In some countries where I visit it is illegal to proselytize.

Geographic barriers make it difficult to reach those who live in isolated places. Numerous churches in the remote mountains of southern Colombia are in places where North American missionaries will seldom if ever go. Many churches are accessible only with great difficulty. I personally know the challenge of churches in eastern Guatemala and the southwestern Dominican Republic.

Safety concerns present another barrier. National missionaries go to places where North Americans would be in danger from drug dealers, gangs, and violence.

Numerous barriers exist in the teeming cities, making contact difficult in urban areas where people live in protected, inaccessible communities or apartments. But... everyone comes out for work, shopping, and other activities. The most natural gospel contacts come through Christians who live and work alongside the unreached.

Cultural barriers. Sometimes, North Americans do not go, and those who do go struggle, because of cultural barriers. It takes a long time to genuinely assimilate into a foreign culture.

Language barriers. The language barrier may seem obvious yet surmountable. But the truth is that language is subtle, nuanced, filled with idioms, figures of speech, and expected responses. Even after one learns to speak a language, years can be filled with grasping hidden meanings.

Religious barriers. The gospel must go to those places where false religions, ancestral worship, voodoo, animism, and other unbiblical ideas are ingrained. Getting over those barriers requires time, relationship, and understanding. National workers are usually most effective—unless the inserted missionary is ready to invest a lifetime.

These barriers explain why LALD is committed to facilitating the work of national Christians in their own locations and in the places they easily and naturally access. LALD comes alongside national and indigenous believers who already live in some of the places that are hardest to reach.

These indigenous brothers and sisters make disciples, multiply churches, and care for others in biblical, practical ways. They are on the front lines continually.

I regularly receive and share updates. People who have never heard the gospel before are finding Jesus. Will you join us in prayer for the unreached? Will you pray for the brothers and sisters with whom we work, those who have opportunity to reach the unreached?

Will you help spread the message of Jesus where he is not known? **Brothers and sisters, we must reach them! As many as we can as soon as we can!**